



## Ten Strategies for Success at *THE EDGE*



How did Shackleton gain such extraordinary levels of courage, unity, and commitment among the crew of the *Endurance*? How did he produce the teamwork essential for success in such extreme circumstances?

How did the *AFR Midnight Rambler* survive the “perfect storm” that many other larger, more expensive boats could not? How did its crew sustain high performance under such adversity, when other “more professional” crews could not?

Based on research into a large number of adventure and survival stories, examination of the literature on leadership and teams, and our own experience working with managers and executives, The Syncretics Group has identified *Ten Strategies for Success* that distinguish leaders and teams that succeed from those that fail at *The Edge*:

- 1. Never lose site of the ultimate goal, and focus energy on short-term objectives.**
  - Many leaders do one or the other, but not both. Leading at *The Edge* requires an effective balancing of long-term goals and short-term objectives.
- 2. Set a personal example with visible, memorable symbols and behaviors.**
  - Leaders and team members set examples, whether they know it or not. The key is to intentionally set the example you need to underscore what must be done.
- 3. Instill optimism and self-confidence, but stay grounded in reality.**
  - It is crucial that leaders resonate optimism, even in the face of obstacles, but nevertheless stay grounded in reality.
- 4. Take care of yourself: Maintain your stamina and let go of guilt.**
  - Today’s leaders and teams are under great stress. Mistakes are unavoidable. It is essential that everyone pay attention to their physical and mental health.
- 5. Reinforce the team message constantly: “We are one—we live or die together”.**
  - A high-performing team is powerful, but highly vulnerable to fracture and decay. One of the leader’s key roles is to sustain team purpose and cohesion.



**6. Minimize status differences and insist on courtesy and mutual respect.**

- Nothing undermines a team more than unnecessary status differences and lack of respect for the individual. Leaders can set expectations for team values, and team members can mold them into normative standards for behavior.

**7. Master conflict—deal with anger in small doses, engage dissidents, and avoid needless power struggles.**

- Conflict is inevitable when faced with adversity and uncertainty. Leaders and teams make sure that conflict is productive, not destructive.

**8. Find something to celebrate and something to laugh about.**

- Great leaders are able to use recognition and celebration in good times and bad. It is when anxiety is most pronounced that “lightening up” is so beneficial.

**9. Be willing to take the Big Risk.**

- This is not about being an inveterate risk-taker. It is about a leader’s willingness to take a risk when it is clear that playing it safe is more harmful to the team’s prospects.

**10. Never give up — there’s always another move.**

- Generating creative solutions isn’t easy in any situation, but it is especially tough in demanding environments ripe with adversity and uncertainty. Leaders and teams need to tenaciously attack daunting problems with the confidence that a solution will always be possible.