

***Into Thin Air* Discussion Questions**

1. Jon Krakauer describes any attempt to climb Mt. Everest as “an intrinsically irrational act”? Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not? Alternately, what are some legitimate reasons for attempting such a feat?

2. Who should (if anyone) decide if someone is fit to climb Everest? The individual, the guides, the tour companies, the government of Nepal? In the abstract, how free should we be to make decisions that may involve or endanger others or affect the environment around us?

3. What role do the Sherpas play in the commercialization of Everest? What is their responsibility to their mountain? To their community? To their family? To their clients? What is the responsibility of the climbers or the tour companies to them?

4. What does *Into Thin Air* suggest about the importance of leadership and teamwork in comparison to individual achievement?

5. What does *Into Thin Air* suggest about communication? Honesty? Ambition?

6. Krakauer's book illuminates one of the great debates of our century: commercialism/progress vs. preservation. As leaders and citizens, how do we advance communities while remaining true to ancient wisdom, tradition and history? Where does our obligation lie as citizens of the world: to the preservation of our natural world or to the pursuit of profit? How is the idea of "The Tragedy of the Commons" applicable here?

7. Who is responsible for the deaths documented in the book? Ultimately, is a person responsible for others? Is self-preservation the bottom line here?

Note: The questions are modified from those found on the following website:
[www.rollins.edu/explorations/ documents/IntoThinAirlettertostudents_000.pdf](http://www.rollins.edu/explorations/documents/IntoThinAirlettertostudents_000.pdf)