

# Mark Pollock

## Explorer, Innovator, and Collaboration Catalyst

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

### Topics

- Adventure
- Disability Rights
- Inspiration / Achievement
- Leadership
- Motivation
- Overcoming Adversity
- Personal Growth
- Teamwork / Teambuilding

### About Mark Pollock

Mark helps leaders and their teams to build resilience and collaborate with others so that they achieve more than they thought possible.

Unbroken by blindness in 1998, Mark became an adventure athlete competing in ultra-endurance races across deserts, mountains, and the polar ice caps including being the first blind person to race to the South Pole. He also won silver and bronze medals for rowing at the Commonwealth Games and set up a motivational speaking business ([www.markpollock.com](http://www.markpollock.com)).

In 2010 a fall from a second story window nearly killed him. Mark broke his back and the damage to his spinal cord left him paralysed. Now he is on a new expedition, this time to cure paralysis in our lifetime by exploring the intersection where humans and technology collide.

As a speaker, Mark is best known for his 2018 TED Talk focused on resolving the tension between acceptance and hope ([go.ted.com/markandsimone](https://go.ted.com/markandsimone)) delivered jointly with his fiancée, Simone George. It gathered over 1.5 million views in its first 6 months online and has been translated into 12 languages. He has inspired millions of people in hundreds of organisations and is a Davos, World Economic Forum, InnoTown, F.ounders, EG and Wired speaker.

Co-Founder of the global running series called Run in the Dark ([www.runinthedark.org](http://www.runinthedark.org)), Mark has been selected by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader and is a former member of the Global Futures Council on Human Enhancement. He is a UBS Global Visionary, is on the Board of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation (USA) and is a Wings for Life Ambassador (Europe).

In addition, Mark is the subject of the acclaimed documentaries 'Blind Man Walking' and 'Unbreakable – The Mark Pollock Story', he has been awarded honorary doctorates by The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and also from Queens University Belfast. And, he holds a diploma in Global Leadership and Public Policy for the 21st Century from Harvard University, degrees from Trinity College Dublin and The Smurfit Business School.

### Select Keynotes

#### • Adversity & Challenges – Maintaining a Resilient Mindset Under Pressure

Sometimes we choose our challenges, sometimes our challenges choose us. What we decide to do about them is what counts. Deciding to be a competitor, a realist and a collaborator offers your people a chance of maintaining a resilient mindset under pressure. Mark Pollock's keynote on adversity and challenges uses the power of active decision making to deal with challenges, regardless of where they come from, to help your people become more resilient.

#### • Collaboration & Teamwork – Creating and Motivating Dispersed Teams Across Disciplines and Geographies

Galvanising a disparate group of people around a common goal is not easy. Yet when it happens, when we collaborate, that is when major breakthroughs happen. Mark Pollock's keynote on collaboration and teamwork provides your people with insight into how high-performance teams get things done when others can't.

#### • Human Enhancement – Exploring the Intersection Where Humans and Technology Collide During the 4th Industrial



## Revolution.

Exploring the intersection where humans and technology collide is essential for businesses to maintain their competitive edge. By raising the consciousness of your people to the human dimension of the 4th industrial revolution, you will empower and encourage innovation at the edge. Mark Pollock's keynote on human enhancement provides your people with insight into the transformative intersection of technology and humankind as he explores a cure for paralysis using robotics, neuro-modulation, AI and VR/AR.

- **Insights**

Over the last 20 years, Mark has studied how to build resilience and collaborate with others.

Some of what he has discovered is showcased here in a selection of talks, mini-documentaries, podcasts, media appearances and articles, each providing insights from a different perspective to help you ac

- **Leadership & Motivation – Leading Through a Crisis and Developing Intrinsic Motivation to Move Forward**

Uncertainty and change typify a crisis and it's difficult to lead in such circumstances. By providing your people with insights into the resilience, attitude and decisions of others facing extreme circumstances you will help them to develop the intrinsic motivation to move forward. Mark Pollock's keynote on leadership and motivation delivers deep insights for leaders to navigate through the crucible moments they face and lead others to achieve more.

- **Mark's Story**

Unbroken by blindness in 1998 and a paralysing fall in 2010, Mark is acknowledged by leaders in organisations worldwide as an expert in resilience, innovation and collaboration. He says, *"The reason to bring in a motivational speaker is to move the audience emotionally. It can never be about the speaker, rather it must be about engaging the audience to help them achieve more than they thought possible – that is what I aim to do every time."*

- **Mindset & Performance – Challenging Expectations to Perform at a Higher Level**

It is tough to deliver world class performance. Your people won't do it by chance. With a high-impact catalyst you can help them act with the courage to make it happen. Mark Pollock's keynote on mindset and performance is that catalyst - it challenges your people to examine expectations of themselves and others to perform at a higher level.

- **Mission**

Up to this point in history, it has proven to be impossible to find a cure for paralysis. Yet history is filled with accounts of the impossible made possible through human endeavour.

That's why Mark started asking, *"Why can't that same human endeavour cure paralysis in our lifetime?"*

And he believes it can.

## Select Articles

- [Mark Pollock's Inspiring Journey of a Million Steps](#)

Mark Pollock's story is one of true resilience and dedication. At the age of five, he lost sight in his right eye due to a genetic disease and was forced to stop playing contact sports to protect his remaining eyesight. It wasn't until he was twenty-two that he went completely blind as his retina detached from the eye.

## Select Testimonials

"During our Google team off-site, Mark was our keynote speaker. He combined messages of resilience, innovation and collaboration to prompt our team to reflect on how we deal with challenges, big and small. His delivery was powerful, emotional and uplifting in equal measure."

— Director Sales, Google

In the weeks following Mark's talk I have seen managers' at LinkedIn reference Mark's approach to solving complex problems. His talk was inspirational and can be applied in our daily business lives.

— Director, Northern Europe & Growth Markets - LinkedIn

Mark was a speaker at National Geographic's Extreme Explorers dinner in Davos in January 2016. His personal story and insights were

incredibly powerful, and clearly had a profound impact on everyone in the room. He embodies the spirit, resilience and determination that are the hallmarks of what it means to be an explorer.

– *Editor in Chief - National Geographic Magazine*

I had high hopes and expectations and they were all exceeded significantly. Since the session, so many of our business partners have commented on how much they appreciated Mark's input and how we used his insights to set the tone for the conference. Most importantly, Mark is living proof that we are able to overcome any challenges.

– *EMEAR Strategic Account Lead, Cisco*

Mark brought a hugely authentic and moving story to our conference. He challenged us all to think about the mind-sets we bring to work and life, and to change those for the better.

– *Global HR Manager Crude & SEE - Shell UK*

Mark prompted us to consider how we, as leaders, turn challenges into opportunities. This isn't just a personal resilience story, it's a leadership lesson.

– *Group Chief Executive, Bank of Ireland*

Thank you for your presentation at our 2018 Partners' Conference. The story, your response and the manner in which you have turned such adversity into a positive is awe-inspiring enough. But the real message for me lies in your delivery which is laced with humour, warmth and humility. As you may have detected, building our community is very important in the business we're building and the characteristics you displayed, coupled with your inspiring messages, will serve as model behaviours for everyone who heard you.

– *HEAD OF PFP CHANGE & CONTROLS - Prudential Financial Planning*

Mark provided a powerful perspective to the assembled media at Davos. Mark doesn't just talk about the transformative intersection of technology and humankind – he lives it. As he explores a cure for paralysis, he helped people understand the human dimension of the fourth industrial revolution at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting.

– *Head of Public Engagement & Foundations - World Economic Forum*

The rule of seven is one of the oldest concepts in marketing, the rule states that you must hear something seven times before you act. Mark is a rule breaker in so many ways, but most importantly his message to be a competitor or spectator, realist or optimist, collaborator or soloist was a onetime hit with our team at LinkedIn. I have heard Mark speak many times and each time I come away with a renewed sense of purpose and willingness to act. Mark's drive to build radical collaboration hubs is one of the most important efforts in his drive to find a cure for paralysis however it's also the biggest lesson he has for those he interacts with.

– *HEAD OF SOLUTIONS SMB, EMEA & GROWTH MARKETS - LinkedIn*

Mark has presented to our EY tax department and to the finalists of the EY Entrepreneur of the Year programme. By using his experiences as a backdrop, he presented the decisions that we all face in times of uncertainty and change. And, as the story unfolded, both audiences were prompted to examine their decision making when challenges appear. The relevance to entrepreneurs and corporate employees alike was excellent.

– *Head of Tax and EY Entrepreneur of the Year Programme - EY Ireland*

Mark joined us at our National Conference to share his insights into individual decision making in tough circumstances, and the importance of collaborative working. Using his own field of endeavour to bring the session to life, he prompted us to focus on the decisions we make when we face challenges, rather than the challenges themselves. It is this kind of thinking that led us to invite Mark to speak at our conference, where he delivered a very powerful speech that left a lasting impression.

— *Pfizer - UK Managing Director*

Mark joined us at our DJO Global sales conference to kick off the year. The feedback from the team after his speech was incredible and unanimously positive. Mark's inspirational words had a huge impact on the team and helped them to put their own challenges into perspective. His message resonated throughout the remainder of the conference. We have had many guest speakers at our annual conference over the years but no one made a lasting impact quite like Mark.

— *PRESIDENT - DJO Global*

It was a privilege to have Mark address both our customers and our Management Team at Google. He delivers that rare combination of inspiration, perspective and practical insight that forces his audience to really reflect on how they rise to their personal challenges and set goals that seem unachievable. He delivers his message in a deeply personal, humorous and memorable way that lands with his audience. It was a pleasure for all of us to spend time in his company. Inspiring.

— *REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NORTHERN EUROPE - Google*

I was honored to meet with Mark Pollock in Ireland this year, where we engaged with teachers and students at St. Patrick's College to discuss the ways technology is changing how students learn. Mark is an extreme adventurer and athlete who has raced to the South Pole — and even more incredibly, he was the first blind man to ever do so. Mark is a brilliant example of the fact that we can always achieve more than what we think is possible.

— *SATYA NADELLA - CEO, Microsoft*

Mark presented at our Global Sales Partners Conference in Twitter and was exceptional. His ability to link his personal story to people's everyday life and work challenges was excellent. The session was not just about listening to an incredible story, it was a chance for everyone to really think about themselves. There is something in this talk for everyone.

— *SENIOR DIRECTOR EMEA - Twitter*