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MARCH 25, 2020

# OPPORTUNITY

This week in response to the covid-19 pandemic, The Outdoor Academy v. begin delivering our program online. For a school built on the principle of experiential learning in a small community setting in the outdoors, this presents us with a tremendous challenge. But with challenge comes opportunity.

Before coming to The Outdoor Academy, I spent many years working for the North Carolina Bound School. It was there that I learned about the educational philosophies of Kurt Hahn. Hahn started a progressive school in Germany before having to flee the Nazis to escape persecution for being Jewish. Instead of bemoaning his circumstances, Hahn moved forward,

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Today we utilize many of the ideals of Hahn and Outward Bound here at The Outdoor Academy. Kurt Hahn famously said:

“Your disability is your opportunity.”

— Kurt Hahn

This is a motto I always come back to during difficult times. I also use this quote to remind myself that my perceived shortcomings contain lessons waiting to be learned.

I felt discouraged when I first heard the news that students would not be returning to campus as planned. But after a week of video conferencing with faculty and students scattered all around the country, I am energized and excited by what lies ahead for Semester 50.

Our faculty are some of the most creative and talented educators I have ever met. I know that they will continue to deliver an engaging educational experience for our students. Getting silly and putting on costumes with students while on a video chat also reminded me that we can still laugh and have fun as a community even though we are spread far and wide.

None of us know what the next few weeks and months are going to look like. But we do have a choice in how we respond. We can cower in fear and discouragement at the challenges we face, or we can choose a different path. This path is one of acceptance. Acceptance that within every obstacle, there is the opportunity to learn and to grow.

*By John Gray*

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