LAI Leading Authorities, Inc.

Darcy Gaechter

Adventurer, Author, First & Only Woman to Kayak the Amazon River from Source to Sea

The Adventure Mindset: Do What They Say You Can't. Darcy Gaechter's expedition to becoming the first and only woman to kayak the Amazon River from source to sea was as much a physical feat as it was a mental and emotional challenge. For every milestone, there were an equal number of moments where she thought about calling it quits and would have had she not had the "adventure mindset" to keep her going. In this talk, Gaechter introduces audiences to the adventure mindset, empowering them to approach any challenge with the mental and emotional readiness that things may not go according to plan, but that's okay. As she shares, success in any endeavor — from kayaking to achieving business goals — is rooted in the ability to plan ahead but think flexibly, treat obstacles as things to overcome (rather than personal affronts), and reframe failure as a minor setback that offers a chance to try again in a new way. The adventure mindset can be adapted by any organization or individual on the path to achieving incredible goals and daring to do the things that people say they can't.

Redefine What's Possible: Overcoming Obstacles to "Do the Undoable." Once nicknamed "Diminutive Darcy" by a local reporter, Darcy Gaechter may be small in stature but not in spirit. Her amazing feats in the world of expedition kayaking challenge stereotypes and prove that personal limits cannot be defined by anyone but yourself. In this talk, Darcy shares how to focus on transforming ideas of what is possible. Someday each of us will be called upon to do the undoable, and when that day comes, we must first start by cultivating an unwavering belief that we can do it, no matter what anyone else says. We will then have to follow this conviction up with determination, perseverance, and an incredible amount of hard work. Her talk aims to lend inspiration to anyone facing a challenge and to give useful insight on how to overcome even the most daunting impediments.

Amazon Woman: Facing Fears, Chasing Dreams, and a Quest to Kayak the World's Largest River from Source to Sea. In this talk, Darcy Gaechter takes audiences along her extraordinary and inspiring expedition to becoming the first female to kayak the entire Amazon River. From tackling raging Class Five whitewater to cutting her hair in hopes of passing for a boy and being less of a target in Peru's notoriously dangerous "Red Zone," Darcy's heart-pounding journey demonstrates how to find courage and strength when challenging yourself and pushing your personal limits. And how having an "expedition mindset" in every walk of life – expecting the unexpected and seeing obstacles as opportunities for success rather than chances for failure – is key to any success.

Control What You Can Control: How to Navigate & Embrace Uncertainty. When Darcy Gaechter set out to become the first woman to kayak the Amazon River from source to sea, she paddled toward uncertainty for the entirety of the 148-day, 4,000-mile expedition. Could she and her

teammates make it to the end? What kind of hardships would they face on the journey there? Rather than fight the uncertainties, Gaechter made the choice to embrace them and control what she could control, while accepting that she couldn't control everything. In this talk, Gaechter helps audience members turn the negatives surrounding uncertainty in the workplace, and elsewhere, into positives, and offers steps anyone can take to be like the river and adapt to new circumstances as they are met.

Finding the Reward in Risk. Having achieved "first female" descents of many of the world's most-challenging rivers, Darcy Gaechter understands as well as anybody that being first means taking risks. And being comfortable with taking risks also means being comfortable with failure. In this thought-provoking session, Gaechter draws upon parallels between her thrilling expeditions, including her pioneering 4,000-mile adventure across the Amazon, and the challenges we all face daily within our organizations and out in our communities to offer audiences new and practical strategies for approaching risk with confidence. Gaechter uses real-life examples from her adventures to demonstrate instances in which she controlled her fears and bettered her mindset to more clearly assess and take on the risks in front of her, and shows audience members how they can do the same.

The Journey to Happiness and High Performance. In addition to braving unimaginable conditions on her adventure to becoming the first woman to kayak the Amazon River, Darcy Gaechter also came face-to-face with self-doubt, imposter syndrome, and anxiety over whether she had what it took to achieve something that had never been done before. Leading an open and honest conversation on the key role that happiness plays in sparking high performance for teams and individuals, Gaechter shares the methods she uses to shift her mindset to be more positive, even when the voices in her head tell her she should give up. The action steps she provides are intended to help each person identify their own unique ways for coping with internal and external stressors, while approaching their goals in ways that allow them to celebrate all of the victories leading to the larger objective.

Back to the Beginning: Goal-Setting for Growth. How do you maintain your motivation once you've achieved everything you've been working toward? That's a question that Darcy Gaechter has had to answer for herself time and again as she conquered some of nature's most demanding tests of grit, determination, and resolve. For Gaechter, her past accomplishments are what drive her to seek out new challenges — from new kayaking expeditions and trail running to leading a business and writing a book. In this talk, Gaechter underlines the importance of goal-setting in all aspects of life, while also emphasizing that, for every goal you achieve, countless new opportunities open up to pursue another one. She gets audience members' minds working as she provides a framework for how each person can align their goals to their purpose and find inspiration for their next challenge in the most unlikely of places.