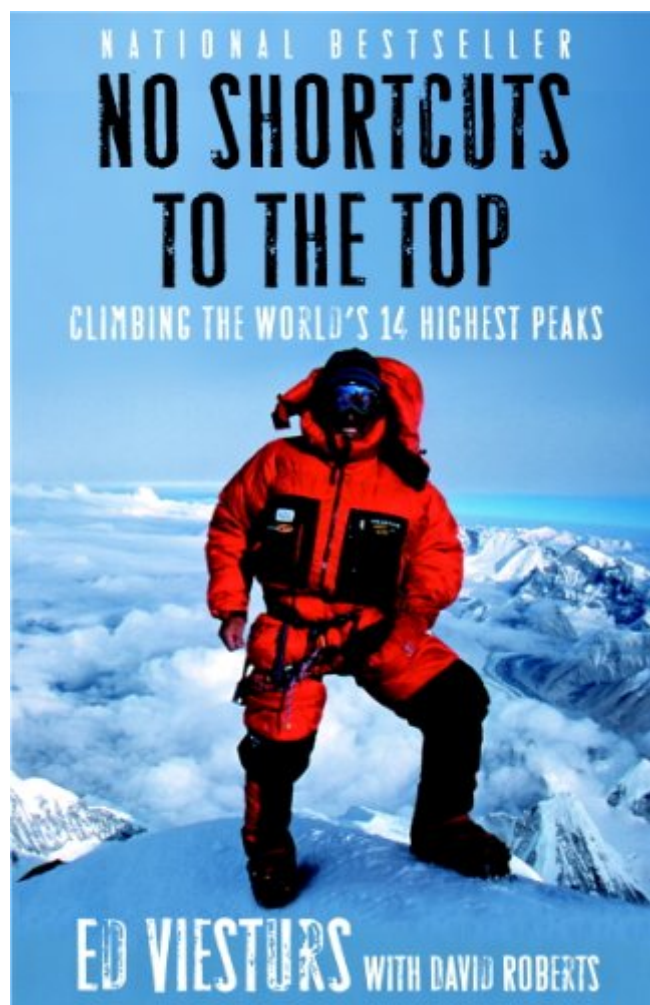


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No Shortcuts To The Top: Climbing The World's 14 Highest Peaks



Synopsis

This gripping and triumphant memoir from the author of *The Mountain* follows a living legend of extreme mountaineering as he makes his assault on history, one 8,000-meter summit at a time. For eighteen years Ed Viesturs pursued climbing's holy grail: to stand atop the world's fourteen 8,000-meter peaks, without the aid of bottled oxygen. But *No Shortcuts to the Top* is as much about the man who would become the first American to achieve that goal as it is about his stunning quest. As Viesturs recounts the stories of his most harrowing climbs, he reveals a man torn between the flat, safe world he and his loved ones share and the majestic and deadly places where only he can go. A preternaturally cautious climber who once turned back 300 feet from the top of Everest but who would not shrink from a peak (Annapurna) known to claim the life of one climber for every two who reached its summit, Viesturs lives by an unyielding motto, "Reaching the summit is optional. Getting down is mandatory." It is with this philosophy that he vividly describes fatal errors in judgment made by his fellow climbers as well as a few of his own close calls and gallant rescues. And, for the first time, he details his own pivotal and heroic role in the 1996 Everest disaster made famous in Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air*. In addition to the raw excitement of Viesturs's odyssey, *No Shortcuts to the Top* is leavened with many funny moments revealing the camaraderie between climbers. It is more than the first full account of one of the staggering accomplishments of our time; it is a portrait of a brave and devoted family man and his beliefs that shaped this most perilous and magnificent pursuit.

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Customer Reviews

Interesting and informative. Ed Viesturs is an adventurer - and with one heck of an accomplishment. He is one of the few humans who have summited (and returned - an important part of his mantra) all 14 of the Earth's 8,000 meter peaks. This book is the Ed Story and weaves his life into the telling of his accomplishment. It is well written and easy to follow. The action - mountaineering's close calls, including Viesturs' famous self-arrest on K-2, is gripping and presented tightly without over-dramatizing the events. It does occasionally get repetitive - after all there are 14 mountains over about 20 attempts that make up the story. While mentioning all, Viesturs focuses on a few to highlight his career. Career is an accurate description. Viesturs gave everything to climb, starting with subsistence employment and basement housing to be able to afford his dream. As his fame grew, and the real chance to summit all of the 8,000ers developed, the author was able to piece together corporate sponsorships and motivational speaking opportunities in order to sustain himself - at a quite comfortable level in the end one is left to believe. This isn't just a mountain tale book. The strength is Viesturs describing his approach to risk and the often dangerous and fatal activity that has defined his life. His self-discipline and ability to make the right choices in trying situations is the real story here. Viesturs turned away several times just yards away from summits when the weather or terrain didn't feel right - a discipline too many of his colleagues ignore when "summit fever" overcomes many after weeks assaulting a mountain with the top in plain sight and a short (relative term to be sure) climb away. The author would have to go back, often multiple times and over a period of years, to tag those hold-out summits - a time consuming, costly, and frustrating endeavor but one borne of an approach that kept Ed Viesturs alive. Not only does this book give the armchair mountaineer good insight into what is involved in all facets of a climb, it is an excellent example of a disciplined and consistent approach to significant undertakings.

I liked the book. I enjoy reading about climbing the high peaks even though I've never done any of it and I have no desire to do so. The author did a good job of describing what it's like on the high

peaks. I like his very conservative approach to climbing. The timeline is a bit choppy in places, back and forth in time to the point it was a bit confusing to me at times. He also uses a lot of technical terms that the average reader won't know but X-Ray will generally give a good definition and there is a complete glossary in the back as well as a timeline. He does pat himself on the back some but it's his book and he did accomplish a lot. If you enjoy the high mountaineering books, you will likely enjoy this one.

This book is basically the story of the author's mountain climbing career. It describes his early days as a guide in the Pacific Northwest and carries on through to the history and description of the expeditions that eventually lead to the author summiting all 14 mountain peaks on earth that rise above 8000 meters. During this journey the reader is also educated about the history of big league mountaineering and the individuals involved. Most of us will (by choice or otherwise), never be able to experience climbing an 8000 meter mountain and this book is your chance to hear the story from a true expert. The book is easy to read and holds the reader's attention. I found it fascinating.

Fascinating account of the passion, endurance and patience that Ed Viesturs displayed in his dream to summit the world's highest peaks. For me, his humanity and humility in difficult situations was just as interesting as his intelligence, strength and agility as a mountaineer. I absolutely recommend this book to other people who love stories of adventure.

The biggest lesson I learned from this book: You must pay the price in life regardless your endeavor. Kudos to Ken for paying that price! This book is so readable with a mystery like quality. Persistence, preparation and restraint, along with some luck, are ingredients for success.

Captivating story. Total dedication and an immense respect for the mountains he conquered and for those who joined him in the journey. Swallowing his pride and drive to succeed more than once in the name of 'getting back down the mountain safely' is different than the public perception that extreme mountain climbers often portray.

After coming across Ed's/Nat.Geo.'s "The Will to Climb" Youtube a few weeks ago, I had to get his book. It wasn't a disappointment, and to anyone fascinated by mountaineering and what makes mountaineers tick, I highly recommend this. Also, it is a true display of what someone can do who follows his heart versus what looks good on paper. In this sense the book is truly inspirational.

I've read many mountaineering books covering Everest, but none about the 14 peaks. Well written and interesting by a thoughtful and caring man!

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