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LISTENING

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READING

DAREDEVIL TO CROSS GRAND CANYON

¹ The Grand Canyon gets almost 5 million visitors a year. Nobody, however, has ever experienced the Grand Canyon the way Nik Wallenda will this Sunday. On this ⁵ day he will attempt to cross a 375-meter long tightrope. The wire will be tied between two mountain cliffs. He will walk the wire while he is 450 metres above

the Colorado River, without a net! Why ¹⁰ would anyone try to do this?

It runs in the family

Nik Wallenda is no ordinary daredevil. The 34-year-old, known as 'The King of the High Wire,' comes from a long line of tightrope ¹⁵ walkers and acrobats. Nik Wallenda has trained

on the wire since he was very young. He says he's probably walked over 1,000 miles on tightropes in his lifetime, starting from the age of two. At that age Nik hopped onto a rope tied
20 between two trees in his parents' backyard. He was just copying what his parents were doing. For seven generations the Wallendas have been tightrope walkers and acrobats, entertaining audiences around the globe. Nik has three
25 children – they're all tightrope walkers too! Nik feels that by doing this stunt he's honouring the Wallenda family name, in particular, his great-grandfather Karl, who tragically died during a tightrope stunt.



55 the final decision whether or not the weather conditions are good enough to walk across the canyon.'

30 A miracle of nature

Wallenda chose the Grand Canyon as the location of his stunt because he visited it when he was a teenager. He considers the Grand Canyon 'an incredible natural wonder.' He adds
35 to this: 'I have always dreamt of doing this stunt and I am looking forward to visiting the Grand Canyon again. When I walk out over the canyon, I plan to look down and take in this incredible view in a way that no one else ever has before.'
40 Nik hopes to walk in good weather conditions. With strong winds blowing upwards, the Grand Canyon can be a very tricky place to walk across.

Preparation

In preparation for the walk, Wallenda spent 14
45 days training in Sarasota in Florida. He had a special tightrope setup to simulate his walk over the canyon. It stretched 330 meters, and he walked back and forth it twice a day. Towards the end of the training period, he
50 brought out two wind machines. These wind machines generated winds of 140 kilometres per hour against his balancing pole. Nik says: 'It builds confidence to walk in these types of conditions. The safety coordinator makes

Nerves

The stunt itself doesn't make Nik nervous.
60 He knows what he's doing. According to Nik 'when you've done something your entire life, it becomes very normal. It's like riding a bike.'
Wallenda also says he tries to shut out thoughts of tripping or falling. The media ask him many
65 questions about falling and his safety. Nik doesn't like it. He thinks that questions about falling mess with his mental preparation: 'It really is just going to be me, the canyon and the cameras. It's intimate. It's me fulfilling a dream
70 I've had for a long time,' said Wallenda.

More adventures

Although Nik hasn't even fulfilled this dream yet, he already has other adventurous plans: 'I want to walk to the top of the Eiffel Tower on a
75 tightrope wire. I have also started planning a tightrope walk in New York City, which I hope to do within the next year.' Who knows what Nik will do next, but first he'll have to cross a canyon ...

80 Adapted from: mnn.com

tightrope walkers
balancing pole

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