



New Adventures

EUGENE ERIC KIM | DECEMBER 31, 2012



Earlier this month, I made the hardest, most gut-wrenching decision of my professional life. Effective today, I am leaving Groupaya, which I [co-founded in late 2011](#) with the amazing, wonderful [Kristin Cobble](#).

My reasons for leaving are simple, although the decision was anything but. I have a set of things I want to accomplish, both personally and professionally, and I did not feel like I was on the best path to accomplish all of them.

My goals are to be the best human being I can possibly be and to do things that are joyful, impactful, and nourishing. With Groupaya, I was accomplishing the latter and then some, but at the expense of the former. I wasn't finding the balance I wanted, and as I looked inward and ahead, I realized that I wasn't going to get it unless I hit the reset button and found a different path.

In explaining to my team my feelings, I told them the story of [Göran Kropp](#), as described by [Jon Krakauer](#) in his book, *Into Thin Air*. In 1996, Kropp attempted to go from sea level to the top of Mount Everest using only his own power. That meant riding a bike from Sweden to the Himalayas, then attempting to summit the world's highest mountain without additional oxygen. He got an hour away from the summit, but realized that the conditions weren't right, and had the discipline and wisdom to turn around. Famed mountaineer, [Rob Hall](#), ran into Kropp on his way back down the mountain, and, in expressing his admiration for Kropp's decision, explained, "With enough determination, any bloody idiot can get *up* this hill. The trick is to get back down alive."

I don't claim to have done anything as challenging as Kropp did, but I at least have an inkling for how he must have felt. Leaving Groupaya feels a bit like turning around just an hour away from the summit. We surpassed most of [our goals for 2012](#), our [first year in business](#). We had amazing clients, we did top-notch work, and we were constantly learning and improving. We had succeeded in building a high-performance organization with the kind of culture I had always dreamed of. We were collectively practicing what we preached, and we had built a platform that would enable us to leap even further forward. Thanks to my peers and the structures we had put into place, I was doing the best quality work I had ever done.

Unfortunately, I wasn't practicing as an individual what we were practicing as a group. I need different structures to help me find that balance, and I'm leaving Groupaya and most likely this field in order to find those structures. I have devoted the last 10 years of my life to studying and practicing the art of effective collaboration, and helping others do the same. I've given it everything I've got. I wish I could have accomplished more, but I'm proud of what I did accomplish. I have zero regrets, and — regardless of what I choose to do next — I will continue to practice this craft. It's too important not to, and I love doing it.

I don't know what I'm going to do next. I have some client commitments over the next few months that I need to complete, and I'd like to spend some time writing down what I've learned over the past 10 years. Beyond that, I have no idea. Regardless, I will surely share stories about future adventures on [my personal blog](#).

What I do know is that I'll miss the team terribly. Kristin, Rebecca, Natalie, Amy, Dana, and Betty, you guys mean everything to me, and I will feel forever grateful to you for being such an intimate part of my life and my learning. Many thanks to you and to all my friends who made this past year so rich and rewarding.

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