



# LIFE IS FOR LIVING

Having achieved more than most people dream of in a lifetime, Manley Hopkinson is a man to whom adventure is a way of life.

**B**y his own admission, Manley Hopkinson has a low boredom threshold. The son of a naval commander, adventure is in his blood and he relishes every new challenge.

From being part of the team that won the inaugural race to the magnetic North Pole (involving 400 miles on skis pulling a 120lb sledge), to skippering of one of 12 yachts competing in the BT Global Challenge, life in Manley Hopkinson world is far from dull.

Speaking to him you cannot help but be swept along on a relentless tide of enthusiasm and wonder - and it is this infectious enjoyment of life that makes him one of the most inspirational and compelling speakers for some of the country's top businessmen.

"I've never had a particular plan other than I didn't want to toe the normal line and some of my decisions have been financially diabolical," he laughs. The wealth of the experience not the financial gain is the only motivation for Manley - who has sailed

most of his life and first skippered a boat across the Channel at the age of 16, crossing the Atlantic while still a teenager. "I love the beauty of the sea. The best place to be is mid-ocean, it's exquisite and you feel so close to your roots."

Surprisingly for an active child, Manley decided to follow his artistic instincts and his grandfather into architecture. Unsurprisingly he didn't last long: "I had this vision that I would be asked to create buildings on unlimited budgets, but the reality was very different and very restrictive." From there he joined the navy, a way of life he knew something about as his father was made commander at the young age of 34.

Four years into the navy he needed another challenge and applied to both the Marines and the Hong Kong Marine Police. "On the same week I had a letter from both saying, 'Can you join?' It was either South Devon or South China - not a hard call - and it was fantastic. The Eighties were very much long shorts, long socks and long drinks!"



“People often come up to me and say that a talk has changed their life – and that makes everything worthwhile.”



Unusually Manley thrives as both a team leader and a team player. “I like to test myself both as a team leader and a player, I am very happy in a team dynamic but I wouldn’t enjoy being a single handed sailor.”

Being part of the right team is paramount and so Manley is planning to be on board the Crean Antarctic Expedition. This journey honours Tom Crean an intrepid explorer who was not chosen for the final 170 mile push to the Pole, during which Scott subsequently perished. It is widely thought that had Crean been involved, Scott would have survived.

“I was approached by Anthony Crean: Tom’s relative saying that he wanted to go the Pole and finish the journey and he wanted to launch a team.” With a journey to the Arctic under his belt, Manley was recruited for his expedition experience. “The risks are far more than in the Arctic where you get sea level winds. In the Antarctic you are at 3 km and the winds come across the Pole, making it very unpredictable.

“The planning is now excellent and the people on board are working very hard to secure the finance and the structure and we are looking at making the trip in Christmas 2007. We will go to the same spots as the original expedition and be wearing the same clothing, using the same equipment and even eating the same food.”

While using wooden skis will not be too much of a hardship, the rations: pemmican ( a block of lard containing dried meat and fruits) leave a lot to be desired. Filmed for TV, the expedition will raise money to provide disadvantaged young people with opportunities for adventure.

As if helping to plan an Antarctic expedition were not work enough, Manley also runs 4x4 driving

expeditions with his brother as well as his own business: Boating Partners which brings together business and boats to facilitate exciting racing and corporate sponsorship possibilities. Currently working on a secret major world event which, “will have the same effect on sailing as Kerry Packer had on cricket,” Manley has more than enough to keep him busy.

Talking about his adventures gives him a chance to relive some fantastic memories. His inspirational speaking came about by chance after he was asked at the last minute to stand in for yachtsman Chay Blyth. Some may have balked at being thrust into the limelight but the experience gave Manley a taste for public speaking and an opportunity to be “entertaining and edifying.”

“I thorough enjoy it and I get enormous satisfaction in reliving the events, if you don’t talk about them there’s a danger in forgetting what you did!”

Manley’s enthusiasm and inspirational talks go down a storm with typically cynical business people who have seen everything before: “People often come up to me and say that a talk has changed their life – and that makes everything worthwhile.”

He wants to pass on his enthusiasm and quest for adventure to his children and would like to sail the world with his family before the youngsters are old enough to go to school. “You get such a different perspective on life when you are sailing, it’s almost a spiritual experience.”

Many people tied to a routine normal existence may envy Manley his luck, but as he rightly says: “Luck is where preparation meets opportunity.”

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