

**Survival Lessons from the Mountains**  
**(part 1 – lessons from the climbers)**

Doug Scott: Take it one feature at a time. Do that, get there, and then think about the next bit. Because to think about the whole thing was too mind boggling. Focus on the immediate task at hand, instead of wasting time and energy worrying about your plight.

Coral Bowman: Bowman was distracted by relationship issues, and felt rushed by weather concerns. It's a reminder that accidents usually happen when climbers lose their focus. And of course it's mandatory to double check your anchors and rappel set-up and that of your partners.

Joe Simpson: Decisions made before the climb started contributed to their fate. They were trying to go light, but should have packed extra food and stove fuel. For the sake of a few gas canisters we lost control of events and felt forced to descend in the dark. The other lesson: Humans can endure far more than what anyone might think is possible, as long as they don't give up.

Jean-Christophe LaFaille: The sum of everything I had done over the last 10 years got me out of that situation. His extensive soloing in the Apls prepared him, as did his down-climbing skills, something that is rarely practiced. Ingenuity also was a key: when obvious solutions are not available, consider every alternative.

Takeyasu Minamiura: Though some climbers understandably prefer to maximize the adventure of wilderness expeditions by climbing without a radio or sat phone, Minamiura surely would have perished if he could not have called for help.

Tommy Caldwell: When planning any expedition, there are so many potential hazards, at some point you have to throw caution to the wind and just go for it. We just hit it wrong in Kyrgyzstan. In the future, I would research political situations a bit more vigorously, and consider the things the State Department has to say more carefully. In general, I get more cautious the older I get.

Robert Bates: Few expeditions in history have demonstrated such selflessness and teamwork, and this was partly a result of Huston and Bates' careful selection of a small and harmonious team. "We entered the mountains as strangers, but we left as brothers". It pays to choose your partners carefully.

**Survival Lessons from the Mountains**  
**(part 2 – lessons from the rescuers)**

Problem: Haste

Solution: Speed up by improving efficiency, not by rushing or cutting corners.

Problem: Fatigue causes carelessness

Solution: Be strict with safety protocol at the end of long pushes.

Problem: The elements

Solution: Get a good weather forecast.. Carry all synthetic insulation – no down. Have at least an extra day of food and water beyond your most conservative estimate of ascent time. Have a reliable buddy on the ground keeping an eye on the weather and your progress and providing weather updates if necessary.

Problem: Inadequate back-up. Why the primary fails is often a mystery, but that's not the point, which is that it does happen.

Solution: Tie in short, use a back-up self-belay, care enough gear in the sizes needed to always have two strong points of protection, tie in a back-up before any transverse maneuver.

Problem: not prepared for rescue

Solution: Have a 2-way communication device so you can explain your exact situation. Take a wilderness first responder course, so you can care for an injured partner before rescue arrives and so you understand what the rescue alternative are. Be harnessed and fully dressed for a helo lift, with gear secured and ropes coiled so nothing is free to catch in a helo rotor.

Problem: Weakness in Mountain fundamentals

Solution: Learn the basics at lower elevations. Plan time to acclimatize, force yourself to eat and drink adequately, better decisions are made during a rest break than when on the move. Have a good ratio of killed people to novices – one experienced for every novice with two experienced is the minimum benchmark.

Problem: Summit Fever

Solution: Have a plan specifying a turnaround point, and trigger points for weather. Communicate it, agree on it and follow it. Take breaks and assess everyone's physical and mental states.