

Robert Swan, OBE

Polar Explorer, Environmental Leader, Founder of Mission 2041 and inspirational public speaker.

As a young boy, Robert Swan was seduced by the story of Scott of the Antarctic into leading the life of a polar explorer. It has not always been an easy life and he has suffered along the way (incurring huge personal debts in his first expedition, having his eyes change colour as a result of spending weeks walking under the hole in the Ozone layer) but his personal leadership, passion and honesty have allowed him to turn adversity to opportunity in a way that is truly inspirational to a wide audience.



He has earned his place in history alongside the great explorers and adventurers who have tested their physical and mental strength to the limit in the planet's most hostile environments. By the age of 33 he became the first man to walk to both the North and South Poles. His 900-mile journey "In the Footsteps of Scott" across the treacherous Antarctic ice cap to the South Pole still stands as the longest unassisted walk ever made.

He witnessed first hand the damage that man has inflicted on the most delicate of the world's environments. He has walked under the hole in the ozone layer and seen Arctic ice melting two months earlier than it should – both a result of the greenhouse effect. Educating and inspiring people to become involved in the protection of our planet's most precious environments has become his life's work. Along the way he has also addressed issues of keen local interest, as in Southern Africa when with his team he brought his darling yacht on an 8,000 mile inland trip to schools as part of a project to educate local teenagers how to keep themselves safe from HIV and AIDS.

In 2003 Robert Swan and his company delivered the first ever corporate Antarctic Expedition on Teamwork and Leadership through positive participation and real missions. He continues to deliver these expeditions to the Antarctic annually, taking a select team of committed and ambitious students and corporate executives directly to the heart of his world, Antarctica.

Robert Swan's talent as a communicator is the key to his extraordinary career. Now, more than ever, in these increasingly turbulent times, his message is one of hope. No one is inspired by the negative – the challenge in the world isn't lack of information – it's a lack of inspiration. Robert's job is to inspire people to get them to believe it is possible by showing them small achievable steps.

The topics he covers include:

- Personal leadership – how can you inspire others to follow if you don't have a strong personal leadership yourself?
- Trust and teamwork – when times are tough, trust in your team and in the right partners is a crucial element for the success of any project. Clear communication and telling the truth to one another is hugely important here.
- Turn adversity to opportunity – life is tough, but with the right attitude and some of the personal leadership and trust in a good team above, an individual and an organisation can build something positive from the negative.
- Never underestimate the importance of luck – and the need to have a good laugh now and then!

It is hard to describe the effect that Robert's speeches can have on audiences. Simply put, his is an extraordinarily timely message of hope and inspiration.

His personal credo sums up his life's work:

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

-- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe