Bonita Norris

Record-breaking Mountaineer, Award-winning Motivational Speaker, and Bestselling Author of The Girl Who Climbed Everest

Climbing the Mountain of the Mind: Turning Impossible Dreams into Reality What does it take to go beyond your limits? To have an impossible dream and turn it into a reality? For beginner climber Bonita Norris it was to reach the summit of Everest but as she came to learn, the biggest challenge wasn't Everest itself. Creating a mindset that works for us, not against us, is vital for success. This talk explores how we can conquer the biggest mountain of all, the mountain of the mind. In her talks, Bonita passionately and humorously tells of how she woke up one morning and decided to climb Mt Everest, despite no prior experience. Failure seemed inevitable, and there was so much uncertainty ahead, but Bonita had a clear vision and showed up for her goal, no matter how many times others around her told her what she was doing was impossible. She focussed on the process and let progress look after itself. In doing so, she taught herself how to climb, found a team and became the youngest Briton to reach the summit of the world's 8th highest peak in the Himalayas. She then raised £50k in corporate sponsorship during the global financial crash to cover the cost of her Everest expedition, despite having never worked in sales or sponsorship before. Just getting to the base camp of Everest was one of Bonita's proudest achievementsshe had started from scratch, with no mountaineering skills, no team and no money. She had put all the pieces of the jigsaw in place not because of any great talent, but because she was willing to put herself out there, fail and pick herself back up. In her own words, "Everest was my dream and my responsibility. Nobody was going to climb that mountain for me." Great support from mentors and team-mates was fundamental too, as Bonita says, "It's amazing what you can do when you have people around you who believe in you." On Everest Bonita had to climb through the treacherous Icefall, riven with crevasses and head up toward the death zone above 8000m. Here she speaks about the 'mountain of the mind'- how despite the physical challenge being huge, it was the mental challenge that was the hardest to overcome: fear of failure and death, uncertainty and huge risk all wrapped up with the pressure of knowing this would be her only shot at the top of the world. Bonita was able to navigate these challenges with her mantra of 'focus not fret', and also used reflection, perspective and humour to give her the resilience she needed to keep going all the way to the top of the world.