

Ed Viesturs

Author, World-Class Adventurer and Mountain Climber

Washington resident Ed Viesturs is widely regarded as this country's foremost high-altitude mountaineer. He is familiar to many from the 1996 IMAX Everest Expedition documentary and in 2002, he was awarded the historic Lowell Thomas Award by the Explorer's Club for outstanding achievement in the field of mountaineering. In winning the award, he joined an elite group of climbers including Sir Edmund Hillary. In 1992 he was awarded the American Alpine Club Sowles Awards for his participation in two rescues on K-2.

Viesturs is a professional mountaineer and works as a design consultant for several prominent outdoor equipment manufacturers such as Eddie Bauer/First Ascent and Grandoe Gloves. He also represents companies such as Rolex and the Seattle Seahawks. His corporate motivational speeches touch on subjects such as risk management, leadership, team work, overcoming major obstacles, and decision making under pressure.

Ed serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Big City Mountaineers (BCM), an organization that instills critical life skills in under-resourced youth through wilderness mentoring experiences that help keep kids in school, reduce violence and drug use. He is spokesperson for their Summit For Someone benefit climb series which placing individuals on iconic peaks raising support for BCM youth and programs.

Viesturs has successfully reached the summits of all of the world's fourteen 8000-meter peaks without supplemental oxygen, an 18 year project he christened Endeavor 8000. His goal was completed on May 12, 2005 with his ascent of Annapurna one of the world's most treacherous peaks. He is one of only a handful of climbers in history (and the only American) to accomplish this. That year Viesturs was awarded National Geographic's Adventurer of the Year.

During the 18 year span to climb the world's highest peaks he went on 29 Himalayan expeditions and reached the summit on 20 of these occasions and stood on the top of Everest seven times. He climbs without benefit of an oxygen tank, which he feels can be burdensome and potentially troublesome. Only a superior conditioned athlete can scale heights above 25,000 feet without artificial oxygen – a fact Viesturs has turned into an important metaphor for his audiences (i.e., that the key to the journey is in the time and energy invested in the preparation).

Viesturs motto has always been that climbing has to be a round trip. All of his planning and focus during his climbs maintains this ethic and he is not shy about turning back from a climb if conditions are too severe. In spite of his conservative attitude Viesturs has been one of the most successful Himalayan climbers in American history. His story is about risk management as well as being patient enough for conditions to allow an ascent. Ultimately, in his words, "The mountain decides whether you climb or not. The art of mountaineering is knowing when to go, when to stay, and when to retreat."

At the start of their 2005 season the Seattle Seahawks football team brought in Viesturs to speak to them about teamwork. The team and coaches incorporated some of his messages and ideas into their practices and games and went on to play in the Super Bowl that season. According to Viesturs, regardless of the industry, teamwork is the same: "It is an implicit trust in, and recognition that the person next to you is No. 1," he explains. "If we're climbing a mountain together and you slip and fall, I'm there to save your life" – which is the ultimate definition of teamwork. Another lesson Viesturs espouses is the importance of perseverance, or going step by step and not getting discouraged when working toward your goal. Viesturs recalls once being just 300 feet away from the top of Mount

Everest when he had to turn back.

In October 2005 Viesturs best selling autobiography *No Shortcuts To The Top* was published and released by Broadway Books. The book covers in detail Ed Viesturs' career as a mountaineer, how he prepared for his expeditions and his philosophy about how he managed the inherent risks.

In 2008 Viesturs published his second book, *K-2, LIFE AND DEATH ON THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS MOUNTAINS*, as by Broadway Books. This book chronicles 6 historic expeditions on the world's second highest peak, and discusses the risks of success and the costs thereof. Risk management is a key theme throughout.

Viesturs third book- *The Will to Climb: Obsession and Commitment and the Quest to Climb Annapurna--the World's Deadliest Peak* - was released on October 4, 2011.

Viesturs was born in 1959 and now lives on Bainbridge Island, Washington with his wife of 15 years, Paula, and their four children. He continues to go on adventures. On May 19th 2009 he made his 7th ascent of Everest. In January of 2011 he lead a climb of Vinson Massiff, the highest peak in Antarctica, at '16,066. Most recently in August, 2012 made his 212th ascent of 14,410' Mt. Rainier.
