

## ***The Apollo Attitude—When Failure is Not an Option***

By Roxanne Emmerich

It's hard to beat the movie *Apollo 13* for drama. Over 200,000 miles from Earth, in the vacuum of space, an explosion disabled a space capsule on its way to the Moon.

The mission was over. And it would have been reasonable to assume the astronauts' lives were over, too. Yet three days later, the astronauts were standing on the deck of an aircraft carrier.

Then there was the three-masted sailing ship *Endurance*, which left England in August 1914 under the command of Ernest Shackleton with twenty-eight men determined to cross Antarctica by sled.

The *Endurance* ended up trapped and crushed to splinters by ice floes. The men lived on the Antarctic ice for another two years.

Total survivors out of the original twenty-eight men? Twenty-eight.

What if you approached every challenge in your life and in your work as if you simply HAD to overcome it? I'll tell you what—you would do it. You would find a way, and you would get it done.

Whenever I hear the expression, "Failure is not an option," I think of *Apollo 13*. I think of Ernest Shackleton and the men of *Endurance*. I picture them confronting these utterly impossible situations and saying, "Well, lads, let's see what our options are."

I then picture them reaching into a pocket and pulling out a scrap of paper. Under the title **OPTIONS** are two words: **SUCCESS** and **FAILURE**.

Like heck. Why would failure EVER be an option? So why not take it off the list entirely?

We've all heard the hundred or so reasons such and such a thing simply cannot be done, the many, many reasons failure is the only option.

Tell it to Shackleton. Tell it to the astronauts of *Apollo 13* and the engineers at Mission Control in Houston. Tell them all about the insurmountable obstacles you face.

Better **STILL**—why not just take **FAILURE** off that list of options?

## **Show me the baby!**

I have a friend who I dearly love but who always used to explain why something couldn't be done. Excuses came easy to her. Then one day her boss gave her a priceless saying to remember: *Don't tell me about the labor pains—show me the baby.*

Before a project begins, I don't want to hear all the reasons it can't be done. After the project is done, I don't care how many hours you worked. I don't care how many obstacles you hit. Save it for your memoirs. Just show me the baby.

Decide now that whatever project or challenge you currently have before you simply cannot be allowed to fail—that you must use the ingenuity of the *Apollo* crew and the fortitude of the *Endurance* crew to make it happen. It's a completely different way of thinking.

But be careful—it's addicting. Once you get a taste of achieving the impossible, it's hard to quit!

*Roxanne Emmerich is renowned for her ability to transform “ho-hum” workplaces into massive results-oriented “bring-it-on” environments. To discover how you can ignite the passion of your employees, catapult performance to new levels, and boost the morale of your company subscribe to the Thank God It's Monday<sup>TM</sup> e-zine at [www.ThankGoditsMonday.com](http://www.ThankGoditsMonday.com).*