

BEN SAUNDERS

'The New Sir Ranulph Fiennes' Inspirational Polar Explorer

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Topics

- Adventure
- Explorer
- Motivation
- Sports

The challenges of leading, performing, and executing at the highest level, and often in complete isolation, are familiar terrain to Ben Saunders. Navigating and overcoming self-doubt, loneliness, uncertainty, and adversity in pursuit of a goal is what makes Saunders a record-breaking polar explorer, and a speaker whose story resonates with audiences around the world.

While the achievements of this world-leading adventurer are deeply inspiring, it is the hard-won life lessons etched within each voyage — totaling nearly 5,000 miles on skis and more than a year spent in complete isolation in the harshest environments on the planet — that prove most valuable and applicable to his audiences. Faced with some of the world's most unforgiving and unpredictable conditions, Ben has learned the necessity of growing through failure, how to control the controllables in fast-changing environments, and that acting without certainty is the key to unlocking individual and collective self-belief.

His achievements are at the outer limits of human endeavor: he organized and led the longest human-powered polar journey in history; a 108-day return journey to the South Pole on foot that spanned 1,800 miles, the equivalent of 69 back-to-back marathons, dragging 440lbs (200kg) of food and supplies in his sled. Saunders describes this unprecedented journey as “a tough camping trip,” with the type of humorous and understated reflection that make him a perennially well-received and engaging speaker.

In addition, Saunders is the youngest person to ski solo to the North Pole (spending 72 days alone on the Arctic Ocean in conditions recognized as “the worst in 25 years”) and holds the record for the longest solo Arctic journey by a Briton. He has also climbed in the Nepalese Himalayas, worked as an instructor at the John Ridgway School of Adventure, and continues to compete as a cyclist and marathon runner into his forties. He is a worldwide ambassador for the Scouts and works closely with the UK youth development charity British Exploring Society.

From the main stage at TED to small screens around the world, Ben is a sought-after and acclaimed keynote speaker. Labeled a ‘master storyteller’ by TED, his three main-stage appearances at the conference have been viewed more than five million times. Through his real-time journal entries, stunning visual content, and earnest reflection, he takes audiences into the unknown. Whether he’s speaking to global corporations or pioneering start-ups, in-person or online, his honesty, humor, and humility enable people to find often surprising parallels between his experiences and their own. (As Ben points out, he “spent more time in spreadsheets than on skis for twenty years”.)

With an intimate knowledge of both the wonder and the fragility of the natural world, Saunders is a powerful advocate for its future. It is a thread which runs through the expeditions he leads, the stories he tells, the future pioneers he mentors, and through his next chapter as cofounding partner of Kintanna

Ventures, named after a remote Antarctic peak, and a business that identifies, invests in and accelerates climate tech innovation.

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