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What it Takes to Survive

Real life survival stories are often intriguing for many people because it brings up the question: *What would I have done in this situation?* Most assume that they would not be smart enough to come up with any clever ideas or that they would be the first to perish. This may be true but in *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, by Aron Ralston, Aron is faced with a challenge that determines if he has the guts to do what it takes to survive. After a while, Aron loses all hope and does not believe he will survive. His physical, mental, and emotional abilities are what help him escape his entrapment and find help.

Aron is an avid climbing enthusiast, making him physically well prepared for a traumatic experience. He has been skiing, running, biking, and hiking since a young age. No one told him to do it, he just loves outdoor physical activity. He was nearly in the best shape in his life when the accident occurred. His body could better withstand starvation and dehydration because it could support itself for longer than an average person. He also did not experience any medication withdrawals because he was not taking any in the first place. His metabolism was also better suited than most for sub-60 degree Fahrenheit temperatures every night. Even after the amputation, Aron could afford more blood loss than someone with higher a BPM. Overall, out of a majority of Americans, Aron Ralston was best fitted for this circumstance.

Previous life-or-death experiences helped Aron develop a distance between his mental state and real life predicament. If he had survived everything else in the past, he could survive

this. It was not his first rodeo. Although this situation was more intense than any other ordeal, he at least had some sort of practice. He effectively applied logic to all of his options and carefully explored them without losing his mind. Of course though, in the end, instinct took over and he did what he had to do. Aron waited until the last moment to let himself loose; carving into his own arm. Exhausted were his options and he moved forward in the only way he could. Many would have lost their minds in the first few days and killed themselves. He refused to allow his thoughts end his own life on purpose. His outside perspective is what kept him level-headed.

In what seemed Aron's last moments, memories appeared in his head, reminding him of the love he shared between his friends and family, which pushed him to the unthinkable. In the book, Aron describes it as his "secondary reflex." He thought he had given it everything he had, but he was wrong. Motivation brought him out of his remorse and he was given the solution to his problem: break his arm bones using torque. And at last, he was free.

It almost sounds vulgar, but Aron should consider himself lucky that it was him instead of someone else stuck under that boulder. His physical condition outweighed the elements, he kept his cool, and when all seemed lost, his last defense of emotions saved him. Any sooner or later and he would have died. He did the impossible. So, yes, anyone else would have most likely succumbed to the conditions. No clever ideas could outweigh his own.