



The Price of Success

Getting Started on the Olympic Dream

By Ruben Gonzalez

In 1984, at the age of twenty-one, I decided I wanted to compete in the 1988 Calgary Olympics in the sport of luge. I'd never lugged before, so I flew to Lake Placid, New York, to learn at the Olympic track.

I was placed in the beginner luge class with fourteen other "aspiring Olympians." We were training in the old bobsled track, a mean concrete track, one half mile long and filled with wicked turns. We practiced on wheeled sleds at fifty miles per hour, wearing tennis shoes, shorts, a tee-shirt and a crash helmet. (I hate it when they call it that: if you crash, you are going straight to the hospital!)

This is the weeding-out process in the sport of luge. You might think lugers are all thrill-seekers, but the nuts and the daredevils don't last. They are just in it for the adrenaline rush, and don't have any staying power. The ones who make it are the analytical ones who understand that luge is a means to an end: the Olympics. The best lugers are the engineer types who also have the brains and guts. Either one of these characteristics alone is not great; but together, they make a great combination.

I'll never forget my first luge run. I was so pumped up! I remember thinking to myself, "I'm not a groupie anymore. I'm on the road to the Olympics!" At the bottom of the track, they didn't even give us a ride back up. We had to carry our sleds back up the track. But it didn't matter. I was on cloud nine.

The coaches purposely made it difficult on us: they didn't want to waste time with anyone who was not serious.

If you've ever played football, you know exactly what I mean: the first couple of weeks of football practice each season are brutal. The coach works the players to death because he wants to find out

who his real team will be.

There are many facets to success:

- You have to have a dream that takes your breath away, a dream you're willing to fight for.
- You have to believe in yourself.
- You have to take massive action with singleness of purpose.
- You have to have the attitude that you are willing to do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes.

Success is not convenient. In order to succeed, you will need to inconvenience yourself in a big way, for a long time. That's why it's so important to be driven, excited and passionate about your dream.

So, there I was, carrying my sled back up the mountain after my first wheeled luge run ever. Since it was summertime, there were a few tourists watching us train. As I walked back up the track after my first run, I came face to face with an older man who had just seen me slide down the mountain. Our eyes met and I told him, serious as a heart attack, "I'm going to be in the Olympics in four years." He looked at me, paused, and then said, "Son, I think you're going to make it. I can see the passion in your eyes."

Can people see the passion in your eyes when you tell them about your plans, dreams and aspirations? If you're not passionate about your dreams, how will you ignite passion in others?

The more passionate and enthusiastic you are about your dreams, the more others will believe in you and the more followers you'll attract. Your passion will fuel the commitment you'll need to turn mediocrity into excellence. Your passion will help you overcome any circumstance and become unstoppable.

We all have the capacity to get passionate. Unfortunately, most of us keep our enthusiasm bottled up. After all, what if you told someone about your dreams and they laughed at you? Or even worse, what if you didn't reach your dream? That would not feel good, would it? Who cares! Be enthusiastic anyway. Having small thinkers laugh at you is part of the price of success.

A funny thing started happening at the track. Every day there were fewer candidates showing up for practice. They were actually quitting on their dream. It blew my mind! Maybe they didn't want it as badly as I did. Maybe they were not smart enough to call someone when they were struggling. I don't know why they quit. They all had great reasons: they would rationalize, "It's too hard. It's too cold. It's too expensive. I miss my family. I don't like the luge."

I didn't like the luge either! I was killing myself out there. But I was willing to do it, regardless of the costs. Why? Because the luge was a vehicle to my Olympic dream.

Four years and a few broken bones later, I was walking into the opening ceremonies of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics. I felt happy and proud, but at the same time I felt sad for the ones who had quit. What were they feeling now? The regret must be eating them up. I'll bet every time they think about the Olympics they ask themselves, "What if I hadn't quit?"

I paid a huge price to make it to the Olympics. Everyone will pay a huge price for success. The price of success is non-negotiable—but the price of regret is a hundred times bigger. You might as well go for success. It's a lot more fun.

Which will you choose: instant gratification or long-term success? The quality of your life hinges on that choice.

I went on to compete in the 1992 and in the 2002 Winter Olympics. This year, when I competed at the 2010 Vancouver Games at the age of forty-seven, I became the first person to ever compete in four Winter Olympics each in a different decade.

Chase your dream and never quit!

RUBEN GONZALEZ is a four-time Olympian, a bestselling author, motivational speaker and business consultant.

www.networkingtimes.com/link/gonzalez (<http://www.networkingtimes.com/link/gonzalez>)

[← Previous \(2345.phtml\)](#)

[Contents \(toc3.phtml\)](#)

[Next → \(2347.phtml\)](#)

We appreciate your feedback. Write us at our helpdesk (<http://helpdesk.networkingtimes.com>).

[Privacy Policy \(/ntprivacy.php\)](#) | [Return Policy \(/ntreturns.php\)](#)

Copyright © 2016 Gabriel Media Group, Inc.