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# To the Last Breath: A Memoir of Going to Extremes

By Dr. Francis Slakey



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**“When a Georgetown physics professor saw his existence becoming mundane, he actually did something about it. This exciting, moving memoir documents his quest to climb the highest mountains and surf every ocean on earth” (*Entertainment Weekly* “Must List”).**

In 1997, a Georgetown University physics professor set out to scale the highest peak of every continent and surf every ocean. Over the next 12 years, every escape from death brought him closer to life.



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## **To the Last Breath: A Memoir of Going to Extremes** By Dr. Francis Slakey Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #733297 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Simon Schuster
- Published on: 2013-05-28
- Released on: 2013-05-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.13" h x .80" w x 5.81" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**Amazon Best Books of the Month, May 2012:** When Francis Slakey committed himself to climbing the highest peak on every continent and surfing every ocean, his aspirations were purely selfish: he was after both glory (nobody had done both before) and a worthy excuse to maintain the isolation he had carefully nurtured since childhood. But as he traveled the world in the often reckless pursuit of his goals, fate--a concept that, as a physicist, he completely disavowed--seemed to intervene to chip away at the walls he'd built around himself. And when he narrowly avoids a deadly ambush at an Indonesian gold mine, he's forced to question every choice he's made. The adventure pieces of *To the Last Breath*, are first-rate and remarkable in themselves; whether he's dangling on the face of El Capitan after catastrophic equipment failure, summiting Everest solo in a blizzard, or leaping from the roof of a building into a shallow swimming pool as a troubled teenager, Slakey's prose is taut and intense, worthy of the genre's best. But additionally, Slakey has threaded an epic adventure tale with a much more personal journey, creating a single, riveting tale of self-discovery. --*Jon Foro*

From [Booklist](#)

From the moment as a teen that he jumped off a four-story apartment building into a narrow, shallow swimming pool, taking calculated risks with his body became a habit for physics professor Slakey. He was always confident that through planning he could cheat death and injury from any height. Wanting to outdo all other daredevils, he decided not only to climb the highest peak on every continent but also to surf every ocean. Scarred by his mother's early death, he resolved to form no emotional attachments that could slow this quest or, more important, break his heart again. Vowing never to marry, buy a house, or have children, he worked just to support his globetrotting. In his lively memoir, Slakey recounts how, after a series of extraordinary experiences transformed his thinking, he began to involve himself in political causes, improve his teaching, and break all his vows. For readers who like adventure and romance. --Rick Roche

Review

"Intrepid Francis Slakey scales each continent's highest peak, surfs every ocean, and lives to tell the tale in *To The Last Breath*, an exhilarating thrill show for armchair adventurers who prefer air conditioning to thin air." —*Vanity Fair*

"When a Georgetown physics professor saw his existence becoming mundane, he actually did something about it. This exciting, moving memoir documents his quest to climb the highest mountains and surf every ocean on earth." —*Entertainment Weekly* "Must List"

"A dramatic account of summiting Everest, getting ambushed in Indonesia and enduring isolation and spiritual deprivation in Antarctica. . . . *To the Last Breath* is a moving tale of self-discovery, right to the last word." —*People*

"Francis Slakey's exciting, perilous adventures from El Cap to the Indian Ocean are at first just a stunt—the cool, calculated goal of a hardcore scientist. But when the acts of grace and heroism of others open his heart, *To the Last Breath* becomes a tribute to the remarkable connectedness that binds the world and its people together." —Norman Ollestad, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Crazy For The Storm*

"*To The Last Breath* is, in a word, breathtaking. Dr. Slakey takes you with him as he blasts through blizzards

and dangles by frayed lines to get to the top of the highest mountains. He also adds the science of surfing to your body of knowledge. I felt his transformation as if it were my own: from restrained physics professor who gives his students equations instead of himself, to humane, caring soul, willing to love and to lose and to truly enter the world. Slakey's story has the adrenaline of high adventure, but more importantly, it delivers the thrill of self-discovery.” —**Lucinda Franks, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and author of *My Father's Secret War***

“Francis Slakey must have nine lives. In a book that is compelling and insightful from the get-go, Slakey takes the reader along on his adventures as he comes to terms with his mother's death and learns what really matters in life.” (*Washington Post*)

“An adrenaline shot of a book.” (*The Week*)

“More than another tale of high octane machismo.” (*New York Times*)

“A love story, an athletic journey, an introspective process of discovery.” (*Shelf Awareness*)

“Part adventure travel, part call to action for anyone who cares about making a better world.” (*Molly Brown, Kirkus Reviews*)

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Elizabeth Brown:**

Information is provisions for anyone to get better life, information nowadays can get by anyone on everywhere. The information can be a information or any news even restricted. What people must be consider any time those information which is from the former life are challenging to be find than now is taking seriously which one is appropriate to believe or which one the particular resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you understand it as your main information you will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen in you if you take *To the Last Breath: A Memoir of Going to Extremes* as the daily resource information.

#### **Henry Evans:**

Spent a free time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, going to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book may be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the guide untitled *To the Last Breath: A Memoir of Going to Extremes* can be fine book to read. May be it may be best activity to you.

#### **Michael Due:**

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skill or thinking skill perhaps analytical thinking? Then you are receiving problem with the book compared to can satisfy your small amount of time to read it because all of this time you only find publication that need more time to be examine. To the Last Breath: A Memoir of Going to Extremes can be your answer mainly because it can be read by you actually who have those short free time problems.

**David Hosford:**

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