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## Climbing Kilimanjaro

How many of you believe that you can do anything you put your mind to?

How many of you know that you can do anything you put your mind to?

How many of you have proof? (Do you have any examples?)

Well I have one of my own. In 2002, I climbed Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. At 19,340 feet elevation, it is the highest freestanding mountain in the world, and the highest point in Africa. Depending on what source you read, only 30-50% of climbers reach the summit. My boyfriend was worried that I wouldn't make it, as I wasn't much of a hiker. But I was determined. And I believed that I could do it.

The entire hike took 7 days. And only one and a half of that was the way down. It was hard, both mentally and physically. Most of the days I chanted things to myself – "You can do it. You can do it." and "One foot in front of the other. One foot in front of the other." By the time we reached the summit I was exhausted. I hardly had time to be happy about making it because I knew that we still had to hike most of the way back down that day.

The first thing I did at the bottom was take off my hiking boots. Then I found food. I was beyond tired – and beyond happy. I couldn't explain why I had decided that I could do a seven-day hike when before that, the longest hike I'd ever done was maybe seven hours. I joked with my friends that climbing Kilimanjaro was probably one of the stupidest things I



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had ever done. Before I had done it I had believed I could do anything. Now I was dangerous. Now I had proof.

In all honesty it was not the first time I had proved it to myself. Nor was it to be the last. Since then I started my own company and I ran a marathon. Before that I had gone skydiving, became a certified scuba diver, and moved to Japan on my own. I am constantly proving to myself that I can do anything. It's not always about big challenges either. Sometimes it's something normal and everyday – telling myself I know I can figure out this code or I know I can win this proposal.

Now, I'm not superwoman. I don't always have a positive attitude. But without the right attitude, life is nothing but a fight. If I hadn't believed that I would make it to the top of Kilimanjaro, chances are I wouldn't have made it. It's the same in all areas of life. If you don't believe that you can make the sale, you probably won't. If you don't believe you can make more money this year, then you probably can't. But if you believe – you can accomplish anything.

Imagine the power of that. That by believing you can do something – you can do it. Now, there is a catch here. You really have to believe. You can't just say the words. And of course you have to do some work. I wouldn't have made it to the top of Kilimanjaro by belief alone. I still had to move my feet. You can't make a sale only by believing that you can – you still have to talk to a potential customer.



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However, think how much more powerful you will be if you believe in yourself. How much more fulfilled your life will be if you believe it can be. Why not constantly challenge yourself to prove that you can do anything?

Now, you may have noticed that most of my proof is done with physical challenges. That's the area where I have the least amount of self-confidence. Even now, with a varsity letter in crew, having climbed the highest mountain in Africa, and having run a marathon, I do not think of myself as athletic. I think of it as something I work very hard on. I can do these physical challenges, but only because I believe I can and I work hard to achieve my goals.

By accomplishing these physical challenges I remind myself that I really can do anything. Even in the area I have the least amount of self-confidence. When I start feeling negative, or like I can't do things in my everyday life, I can remember the feeling I had when I finished the climb. I can remember that if I could do that – I can do anything.

For other people, physical challenges are no big deal. Maybe your biggest proof to yourself was finishing school, or starting your company, or being a parent. (Do you have any examples?)

The big challenges are there to remind us on a larger scale the power of believing in ourselves. Now, you may not all be going out and climbing Kilimanjaro, but hopefully, you are all challenging yourselves daily – constantly proving to yourself that you can do anything. (Do you have any examples of something you've done recently that was a challenge?)



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If you haven't yet proved to yourself that you can do anything, find a Kilimanjaro of your own. Find a challenge that's big enough that you can prove to yourself that you can do anything you put your mind to. Finish a marathon. Go back to school. Whatever it is, know that if you believe in yourself and do the work, you can accomplish it. And after that you will be dangerous. You will be unstoppable. Because you will know that you can do anything, no matter what anyone else may think, you can do anything you put your mind to.