

Ben Saunders

Record-Breaking Polar Explorer, TED "Master Storyteller," and Climate Tech Investor

Thriving in the Toughest Conditions. Record-breaking polar explorer Ben Saunders' story is ultimately one of achieving highly ambitious goals in the world's most challenging, hostile, and unpredictable environments. For more than two decades he has built and led world-class teams — selecting and managing individuals that he can trust with his life. He credits his survival — and his success — with some fundamental, hard-won lessons that are almost universally applicable, in business, in leadership and in life, which he shares in this hair-raising talk focusing on overcoming any challenge on the path to success.

Forge, Don't Fracture: Finding the Grit Within. Stress, mental and physical exhaustion, and the pressure of making critical decisions that determine survival — these were just some of the obstacles record-breaking polar explorer Ben Saunders faced on his expeditions across the Antarctic. And as he reveals in his keynotes, these challenges are no different than much of what we face in the increasingly high-pressure, high-demand world of work. Reflecting on his experiences braving — and finding success in — some of nature's most unforgiving environments, Saunders examines the fine line between productive stress and harmful strain, and shares powerful strategies for how anyone can turn stress into grit and leverage their personal strengths and learnings from past experiences for success in any endeavor. Saunders' insights help audiences reframe obstacles into opportunities for discovering resilience, creativity, and strengthening team dynamics in the crucible of adversity, while empowering them to channel the courage and resolve within them to focus on what's within their power and make strides toward their purpose.

The Importance of Honest Communication. When Ben Saunders looks back on the scariest, hardest, and bravest challenges he and his teammates have faced on daring expeditions to the world's most unforgiving environments, he thinks about how communication has been the key to overcoming the obstacles in front of them. In this talk, Saunders offers business leaders and their people tangible examples for how to remove the barriers to open communication, streamline collaborative effectiveness, and create a culture in which asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, but rather a vital hallmark of a high-performing team.

Controlling the Controllables. Operating and performing in the polar regions over two decades, Ben Saunders has learned the futility of expending his own precious and finite energy and attention on elements outside of his control. He gives audiences a compelling insight into the value of optimizing physical, emotional, and psychological energy — both individually and collectively — through an immediately applicable masterclass on the vital importance of focus. During a period when emotional and psychological reserves are under greater strain than ever before, Saunders' story has a unique capacity to motivate an audience to remain present, positive, and purposeful.

Investing in the Journey, Not the Destination. For most of his adult life, polar explorer Ben Saunders was driven by a singular ambition: to be the first to complete the Antarctic journey that had defeated Sir Ernest Shackleton and Captain Robert Scott — 1,800 miles on foot to the South Pole and back. The achievement of this goal after more than a decade of focus and sacrifice forced a rewriting of his own definition of success. At a time when the inclination to yearn for a sunnier future is palpable, this remarkable story of the expectation and the reality of achievement is compelling, essential listening that will inspire any individual or team to achieve incredible goals.

Being the Only Authority on Your Potential. An acclaimed storyteller who wows audiences with captivating visuals, Ben Saunders takes groups on a journey from uncertainty, fear, and self-doubt as he navigated gruelling expeditions across some of the most unforgiving corners of the globe, eventually raising the bar in one of the most demanding fields imaginable. His own life journey gives evidence to the belief that "impossible is just someone else's opinion." Audience members remain at the edge of their seats as he unravels the mysterious roots of perseverance and delivers insights on how to make the best use of the traits and potential we all possess, but all-too-rarely employ to the fullest.

His story of self-belief is fused with practical and applicable lessons on getting difficult things done in difficult environments, building and managing teams, preparing meticulously, knowing when to pivot, and fulfilling individual and organizational potential — no matter how steep the odds may appear.

A Unique Perspective on Climate Change. In 2004, Ben Saunders skied solo from Russia to the North Pole, a 600-mile, 72-day expedition on foot across the floating pack ice of the Arctic Ocean. No one has been able to

repeat this journey since, largely because the Arctic lost nearly 10 billion tonnes of ice in the 19 years that followed. Saunders has spent more time in the polar regions than many career climate scientists, and has witnessed the decline of the places that have shaped him. He is a passionate advocate for sustainable business and the solutions that will tackle climate change and regenerate our damaged ecosystems, and is currently launching his first early-stage climate tech investment fund, Kintanna Ventures. In this talk, Saunders underscores the importance of sustainable business strategies and highlights the ways in which organizations can benefit when they operate for the good of the environment.

WORKSHOP: Navigating Innovation and Uncertainty. Co-led by Ben Saunders, the world-record-breaking polar explorer, and Costas Andriopoulos, a renowned Innovation Professor, this unique workshop is designed to equip business leaders with the skills and insights necessary to foster innovation and effectively manage uncertainty in today's rapidly changing business landscape. Drawing on Costas' extensive knowledge in innovation theory and practice, the workshop delves into cutting-edge strategies for cultivating creativity and driving transformative change within organizations. Ben brings invaluable lessons from the most extreme environments on Earth, offering unparalleled insights into resilience, adaptability, and decision-making under pressure. Together, they create a dynamic learning experience that combines academic rigour with real-world adventure.

A significant emphasis of the workshop is on leadership and teamwork. Participants will learn how to lead with vision and empathy, creating an environment where team members feel valued and motivated. The program delves into the dynamics of high-performing teams, teaching leaders how to cultivate collaboration, communication, and a shared sense of purpose, even in uncertain times.

Participants will engage in interactive sessions, case studies, and experiential learning exercises that mirror the unpredictable challenges of the business world. This program is not just an educational course; it's an adventure into the heart of innovation and resilience, preparing leaders to navigate the uncharted territories of modern business with confidence and strategic foresight.

This program is more than an educational course; it's a transformative experience that prepares leaders to confidently navigate the complexities of modern business, armed with enhanced skills in innovation, leadership, teamwork, and resilience.

Key Takeaways for Participants:

- *Innovation strategies:* Learn cutting-edge techniques to foster a culture of innovation and implement transformative ideas in your organisation
- *Resilient leadership:* Gain insights into leading under pressure, making decisive choices, and maintaining team morale in challenging situations
- *Team dynamics:* Understand the essentials of building and sustaining high-performing teams, even when facing uncertainty
- *Adaptability skills:* Develop the ability to adapt to changing environments and pivot strategies effectively
- *Practical insights:* Benefit from the unique perspectives of a polar explorer on resilience and adaptability in extreme conditions
- *Networking opportunity:* Connect with fellow leaders and build a network of professionals committed to innovation and excellence