

David Lim's illness and hospitalisation changed the course of his life



DAVID LIM

Climb Every Mountain

David Lim never thought he would fall in love with mountaineering. Having been involved in competitive cross-country running as a teen, the 42-year-old Lim, while at Cambridge University, competed in sweep-oared rowing. When he returned to Singapore after working in London for a few years he looked for a sport to capture his imagination in the same way. It was difficult: "Singapore then did not have good club infrastructure, equipment or the depth of experience in many sporting fields," he says.

This was before he chanced upon a book about mountaineering wisdom by a British

author which changed his life. "I was introduced to rock-climbing later by an ex-colleague in Britain." He says. "On my way back to Singapore, I spent five weeks learning how to ski and climb in the Swiss and French Alps in winter. That was the start of my mountaineering career."

Since then, Lim has been on 55 expeditions on some of the most challenging peaks around the world. After he scaled the tallest mountain in the world as expedition leader he returned to Singapore with a disconcerting unease in his stomach. It aggravated into an inability to turn

the ignition of his car. A series of tests ensued after which he was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome. "It's a very rare nerve disorder. The chance of getting it is one in 100,000. The chance of getting the very serious variation that I contracted is one in two million," he says.

Lim was hospitalised for six months, 42 days of which were spent in the intensive care unit. A year later he regained his health but was disabled from below the right knee. He has since lost partial control of his left hand and left leg after which he learnt to do the things we take

"Although I'm disabled now, I'm enabled in many new ways"

for granted all over again. "I didn't accept it for a while," he says. "But you think about it after a few months and think maybe God has a different plan for your life."

The illness changed Lim's life: he was inspired to leave the corporate job in the company he had been with for nine years to start his own business. Drawing from his harrowing and life-changing experience, he now runs motivational workshops through his company Everest Motivation Team and has authored two books — *Mountain to Climb* and *Against Giants*.

Lim feels a new sense of fulfilment and meaning in life and believes that, had it not been for his illness, he would not have achieved what he has. "My illness and subsequent disability are 'dark gifts' from God. They allowed me to do what I do now. They're 'gifts' that were unwanted and came at a high price, but now I can be a catalyst in human motivation. It's given me a totally new life and, though I'm disabled now, I'm enabled in many new ways."

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