



by John Huston

Tyler and I talk about the importance mental training all the time. So what exactly is it?

Mental training is getting our minds ready for all aspects of the expedition.

How we respond to the challenges of the expedition will be the difference between success and failure.

Our mental training is a slow process that takes place over years and months. A lot of the mental training comes from our past expedition experience. This experience provides a critical foundation to build upon.

During the summer and fall we use several different methods to prepare our brains for the challenge ahead.

Here's a list of a few of the methods of mental training we commonly use. We'll talk about these and other topics in more detail down in the future.

1. **Positive Visualization:** Imagining, in detail, situations that may happen on the expedition. We then visualize the necessary steps to success. In many ways this focused thinking increases our base of experience. It is not the same as being on the expedition but in many ways it can be close and thus improve performance when similar situations occur.
2. **Critical Self-Assessment:** We constantly look at our weaknesses. We then educate ourselves through research or seeking advice. Staying humble is essential to many aspects of the expeditionary experience, perhaps most importantly in the ability to strive to improve.
3. **Optimism:** Belief in positive possibilities. A lot of this training happens the daily existence of working to fund and grow the expedition project. At times, setbacks occur or goals can seem far away, but we believe strongly that if we keep plugging forward and be true to who we are, then all will work out on in end. The path is not always known, but in many ways that is the fun

part. Optimism in our minds is not just an idea, but the hard work that makes turns an idea into action.

4. Not Thinking (Don't Worry too Much): In many ways thinking about unknowns and daunting challenges is a lot more difficult than experience the challenge itself. Positive action breeds more positive action. We don't always know exactly how we are going to get there, but we know that we will get there. We don't know how we will feel or what we will think in the future. The ability to let go and forget yourself, in ways can be a key to enjoying expeditions.

5. Reading and Asking Questions: We are fascinated by how other individuals, not just polar explorers, undertake challenges. Although the problem itself be very different from our challenges, successful mental approaches to challenge can be universal. We love studying this topic and hope to use our expedition as a similar resource for others.