
JAMLING TENZING NORLAY

Son of Sherpa Tenzing, who climbed with Sir Edmund Hilary on the first ascent of Everest

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Topics

- Adventure
- Asia
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“I climbed Everest so that my children wouldn’t have to.”

Ever since Jamling Tenzing Norgay’s father, Tenzing Norgay, spoke these words to his son, Jamling had been seized by a passion to follow in his father’s historic footsteps — to step onto Mount Everest’s icy skin and learn the lessons she has to teach.

Destiny reserves the telling of some tales for certain people. In the illustrated presentation, *Touching My Father’s Soul An Odyssey to the Top of Everest*, Jamling brings to life a profound and compelling adventure, interweaving the lives of a family, a mountain and a people, and of climbers facing nearly insurmountable obstacles. It is a story of disaster, triumph, professionalism and the resilience of the human spirit.

Clearly, it takes an unusual level of aspiration to simply decide to attempt Everest. And to reach the summit and return safely to base camp demands extraordinary commitment and perseverance. On Everest, the stakes are high: Only one climber in seven who attempt it reaches the top. Of every five who do reach the summit, one dies trying.

The challenges are nearly overwhelming. Even veteran climbers face hypoxia (lack of oxygen — and the reduction in strength that accompanies it), altitude sickness, intestinal sickness, severe weight loss, homesickness, brutal weather conditions, recalcitrant porters, strained international group dynamics (11 teams crowded onto the mountain in 1996), and “objective dangers” such as being crushed by apartment-sized blocks of ice that litter the Khumbu Icefall, a glacier in motion.

As Jamling found on Everest, we find more than personal triumph and family honor. We discover that climbing this mountain safely requires leadership, planning, confidence, commitment, apprenticeship, experience, judgment, strength, persistence, patience, professionalism, teamwork, respect and humility — all in a measured balance. For each of these attributes, Jamling provides examples of how they were used to further his team’s effort, how they contributed to their safety, success and response to the tragedy.

Aspiration and ambition are essential, but the mountain cannot be climbed on hopes and dreams alone. In his talk, we learn about what it really takes to succeed, and we learn some of the lessons that this dangerous mountain has to teach us.

It turns out that Jamling did have to climb Everest in order to learn these lessons himself.