



BY JULIE MEHTA

# Q & A

with Phil Keoghan

The Amazing Race host talks about how we can all live with a spirit of adventure and achieve just a “wee bit” of the impossible

**Phil Keoghan** has visited more than 100 countries, set a world record for group bungee jumping and renewed his wedding vows while hand-feeding sharks. Phil's passion for life arose out of a brush with death at age 19. Scuba-diving through a shipwreck in his native New Zealand, he panicked and blacked out. After being rescued, Phil wrote out a list of things he wanted to do before he died. Since then, he's kept updating his list—and fulfilling his dreams. His latest accomplishments? The book *No Opportunity Wasted*, a guide to creating and carrying out your own life list, and a TV show of the same name that gives people three days and \$3000 to make their dreams happen.

**Q** Why do you think it's so important to make a list of things you want to do in life?

We all talk about things that we want to do but they never really become concrete because we never commit to them. I think by putting things down on paper, you're taking the first step in committing to make something happen. It's almost like writing a contract.

**Q** The first list you made had a lot

**of extreme adventures on it. And you urge people to take on physical challenges. What's behind that?** The reason I push so hard for people to do things like bungee jumping and skydiving is that I am encouraging them to exercise their mental-leaping muscle. The bungee jumping and the skydiving only serve as metaphors for choices that they make in other areas of their lives. So when they leap off that bridge, they are leaping into the unknown, and having done something like that they are then more likely to leap in other unexplored areas of life.

**Q You've said that your biggest leap of faith wasn't diving off a bridge. It was moving to America to try to make it in television.** That was a big deal for me. I left a lucrative career in New Zealand. I felt like I could do more and I wanted to put myself up against the biggest competition in the world in the entertainment area.

**Q Has your life list evolved over the years?** It's become less selfish as I've gotten more mature, and more about doing things with others and for others. The list should change—maybe you put something on your list five years ago that doesn't seem relevant today.

**Q How do you keep focused on the goals on your list?** A lot of times, when I look at people's lists, I see that the thing they want to do most is the thing they're most scared of. Fear of start-

ing a new business because it might fail. Fear of starting a new relationship because they've been hurt before. A lot of what we don't do is because of fear so it's important that you build a support team around yourself. Lean on people a wee bit to help you and perhaps you'll find their biggest fear is something you can help them with.

**Q Do you think the biggest fear for a lot of people is the fear of failure?** Yeah, and I think maybe I don't see failure in the same way that other people do. Failure to me is only a step in trying to attain your goal.

**Q So in that case the only real failure is giving up?** To me the only real failure is in not attempting. There are a lot of people who live with regret because they never ever try. I know people who've tried a business that has not been a success, but they have used that as a teaching tool in making something else a success.

**Q There's this great anecdote on your website about a street performer you saw in Santa Monica with your daughter. Can you tell us about what he showed you?** This guy was wrapped in chains. If anybody had looked at him, they would have said, "There's absolutely no way he's going to get free." But he slowly performed these miracle moves and got out. I think that's very symbolic of how sometimes we make assumptions that something is impossible



Physical challenges give Phil the confidence to make leaps of faith in other areas.

to do. There are some people—what I call “Nah” people—that will just drain you of energy. And there are other people who rather than concentrating on what they don't have and what they can't do, they concentrate on what they do have and what they can do. And when you meet somebody who's what I call a NOW person, it's just so invigorating. It's a mindset that you notice. The glass is half full and everything is a possibility.

**Q This doesn't just apply to big goals, but to even the little things in everyday life?** Some dreams require a lifetime of dedication. But there's also a lot of things you can do to enhance the quality of your life that do not require a tremendous amount of time and money. Think of those smaller things! My whole

philosophy is using imagination as your currency. One of my favorite stories was sent to me by a man who wanted to take his wife out for a special dinner but couldn't really afford it. They'd always dreamed of going to Hawaii, so the husband and the kids decided they would create a mini Hawaii at their house. They set up this dinner on the roof with the sun going down. They got some palm trees, some plants and followed a Hawaiian recipe and gave her leis. He could have taken her to the best restaurant and it wouldn't have been anywhere near as memorable. Sometimes it's just a matter of going against the grain a wee bit, thinking a little differently. Being original.

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