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Excerpts from:

To Scale a Mountain, First Meditate by the Sea

By Jen Murphy

When Erik Oberholtzer was feeling overwhelmed by the stress of expanding his restaurant business, he decided to go as far off the grid as he could go for three weeks.

Mr. Oberholtzer, co-founder of Tender Greens, a casual, slow-food-minded restaurant with 13 locations in California, left his phone, email and most human contact behind in mid-2012 and went trekking in the Himalayas. "In a world where we are so distracted by everything digital, it's nice to be focused on just putting one foot in front of the other," he says.



The 45-year-old says the last time he felt stressed by life was his sophomore year at Drexel University in Philadelphia. With a full course-load and full-time work, he recalls, "I was struggling to find balance." That was when a friend convinced him to try Transcendental Meditation. He has done it every day since.

Transcendental Meditation encourages a state of awareness by avoiding distracting thoughts. He says the great thing about meditation is that he can do it anywhere. Mr. Oberholtzer lives in Santa Monica, Calif., and flies to San Francisco at least once a week for work. He often meditates on the short plane ride.

He uses his weekly gym workouts to clear his head and keep him fit enough to climb mountains around Southern California on weekends. "It helps me train for climbing when I can't be on a mountain," he says.

"I never start my day without meditating," he says. It's the first thing he does after he brushes his teeth. He does a second meditation between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. "It's difficult to find 20 minutes to slip away midday," he says. "But everyone who knows me knows I will be more present and mindful in a meeting if I take time beforehand to meditate."