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Highpointing: It's Not Just For Mountaineers

By Diane Winger

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Mount Sunflower, Kansas. Ebright Azimuth, Delaware. Hawkeye Point, Iowa. Hoosier High Point, Indiana.

They may not have the name recognition of Mount McKinley (Denali), Mount Rainier, Mount Whitney, and Mount Hood. And they certainly are far, far easier to get to! But all these places have something in common. Each is the highest natural spot in its state.

Welcome to the world of Highpointing. Thousands of otherwise sane people have set out to drive, stroll, hike, or climb to the highest point in each of the 50 states. Many never plan to make it to the tougher highpoints like Denali (in Alaska), Rainier (in Washington) or Granite (in Montana), but they've discovered the fun in planning trips to locate the unusual "summits" of Sunflower (located on the flatlands of Kansas), Ebright Azimuth (yes, a suburban neighborhood can be the site of a state highpoint), Hawkeye Point (located at the end of a feeding trough on a farm in Iowa), and Lakewood Park (turn right at the restrooms, and stroll a short way along a path in a Florida park).

Of the 50 state highpoints, 14 are drive-ups. You drive right up to the highpoint, or so close to it you could toss a rock and hit it. Probably 8 more are extremely easy, involving a round-trip walk or hike of 30 minutes or less. In fact, only about 9 or 10 of the state highpoints involve more than a hike along a good trail. OK, some of these trails require long hikes that may gain a fair amount of elevation. Still, if you're in good condition, and can walk for many hours, you can manage to check off about 40 state highpoints!

Why do people get into highpointing? It's a great way to see our country. You'll find highpoints in popular resort areas (Mount Mansfield at Stowe in Vermont), National Parks (Clingmans Dome, in Great Smoky Mountains, Tennessee), and State Parks (Mauna Kea in Hawaii; Harney Peak in Custer State Park, South Dakota). But many highpoints are well off the beaten path, and will take you to beautiful and interesting parts of the country that you may have otherwise overlooked. Eagle Mountain

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is in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of Minnesota. Oklahoma's highpoint, Black Mesa, is near the very tip of the panhandle. Taum Sauk Mountain in Missouri is in a beautiful region of the Ozarks. Visit when the autumn leaves are at their peak, climb the nearby Lookout Tower, and prepare to be thrilled.

There are also many interesting things to see and do near the highpoints. Take in a concert by the Boston Symphony Orchestra or Boston Pops at Tanglewood in Massachusetts. Looking for something less cultured? How about the Boll Weevil Monument in Florida? Or the Wisconsin Concrete Park, featuring concrete sculptures of horses, soldiers, and heroes? If food and drink are more to your liking, don't miss a tour of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory in Vermont, Great Adirondack Brewing Company in New York, or stop in at the Hilltop Restaurant in L'Anse, Michigan for the most decadent (and largest) sweet rolls you can imagine.

Happy Highpointing, everyone!

Diane Winger is co-author of "Highpoint Adventures - The Complete Guide to the 50 State Highpoints", and other guidebooks. Visit

www.HighpointAdventures.com

to learn more about hiking, climbing, and

travel adventures in the great outdoors.

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The Most Courageous People in the World.

By Graham and Julie

Who are the most courageous people in the world? Armed services? Coastguards? Astronauts? Firepersons? Explorers? Mountaineers?Sports? For us, the most courageous people in the world are those who are committed to discovering how they can get the best out of themselves. Individuals, who are committed to learning about and changing, their habits and beliefs in order to fulfil their dreams. Individuals, who are fighting the dreaded disease of complacency.

Complacency is one of the deadliest diseases you face in your life. It stifles growth. Kills companies. Destroys the economy of your Country. Changes and destroys your relationship with your partner, friends, children and colleagues.

If you:

have a feeling of self-satisfaction.

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find you are low in energy and enthusiasm.

have become unaware of danger, trouble, or controversy in your life.

find it difficult to accept positive criticism and acknowledge your mistakes.

take ages making a decision, especially those that will change your future or may be unpopular.

go through the day with an attitude of `that's good enough' or `that will do'.

Then, in a nutshell, complacency has you in it's hands and is destroying you.

Complacency is taking away your spirit.

How do you overcome complacency? What's the treatment?

Napoleon Hill says the treatment is: Control Your Own Thoughts.

"You are searching for the magic key that will unlock the door to the source of power; and you have the key in your own hands, and you make use of it the moment you learn to control your own thoughts."

The magic key is NOT to focus on and control your negative and wasteful thoughts but to develop your necessary and positive thoughts.

Negative and wasteful thoughts, like blame and worry, have no useful purpose. Their job is to reduce your energy and your potential. To make you weaker than you really are. Therefore DO NOT concentrate your thinking on your weaknesses because the more you think negative and wasteful

thoughts the further and further you will get from your potential. You cannot change negative thoughts to positive ones.

So, what can you do?

There are two strategies that you can adopt to be successful:

1.Focus on your necessary and positive thoughts.

Necessary thoughts: those that keep your life working naturally and Positive thoughts are those that move you forward with the intention of forming win/win relationships. Both are invaluable. They bring you energy and success. They are your seeds to a successful life. They drive your feelings, words and actions. The more you can think in the positive the more your feelings, words and actions are positive and you are successful.

2.Stop asking yourself `why' whenever you don't get the results you want..

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`Why' only causes you to respond with `because'. And any sentence starting with `because' means that you are now defending your past behaviour and change is impossible. Instead ask yourself; `what caused it to happen' or `how did it happen'. Now you have something strong to base your future on.

These strategies are the antidote that finishes complacency and give you freedom.

You have the freedom to choose your behaviour. You don't have to continue following others and what others say to you. All you have to do is focus on your natural and positive thoughts. These give you power and enable you to find what you are truly capable of.

The most courageous people in the world are those who overcome the disease of complacency and strive to be all they are capable of being.

"Only those who risk going far can possibly find out how far one can go"

(TS Eliot 1888 – 1965)

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