



"So many people have dreams they want to pursue, but they're afraid to talk about them because they don't want to fail or have others hold them to it."

Jedidiah Jenkins

—Travel writer—

At the age of 30, Jedidiah Jenkins quit his day job and embarked on a 16-month, 10,000-mile bike trip from Oregon to Patagonia, Chile, the self-imposed catalyst for pursuing his dream of writing a book. After garnering a massive online following for writing about his travels, he has since returned home to LA, where he recently launched a magazine, *Wilderness*, and is currently working on a book about his cross-continental adventure.

Tell me about your path to what you're doing now.

I grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, to parents who were both creative. Back in the '70s, they traveled across America for five years and wrote about their experiences for National Geographic. Their journey captured the imagination of America because the country was having an identity crisis at the time—the Vietnam War was going on, the president had left office, and everything was a shitshow. I don't want to call them eccentric, but it didn't surprise me when they got divorced in the '80s. Being raised by two free spirits meant that the conventional track most humans find themselves on—the assembly line of life—didn't tempt me like it does others. My parents told me, "Go, do, be, and dream. There's nothing out of reach, and you can have an unconventional life as long as you're true to yourself."

Considering where you are now, what are your ambitions for the coming years?

I love public speaking, telling stories, and connecting with people, so I would like to do more of that in the future. As far as adventures go, I'm not sure what that will look like. When you're climbing a mountain, you have no idea what's on the other side. Climbing the mountain of this book means that I don't know how it's going to be received or if I'm going to go on book tours. I don't know what doors are going to open, but I do know my nature, and every seven years or so I start itching to do something weird and fun. I would love to sail a boat from Los Angeles through the Panama Canal and around to Rhode Island, where my aunt lives. Or maybe I'll ride a motorcycle across Europe or Mongolia. Who knows? I will definitely go on more big adventures in my life, but I don't yet know what those will be.

What advice do you have for someone starting out?

I've been thinking about the why behind the why. In my case, I thought I wanted to be a film director because I like telling stories—that was my first why. But when I moved to California and studied directing, I realized that I hated it. I learned that directors are basically the boss of 200 people, and I am not good at that. I felt lost. I knew I wanted to tell stories, and when I asked myself why, I realized it was because I liked to connect with people. I recognized that I enjoyed the storytelling part of being a director, but not the boss part, and that's when I decided to switch to creative writing. All of a sudden, I had found the fulfillment in writing that I thought I would find in directing. My advice to people starting out is to follow your curiosities, hold your goals loosely, and try to figure out what you really want.