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OPTIMISM

by
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W.
Dog

8
TRAITS
OF
IDITAROD

OPTIMISM

Hopefulness and confidence about the future. The belief that good will prevail over evil in the universe.

The 7th trait of Iditarod is “O” for Optimism. Rookie mushers and veterans alike have the tendency to believe, expect or hope that things will turn out well in the Iditarod. Every musher knows the challenges of the famed Dalzell Gorge and Farewell Burn. Being confident in their abilities to drive dogs, mushers believe that they will be successful in traveling through the challenging portions of the trail. Drivers who experience difficult weather conditions or trail conditions believe that things continually get better and that good will ultimately outweigh bad. Individuals who have an optimistic rather than pessimistic view of life are positive self-confident people who are a pleasure to associate with in any aspect of life.

Mushers who have shown great optimism far beyond the Iditarod Trial include DeeDee Jonrowe, Charlie Boulding, Martin Buser and Rachael Scdoris. DeeDee was involved in car crash where she and her husband sustained serious injuries and her grandmother was killed. She is also a cancer survivor. Optimism was on her side as she worked to heal and overcome these

setbacks. Charlie Boulding battled cancer and returned to run Iditarod, evidence of his positive attitude that things can and will improve. Martin amputated part of his index finger a few days before Iditarod XXXIII. Being in a great deal of pain and having to make adaptations in using his hand to tend to the dogs – feeding, cooking, booting, etc., Martin had to believe that each day would get better with less pain and more dexterity. Rachael Scdoris, being legally blind, dreamed of doing The Last Great Race. Rachel was confident in her athleticism and dog driving skills. She petitioned Iditarod, asking to use a visual interpreter that would provide her with a verbal description of the trail to allow her to run Iditarod. Rachel persevered and maintained her optimism while asking Iditarod to accommodate her request. Rachel returns for her fourth Iditarod in 2009. These are a few examples of Iditarod mushers who epitomize optimism – there are many many more who have succeeded because of their optimism.

The pages of Lew Freedman's [Iditarod Classics](#) and [More Iditarod Classics](#) are filled

with stories told by people that exemplify optimistic. Rick Swenson says weather is part of the deal with Iditarod. But when you have the attitude “I’m having a good time” in storms, the storm isn’t a negative. If you don’t have that optimism, then things probably aren’t going to work out for you in Iditarod. People who believe in the goodness of the world around them are people worth being around.

