

A man with a tan complexion is climbing a tree. He is wearing a bright red short-sleeved athletic shirt with white panels on the sleeves and sides, and white shorts with a logo on the left leg. He has a white baseball cap with sunglasses perched on it. His right arm is extended upwards, gripping a tree branch. The background is a clear blue sky with green leaves and branches of the tree.

*This master team
player sports a Nike
Oregon Alti
Compass and a
deep tan from a life
spent outdoors*

With Trails Blazing

Seize life by the horns and
spend little time mulling
over self-limiting negativity

TAKE MY ADVICE

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Ian Adamson

Adventure racer, motivational speaker and author of *Runner's World Guide to Adventure Racing*

Ian Adamson believes that being a jack of all trades and sports can be a very good thing. Some of his secrets to success include unrelenting positive thinking, self-motivation and effective team dynamics. As a speaker to corporations, Ian believes that over the past few decades, there has been a realisation that education beyond the school walls include learning from the life experiences of others. He takes this opportunity to share with us a slice of life lived with unbreakable dedication to passion and the key to keep going strong and remaining at the top of his game.

What's your formula for success?

First of all, my measure of success is my personal happiness. If I am happy with what I'm doing, I'd consider myself to be successful. I am a highly ambitious person but I am not all caught up in goals because I do take the time to be contented with the things I'm doing. My formula is to work hardest on the things I'm passionate about which are adventure racing and being able to help other people. I believe that everyone should find something they can be passionate about in their jobs because that passion would be the reason that keeps them going.

In an environment like Singapore where commercial success is important, how can we enrich our lives beyond our careers?

One of the things I observe about Singapore is that it is a largely successful and wealthy country. The next step

is to move beyond commercial and academic success and to start enjoying the other things in life. This means taking some time away from work and school to enjoy what else the world has to offer and to find other methods of enhancing the physical, mental, cultural and spiritual aspects of life.

Why do you focus on the importance of teamwork in your career?

The essence of teamwork is the condensation of life skills. Every member of a team is there to contribute his share of knowledge and expertise and work with everyone else to attain a common goal. We find ourselves a part of some kind of a

team every day of our lives, in our families and with our friends. In an effective team, I believe in something called 'dynamic leadership'. While there may be a designated leader, the torch of leadership is passed to different team players at different points throughout the course of achieving the ultimate goal. This involves relinquishing personal ego for the good of the team, which is supposed to be a diplomatic and democratic environment.

What are the techniques you employ for managing team dynamics and resolving tension?

It is important to spot tension that is building before it gets to

ownership of the team goal and to see beyond personal issues. Of course at the end of it, if one person is negatively affecting the performance of everyone in your team despite your attempts to integrate him and if the team believes that it will perform better without him, then by all means, let him go.

And your take on motivation, how can a person maintain his drive even when it seems everything around him is falling apart?

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a point when people are arguing because argument is an enormous waste of time and energy. I find that humour—especially self-deprecating humour is a good way to slice through tense moments because if you can encourage people to laugh, they function better at resolving difficulties. However, if there is a member who is unable to integrate himself with a team, it is important to help him think in terms of "If you were in my position, what would you do?" This is a way for him to take

either positively or negatively. It's an attitude and a choice. Sometimes when we make a mistake, it's natural to regard the failure element but in that it's also important to realise that you have the opportunity to learn a lesson from it. It's the same with a difficult situation. You can look at it as a 'problem' or you could approach it as a 'challenge'. If you have that in mind, you'll find that facing your next task becomes an opportunity for you to make another attempt at succeeding rather than as chance to fail.