

Hello Ottawa,

After a very long journey I made it to base camp at Everest. It was by far the hardest thing I have ever put myself through. It was exactly what I needed to help me when I return to my life in Ottawa.

The physical challenge was a known problem I would face. The constant climb and the stress on my muscles from fatigue and lack of oxygen was difficult but manageable.

The other part Ben Webster had warned me about before leaving Ottawa was the mental stress. Lack of sleep and again the oxygen even made playing cards difficult. I felt slow and mental concentration was tough. Getting very ill in Kathmandu, bad headaches in Gorak Shep and being very sick and dehydrated when we reached base camp.

Both of these things were part of the 'brochure' Ben gave me. I knew it was called 'Base Camp Everest' for a reason and that it would be very tough. It is why I wanted to go. To see if I could do it, or if I would fold my hand and walk back in failure.

The part that surprised me the most was the emotional stress. This wasn't in the brochure! Once I reached my goal of base camp I found I wasn't excited or cheering like I thought I would be. Instead I was almost sad because I didn't have Jocelyne there to share it with me. Don't get me wrong, I was happy that I made it up to base camp. But who was really there to share it with me? I had formed new friendships with Ben, Shaunna, Mike and Gary. Great people and I enjoyed their company. However, without my girlfriend Jocelyne it felt empty.

The objective of reaching base camp has been achieved. The technology of getting video transmissions from Nepal to Telecom Ottawa and the Ottawa Carleton District School Board works great thanks to the two teams which I am happy to be part of. Ben, Mike and Gary from Expedition Everest. Chris, Scott, Mike, Jeff and Keri from Telecom Ottawa. I am happy that these objectives were met. I will always remember this trip and I thank Ben, Shauna and Telecom Ottawa for the opportunity to go. Maybe not for the reasons they would think. This trip did help me realize that if I can get to base camp I can do anything and I will use that in both my work and personal life. It was a great achievement. But more importantly it helped me to understand how much I want Jocelyne to be part of my life and that without her I feel lost. This may not sound like a



huge step for most people but for me personally it is. I realized on that mountain that nothing is more important to me than my life with Jocelyne.

I am sitting in my hotel after racing down from base camp to Kathmandu in three days. It was a blur. I didn't stop to take in the pretty mountains or take pictures. I am limping from the stress on my knees from walking down the mountain side so quickly. Even my Sherpa friend who guided me down was surprised at how fast we were moving making it into each village around 2pm each day. Base camp to Dingboche. Dingboche to Namche Bazaar. Namche to Lukla. Yes the surge of oxygen helped a lot but it was not the main reason for my new energy. I showed my Sherpa friend and guide, Lakhba, a picture I took of Jocelyne the night she drove me to the airport and I think he understood as we rushed to Lukla airport. The only objective in my head then and now is to get home to Jocelyne.

I would almost say that everyone should experience a trip like this once in their lives. It will change you. Maybe not the same way it changed me but it will change a part of you. The rewards are huge. They were for me!

Jocelyne, I will see you in two days. I can't wait to tell you how much I missed you and that I love you very much. I am sorry and you were right - blue and yellow will look great in our new house. I can't wait to move in May 1st and start this new chapter of our lives together.

Signing out from Kathmandu,

-Steve

