

PRINCIPALLY SPEAKING

We're All in This Together!

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Why Tommy Turned Back

A good friend of mine writes a monthly blog. I recently came across this entry from some years ago. I thought it was so good, I decided to share (with his permission) a portion of it with you. I hope you enjoy it.



My friend writes...

I recently watched a Netflix documentary called **'The Dawn Wall'** (Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edfw9ip9sCQ>) about world class climber Tommy Caldwell. Among other things, Tommy spent years planning to climb the Dawn Wall section of El Capitan, which was assumed by all to be impossible to ascend.

Along the way, Tommy enlisted a less experienced climber, Kevin Jorgeson, as his partner in the venture. As it turns out, Kevin could not keep up with the more experienced Tommy. Two thirds of the way up, Kevin was stuck on what was probably the most difficult section of the climb, trying over and over to traverse it. Meanwhile, Tommy continued upward, managing to make it past the final real barrier, approximately 100 feet below the top of El Capitan.

On the day he was set to complete the historic climb, Tommy woke up in tears, deciding that it would be better not to reach the top at all than to reach it without Kevin. So, Tommy rappelled down to Kevin and spent 5 or 6 days coaching him, encouraging him, waiting for him to get across the most difficult element in the most difficult of climbs.

Can you imagine how hard that would be? Day in and day out - dangling 2000 feet above the forest below in bad weather, waiting, sitting, sleeping, and eating bad food, trying not to signal disapproval, disappointment, or impatience which would make it even more difficult for Kevin to be successful?

I said to my wife, Jane, 'Wow. I never would do that. I'd finish the climb and then, maybe, go back and help my friend.' Tommy was far better than that. He understood that life is not finally about accomplishments, wonderful though they can be. **Life is about relationships."**



Brian Finger

Brian is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters