

SPEAKERS OF NOTE

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Rachel Colenso (nee Kelsey)

Rachel is not just a climber, she is one of the most extraordinary female adventurers in the world. In a bid to push the boundaries of modern female exploration, promote Eco Tourism and sustainable development, Rachel designed and led the 'Girls Go Guyana project. In January 2006 the Girls Go Guyana team successfully completed their mission, becoming the first westerners to complete the exploration of an ancestral trail through remote jungle in Guyana. In February 2006 Rachel was a member of the winning team in The 2006 Belize Challenge, a multi-discipline, multiday, extreme challenge, ending in a three day survival phase, (living on worms and palm nuts) followed by a full, jungle marathon. Rachel is an experienced motivational speaker well used to coaching and inspiring small and large groups to go beyond their limits. She also has a habit of abseiling onto conference stages! Rachel also competed in the Eco Challenge 2000, the zenith of all adventure races that draws the best explorers and adventure racers from around the globe.

Rachel conceived of the all female "Girls Go Guyana" expedition in 2003, in a bid to push the boundaries of modern female exploration, promote Eco Tourism and sustainable development. In January 2006 Girls Go Guyana team successfully completed their mission, becoming the first westerners to complete the exploration of an ancestral trail through remote jungle in Guyana. The women became the first people to summit an unclimbed jungle mountain in the Kanuku Range, and open a new route up the North Western face of Schoenberg's Peak, with the help of traditional Amerindians Indian guides and hunters from the Macushi tribe. The team continue to support The Prince's Trust Women Working Campaign, which aims to link successful women in business, with those who have started with difficulties in life.

From February to March Rachel was a member of the winning team in The Belize Challenge 2006, a multi-discipline, multiday, extreme challenge, ending in a three day survival phase, (living on worms and palm nuts) followed by a full, jungle marathon. In a very tough race, Rachel lost lots of weight, gained large blisters, and further insight into successful strategies for succeeding as a team! The event has multiple Airings on Channel 4 and Sky in April 2006.

Rachel was born in South Africa and spent her infancy in the Okavango where her parents ran safaris. Together with her brother they explored nature and learned survival skills. In 1993, whilst at Wits University, Rachel lost her brother in a tragic accident. Determined not to let this destroy her life, and bring something positive to her family, she set herself a challenge. Still suffering from a spinal injury sustained from training, she persevered through the pain and went on to win the 1993 South African National Climbing Championships, taking the cup home to her parents in Cape Town. She

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continued with this success to win again in April 1994, when she was offered sponsorship to compete in the World Cup.

Rachel's physique and prowess has secured her roles in many television programmes and films for sport, adventure, stuntwork, and advertising campaigns. Rachel was a competitor in Channel 4's Superhuman programme aired in April 2004. The programme identified the most intelligent, fearless and attractive people in Britain! A unique once-in-a-lifetime scientific competition, the participants required the reactions of a fighter pilot, the physical stamina of a marathon runner and the emotional intelligence of a hostage negotiator! Rachel was tested to the absolute boundaries of human ability across 15 mental, physical, psychological, creative and social functions! In December 2005 Rachel and her husband were filmed as the presenters for a BBC film based in Namibia.

As someone who really does walk the talk, other recent projects have included an Everest Expedition in 2003 in which she was part of the support team that helped Glenn Shaw set a new altitude record for a paraplegic climber. Glenn has suffered from birth with 'Brittle Bone Disease', a simple fall could cripple him for life or kill him outright. The aim of the expedition was for the team to assist Glenn in achieving his ambition of climbing to Base Camp situated at 5500m (18,000ft) on the North Face of Mount Everest in Tibet.

In September 2004 Rachel and her husband set out to climb one of the highest vertical granite faces in the world, "The North Face of Half Dome" in Yosemite National Park. They did this to raise funds for the building of a refuge for the homeless and needy in Accra, Ghana. The ascent took two days and a half during which time they slept like bats, hanging from harnesses on the sheer rock wall. The rock face is almost a mile high of vertical desert and the team had to haul up days of water and supplies with them!

Rachel is an experienced motivational speaker who, over the last few years has spoken in numerous countries on three continents. She is well used to coaching and inspiring small and large groups to go beyond their limits