



Crazy for the Storm

By Norman Ollestad
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Introduction

From the age of three, Norman Ollestad was thrust into the world of surfing and competitive downhill skiing by the intense, charismatic father he both idolized and resented. While his friends were riding bikes, playing ball, and going to birthday parties, young Norman was whisked away in pursuit of wild and demanding adventures. Yet it were these exhilarating tests of skill that prepared "Boy Wonder," as his father called him, to become a fearless champion and ultimately saved his life.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the various ways to interpret the book's title, "Crazy for the Storm"? How did this perspective/attitude shape young Norman's personality and life? Did it help save his life?
2. Was Norman's father too demanding of his son? How has parenting changed since the era of the book, the 1970's? How is the father-son relationship like or unlike your own relationship with your own father?
3. On that fateful day of the crash, little Norman was forced to draw from all the tools and lessons his father had instilled in him from birth. Discuss the connections between what his father exposed him to and when he had to put those experiences to quick use on the mountain.
4. Have you been faced with a seemingly insurmountable situation that forced you to reach deep down inside yourself in order to make it through?
5. What sports, activities or hobbies give you the most satisfaction? Discuss the role your favorite sport, activity or hobby plays in your life? Could you cope without it?
6. Have you had early childhood experiences forced upon you that at first you resisted and rejected, but later became a most favored or treasured experience, skill or pastime?
7. Empowering messages were engrained in Norman, the "Boy Wonder," from an early age such as "Never Give Up" and "We can do it all." These words fueled Norman to keep moving forward each time he weakened or seemed about to succumb. What words and thoughts wield significant power to you?
8. How does the tone from the beginning of the book compare to the end? Does Norman seem to have reconciled the tension generated by his father's insistence to push beyond the limits of the comfort zone? At the conclusion of the book, is the author softened, resolved or conflicted?
9. In contrast to his father's risk-taking nature, young Norman seemed to possess an inherent sense of reserve and caution. Throughout the story, when do we see Norman first begin to emerge from his fears and begin to embrace the joy of the thrill seeking his father craved?
10. There were a few important women that influenced Norman early in his life, including Patricia Chapman who had provided the warm, safe haven when he finally made it down the mountain. How did each relationship impact him and shape him? Did they offer a counterbalance to the dominant male personalities in his life?

About the Author

Norman Ollestad studied creative writing at UCLA and attended the UCLA Film School. He grew up on Topanga Beach in Malibu, California, and now lives in Venice, California. He is the father of an 8-year-old son.