

Daniel Hughes

Expert on Leadership and Decision-Making in High-Pressure Environments

Having summited Everest, been one of the youngest ever to be “badged” into the SAS (UK Special Forces) and one of the top Duathletes in the world, Daniel knows what it is to exist on the edge of human endurance. He ascribes to the belief that; no book can prepare you for your mental and physical limits and once conquered, you can completely reset your boundaries of what you believed possible. As an active 787 Dreamliner pilot and entrepreneur, blue chip companies now send their senior executives to be coached in leadership and decision making in high pressure situations by Daniel.

A natural orator, Hughes’ stories takes the audience by the hand and leads them through enthralling and unfaded tales of human accomplishment. He is unwaveringly authentic and easily connects with people, while his passion and confidence captivates imaginations, allowing the audience to feel as though they were alongside him. Best described as ‘having a wicked sense of humour and a reflective awareness’, Daniel is able to effortlessly read and command a room.

Having suffered enormous adversity at school that resulted in introversion and a lack of self-belief, his catalyst to change was joining the military. Here he excelled and soon volunteered for SAS selection, the UK’s elite Special Forces. Ironically, had it not been for the hardship he faced, he never would have discovered the mental strength and resilience that he would require for this task. While being tested to destruction, and injured, he walked the final 30km sideways, losing all his toenails and skin on his back and at 23 successfully gained a place in the SAS, founding his belief that anything is possible. He served for nearly seven years, where he operated all over the world, had multiple specialties and was promoted to an instructor.

It was perhaps intrepid curiosity that meant Daniels next feat was summiting Everest as a means of raising £1m for impoverished South American children. Facing a year of declines from companies to support his mission, Daniels rugged determination bore an idea: to do the first ever live video broadcast from the summit. Within months he had over 30 sponsors including BBC News Channel, HTC, Coldplay, Gatorade, Nike, and Microsoft. Overcoming numerous technological and logistical issues, Hughes built out a team of 268 that enabled him to deliver the ‘world’s highest video broadcast’, with the equipment now featured in The London Science Museum.

Daniel never strayed far from his relentless pursuit of excellence and soon found himself competing in duathlon for Team GB. Having ranked in the top section of the world in 2014, he decided to harness his extraordinary experiences for use in the corporate sector. Having lived at both ends of the risk spectrum, Hughes is able to bring a unique and invaluable perspective to his work as a pilot and corporate instructor. The NASA based frameworks which we use to mitigate risk and make decisions under pressure in the flight deck, have been invaluable to building a vast array/complete repertoire of experience” he says.

Going on to found Relgnite, an experiential leadership company, Daniel draws on these frameworks, his diverse skill set and classical theories from Daniel Goleman and Eric Berne to assess emotional intelligence and behaviour. His programme is designed to challenge, appraise and transform mind-sets in senior executives around the world. In his spare time, Daniel acts as a Global Educator for Microsoft, delivering educational programmes to empower the next generation.