



## **Probabilities and Possibilities**

by Four-time Olympian Ruben Gonzalez

Whether I'm speaking for 25 people in a boardroom or 10,000 people in an arena, I finish my speeches by saying, "What are the chances that someone like me was going to make it to the Olympics? I wasn't a great athlete, I didn't get started until I was 21 years old, and to top it off I live in hot and humid Houston and I chose to compete in the luge for Pete's sake! What are the chances? One in a million? One in ten million? I probably had a better chance to win the lottery!"

"I was just an ordinary kid with an extraordinary dream. I wasn't a big shot. I was just a little shot that kept on shooting. And that's something you can do too. If you make a decision to become a little shot who keeps on shooting, the world is yours."

Believe it or not, the secret to creating an extraordinary life is right in those words. Most people look at their dreams and start calculating the odds of them ever happening. They can tell you the probabilities and that number is what keeps them from even getting started. They don't understand that the probability at any one time has nothing to do with success. Because if you don't even get started, the probability of success is zero. They don't realize that they can change the probabilities.

Every time you take action in the pursuit of your dream, you're increasing the probabilities of reaching it. It's all up to you. You have control over the probabilities. Once you buy into that, it's easier to make a decision to take massive action.

Understanding that makes it easier to commit to your dream. Once you commit to your dream and make a decision to do whatever it takes for as long as it takes, the probability of success increases dramatically. Why? Because 99% of the people will never do whatever it takes.

When I called the people in Lake Placid to ask for help in getting started in the luge, the guy on the phone laughed at me. He said I was way too old to get started. He said, "If you want to do it at your age and in only four years it will be brutal. Nine out of ten people quit!" When I heard that, I got excited. I got excited because I could see the opportunity. And I simply decided that quitting would not be an option for me.

Once I made that decision, all I had to do was to outlast everyone else! The guy on the phone saw my probability as one out of ten. But I saw it as 100% (as long as I was willing to outlast everyone else). Four years and a few broken bones later, I was competing in the Olympics (it wasn't quite that simple, but focusing on the possibility got me to do what I needed to do to become an Olympian).

Stop focusing on the probabilities. Focus on the possibility. Ask yourself, "What is my dream? Is it a dream that takes my breath away? Is it something that excites me and gives meaning to my life?" And if it is, ask yourself, "If it is possible, then why not me?"

Don't focus on the probabilities. Focusing on the probabilities will kill your confidence. Once you lose your confidence, it's easy to quit. And stop hanging around people that talk about being realistic. Realistic people live boring lives and never do anything exciting. Start hanging around winners. Hang around achievers. I have never heard a real winner talk about being realistic. Think about three people you truly admire. I guarantee you that they did not get where they are by being realistic.

Focus on your dream, listen to your gut feeling, and follow your heart wholeheartedly. Ask yourself, "Why not me? Why not now?" and, "What can I do right now to get me closer to my dream?" When you ask yourself the right questions, focus on the possibilities, and hang around like-minded people, your confidence will soar and you'll be on the road to realizing your dream. Do that, and at the end of your life you will be able to look back and say, "I lived a magnificent life!"

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