

One More Step

by Bonner Paddock [& Neal Bascomb] (2015)

His boss told him to volunteer at some charity. He chose Cerebral Palsy [CP] since he had a mild case of it. He spoke at a meeting & inspired a man who then ran a marathon for his son, Jake. Jake died the next day & Bonner promised to run for Jake.

Soon after he was watching a documentary on Mt. Everest & decided to climb Mt Kilimanjaro [19,340']. It was a seven day 10,000' climb. It was clear that this mountain made one pay for any weakness. He didn't train as well as he should have. You could see the summit off in the distance, but had to take it one step at a time. CP short-circuits the signals from the brain to the muscles & the body doesn't respond properly. The final day they started at midnight in 40 mph wind & 15dF below. He was completely exhausted & ready to quit with only 1000' more to climb. He had to choose to go on. He used the anger from his bad memories to push him on. Days later he would have to deal with those emotions.

When people saw his documentary of his climb, they were inspired; when he saw it, he could see for the 1st time how others saw his physical disabilities. But more than that, he saw his emotional shortcomings that he carried with him. He enjoyed his sales job, but he started his own foundation [One man, one mission – living beyond the limits] to help disabled kids around the world. He returned to Tanzania with a doctor friend to help kids.

He decided to complete an Ironman, but he was going to train right this time. Greg Welch [1994 World Ironman champ] would be his coach. They lined up sponsors & trained for two years. The day of the race, he did well in the swim. It was hot on the bike so he put ice in his shirt & shorts, which dripped water into his shoes & messed up his feet. The run was painful. During the race anger did not work to push him on since he had worked out those issues. He had to find a new source of energy. What pushed him on was those he met that could not run. He finished in 16 hrs & 38 minutes [22 minutes before the cut off]. After the race he was dehydrated & needed two bags of I.V. It took him months to recover. Then he focused on helping others.

Quotes: "We have to focus on what we can control" (Henry Samueli)
"One hurdle at a time. Focus on that one & on nothing else."

Movies: "Yes, You Can" [Team Hoyt] & the documentary of his climb....