



Jim Davidson

ADVENTURER / EXPLORER · AUTHOR

Plans break in public. The teams that recover are not the ones with the best forecast, they are the ones who have rehearsed how to make decisions when conditions stop matching the plan. Most organisations train for execution and improvise the rest, which is exactly the wrong way around.

Jim Davidson is a mountaineer, author and former environmental geologist who helps leaders and teams make better decisions under pressure and rebuild after setbacks they did not choose.

Jim Davidson's 2026 Biography

AVAILABLE FOR

- Speaking

Why organisations work with Jim Davidson

- Two decades inside a regulated, risk-driven scientific career sit behind the climbing stories, so the language of preparation, hazard analysis and recovery lands with operational, safety and engineering audiences who usually distrust adventure speakers.
- Two named, public disasters on his record, the 1992 Mount Rainier crevasse fall and the 2015 Everest earthquake at base camp, give him specific case material to teach from rather than generic survivor framing.
- Co-authored *The Ledge* won the 2012 National Outdoor Book Award for Outdoor Literature, and *The Next Everest* is a published St. Martin's Press title, so the underlying material is editorially vetted, not bureau copy.
- Twice recognised by the U.S. National Park Service for volunteer high-altitude rescues, which gives him a credible voice on team trust, mutual reliance and judgement at altitude that is hard to manufacture.
- Books to senior corporate audiences with a track record of named clients, including Marriott, National Geographic, UPS, Nationwide Insurance and the U.S. Army, so the room calibration is already proven across sectors.

JIM'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Business Continuity and Crisis Management
- Change Management
- Motivation and Inspiration
- Risk Management
- Team Leadership

LANGUAGES: English

Biography highlights

- Co-author, *The Ledge: An Inspirational Story of Friendship and Survival* (Ballantine / Penguin Random House), with journalist Kevin Vaughan.
- Author, *The Next Everest: Surviving the Mountain's Deadliest Day and Finding the Resilience to Climb Again* (St. Martin's Press).
- Winner, 2012 National Outdoor Book Award for Outdoor Literature, for *The Ledge*.
- B.S. and M.S. in environmental geology; roughly 20 years as a practising environmental geologist before full-time speaking.

- Summited Mount Everest in 2017, two years after surviving the April 2015 Nepal earthquake at base camp.
- Recognised twice by the U.S. National Park Service for volunteer high-altitude rescue work in Colorado and Alaska.

Biography

A snowbridge collapsed under Jim Davidson on Mount Rainier in June 1992. He fell roughly 80 feet into a glacial crevasse with his climbing partner, Mike Price. Price did not come out. Davidson did, and spent the next 20 years working as an environmental geologist while quietly building the body of climbing experience that would later put him on Everest.

That two-track career is the point. Davidson is not a climber who picked up a corporate vocabulary, he is a working scientist who spent two decades on industrial sites assessing oil and gasoline contamination, writing remediation plans and answering to regulators. The risk language he uses with executive audiences, hazard recognition, contingency design, post-incident learning comes from that work as much as from the mountains.

The mountains supplied the case studies. Co-authored with journalist Kevin Vaughan, *The Ledge* took the Rainier accident through judgment, friendship and recovery and won the 2012 National Outdoor Book Award for Outdoor Literature. *The Next Everest*, published by St. Martin's Press, covers the 2015 Nepal earthquake, which struck while Davidson was on Everest, and his return to the summit in 2017. Both books are written, not ghosted around a brand.

For corporate audiences, the value is specific. He has briefed Marriott, National Geographic, UPS, Nationwide Insurance and the U.S. Army on what disciplined teams actually do when the plan stops matching the terrain, drawn from rescues he has been part of and the U.S. National Park Service has formally recognised, twice. The talks work because the material is real, the science is honest about luck, and the decisions get named.

Key speaking topics

- Resilience under pressure
- Decision-making in high-consequence environments
- Risk recognition and hazard preparation
- Team trust and mutual reliance
- Recovery after setback
- Leadership in crisis conditions
- Change and uncertainty

Ideal for

- Senior leadership offsites where the agenda is preparation, recovery and judgment, not motivational storytelling.
- Safety, risk, engineering and operations functions in industries where consequence is physical, including energy, construction, utilities, life sciences and defence.
- Annual sales kickoffs and field-leader gatherings that need a credible non-business voice on resilience.
- HR and learning leaders are building a leadership programme around decision-making under uncertainty.

Audience outcomes

- A working vocabulary for talking about hazard, judgement and recovery that doesn't collapse into platitude.
- Two specific case studies, Mount Rainier 1992 and Everest 2015, are used as decision artefacts that the audience can argue with.
- A clearer separation between things a team can prepare for and things it can only respond to.
- Practical questions to take back into post-incident reviews, planning sessions and team debriefs.
- A sharper view of what trust between teammates is actually built from when the consequences are real.

Meet Jim Davidson

Jim Davidson is a resilience expert who has survived not just one epic mountain disaster, but two. From his real-world survival experiences, he distills hard-won lessons about forging the resilience to overcome change, challenge, and uncertainty.

While climbing Mount Everest, Jim and his team survived massive earthquakes and avalanches on what became the mountain's deadliest day ever. Jim later returned to Everest and summited successfully. His riveting survival stories have been featured in documentaries for National Geographic, Smithsonian Channel, Netflix, and Discovery's hit show, "I Shouldn't Be Alive". Jim has been featured on NPR, CBS, CNN, and hundreds of other media outlets.

From his 42 years of adventures, Jim shares compelling stories and practical tips about how to persevere and how to endure uncertain times through resilience strategies and post-traumatic growth. Davidson provides motivating keynotes and interactive workshops on resilience, teamwork, leadership, and change management. His energizing messages have been shared in-person and virtually with audiences in more than 35 countries.

Jim has scaled high peaks from Argentina to Nepal, and from Bolivia to Tibet. While leading expedition teams around the globe, Jim has guided his teammates through storms and setbacks to reach lofty summits. The U.S. National Park Service has commended Jim twice for volunteering on successful high-altitude rescues in Colorado and Alaska.

His latest book, *The Next Everest*, was published in six international editions and was selected as an Amazon Editor's Pick. Jim's survival memoir, *The Ledge*, was a New York Times bestseller. He worked for twenty years as a hydrogeologist and managed his own environmental consulting firm. In his youth, Jim worked for his father painting high-voltage electrical towers carrying 230,000 volts.

Jim Davidson's 2026 talks & topics

Everest Resilience: Overcoming Adversity and Reaching High Goals

A keynote on rebuilding after a setback you did not choose, drawn from the 2015 Everest earthquake and Davidson's 2017 return to summit.

Key takeaways:

- How to keep a team functional when the plan stops matching conditions.
- What recovery looks like in practice, beyond resilience as a slogan.
- Why ambitious goals survive setbacks only when the next decision is concrete.

Climbing Mountains of Change: Elevating Your Team's Resilience

A leadership-team session on operating through prolonged uncertainty, using mountain expedition decision-points as the case material.

Key takeaways:

- Where teams lose time in uncertain conditions, and how to compress it.
- The difference between bracing for change and adapting to it.
- How leaders signal steadiness without signalling denial.

Resilient Teamwork And Resilient Leadership

An interactive workshop built on real high-altitude rescues Davidson has taken part in, focused on trust, role clarity and recovery under pressure.

Key takeaways:

- What mutual reliance is built from when consequences are real.
- How to design team protocols that survive contact with a bad day.
- Where leadership presence matters most, and where it gets in the way.

Jim Davidson's Videos



What Jim Davidson's clients say

Jim was truly an inspirational speaker. He was warm, engaging, and was able to focus his talk so that it was geared toward our organization's mission. He was very professional and we would recommend his talk to any large group focused on resilience. Thank you from Donor Network West.

Andy Daley

Donor Network West

It is a rarity to find such a casual, yet professional presenter. It's a great mix and I definitely look forward to working with you in the future. I can't thank you enough for making my job so much easier...

Jolene McNeil

CMP, Meeting Manager, Industrial Supply Association

The post-event surveys are in and, as I expected, you got top marks from everyone. The only complaints were that I didn't schedule you for a longer session, earlier in the workshop. But that just means we'll have to bring you back!

Martha Morrison

CMP, Vice President-Meetings and Trade Shows, Self Storage Association

Jim Davidson's keynote presentation and incredible personal stories of resiliency set the tone for our entire three-day National State Insurance Trade Association Conference. Our group of insurance association and company executives are in the business of dealing with adversity and Jim used his compelling life lessons to inspire our attendees to reach for new personal and professional heights. We all regularly hear from motivational speakers, but the feedback we received on Jim's presentation was that it uniquely resonated because it was about taking real risks and surviving in the face of impossible odds.

Carole Walker

Executive Director, Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association

Jim was very quick on the uptake during our pre-event meetings and showed from the beginning an understanding for the client's strategic focus for the conference. From their main values and cue words, Jim connected his experiences with the purpose of the event. Inspiring, educational and very value-creating presentation!

Jonas Lysholm Larsen

Project Coordinator, Eventually, Denmark

After Jim Davidson spoke at our event, a participant later said to me, “The best speaker I’ve heard was at your conference. Jim had the most relevance to advising than all of the speakers I’ve heard.” Jim was very easy to work with, he was very organized, and made a lasting impression on the participants. We have since used his book, *The Ledge*, in our local literacy program; the students are on the edge of their seats while reading it.

Patty Pederson

Student Services Coordinator, Carbon County Higher Education Center

This is the second time we have had Jim as a keynote speaker. Jim’s Resilience keynote tied right into the emphasis we wanted as a take away from our meeting. Jim’s ability to assimilate and shape the keynote to our business and provide methods/tools to help each of us moving forward was remarkable. We are grateful to Jim for providing both an inspirational message but more importantly, specific ideas and process that we can begin using immediately to improve ourselves and our business.

Brad Thornton

President & CEO, University Mechanical & Engineering Contractors, Inc.

We will be facing challenges of a different nature in the coming year, challenges of new and dynamic growth. The key to our success will lie in our ability to execute: exactly the problem you had to deal with inside the glacier if you were going to survive. I will be stressing the importance of execution as we embark on these adventures; reminding them of the power of your talk and calling on them to reach inside and go beyond their perceived limits. I believe that they will rise to the occasion as never before. Many thanks for helping us to see beyond ourselves!

David Sage

CEO, Underground Locators, LLC

We had an inspiring, invigorating and very meaningful presentation from mountain climber Jim Davidson. Jim helped us with a great send off by using our challenges as analogies to correspond with his mountain climbing experiences. It worked wonderfully!

Donna D. Watford

CMM, CMP – President of Meeting, Professionals International, Rocky Mountain Chapter

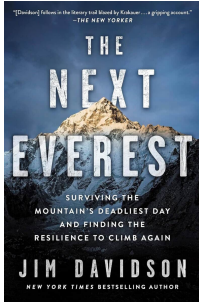
What an incredible story. You could hear a pin drop during his presentation.

Vice President of Convention/Hotel Sales, Caesars, Bally's, Harrah's

Jim gave me the motivation to go forward with a project I have been struggling with for a year. Now I have inspiration to do it!

AMC Institute attendee

JIM'S LATEST BOOKS



The Next Everest: Surviving the Mountain's Deadliest Day and Finding the Resilience to Climb Again

Jim Davidson's 2026 speaking fees

Specific fees fall within the ranges shown. These are presented as a guide only and are subject to change without notice.

	EUR	GBP	USD
Home Country	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
Asia Pacific	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
Europe	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
Middle East & Africa	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
South America	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
United Kingdom	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
US East Coast	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000
US West Coast	€12000 to €40000	£10,001 - £35,000	\$15000 - \$50000

Virtual	Under €12000	Under £10,000	Under \$15000
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