

## TECHNOLOGY 23

Joseph Fig was very anxious and nervous as he watched the exam progress from the sides. He observed that some knights had their legs tangled up on the rope wall, while others couldn't jump swiftly over the stacks of wood present.

Most people fell when they had to jump through the circular stacks of dry muddy leaves. And few people were slow when doing rock climbing. Their king had taught them how to make decisive decisions on where to place their hands when rock climbing.

He also noted that for some people, by the time they reached the cliff top, Landon would say their time was up.

Others had collected the item from Lucius and on their way back to Landon, their time was up as well. Some people also damaged the item on their way back by dropping it in the mud, or letting it fall from the top to the bottom of the cliff.

This was also a fail to their king. Their king said the only thing he would allow to damage the item was blood. Carelessness with important items or even state documents, could lead to exposure and worsen your position with your opponent. If you get the item, one must secure it before proceeding to return.

But surprisingly, what Joseph was worried about was cliff climbing. When he climbed before, he was confident because he was alone on his rope. But now, other people might depend on him to climb up the cliff. Their security and lives were somewhat in his hands.

Their king had told them that in a military war campaign, when a rock wall, cliff or mountain side, was visible anytime, many people would choose to go around it. Joseph included.

This was the first time he had ever heard of a need to know how to scale hills, cliffs or mountains. No one had thought of this idea, but Joseph could see the wisdom in it.

No enemy would imagine that someone would willingly climb a cliff just to attack them, so they would leave that edge unsupervised. Giving room for them to invasion to occur.

And if you were not fast enough when climbing a cliff, the enemy might discover you and throw boulders down on you instantly crushing you. As their king always says 'You need to be swift as an assassin in war'.

Joseph decided to do his best and toughen up for the glory of Baynard and his majesty, as well as improve himself. Even if he didn't complete the exam, he needed to be confident in carrying his teammates through.

And Joseph was right. Although time was important in this drill, Landon's primary objective was on teamwork. He needed each knight to feel the responsibility given to them in a team. They couldn't act selfishly and they needed to make wise decisions that benefit the entire team as a whole.

When Joseph and his team ran towards the bottom of the cliff, Joseph took one end of a rope, knotted it around his waist and passed the other end of the rope to his next teammate. This was of course for safety measures.

Joseph realized that he was the safety climber (lead climber) of the group, while the others were supporting climbers behind him.

Joseph took another rope, tied it around his legs and butt as a harness and knotted both ends of the rope with the other team rope around his waist. His teammates did the same thing as well.

Of course his highness had said that each person must always have a dagger when climbing up a cliff or rock wall. One end of a new rope should always be tied to the dagger and the other end to the climbers waist rope.

Once they reach a dangerous height, the lead climber was to pierce the soil and rock cracks deeply as support and climb up the cliff. In this way, if all of them slip, the rope attached to the deeply pierced knife will save them.

Joseph looked the tall cliff in front of him and decided to start climbing it. He looked at a vine in front of him and hesitated whether or not it would be wise to grab it now.

When he did, nothing happened and he immediately became happy in knowing that he made the right choice for his team.

As they progressed up the hill, suddenly...grrrrrrrrrrp...Joseph felt a tug on his team waist rope and looked down. He immediately saw one of his teammates dangling helplessly from the team rope. His teammate had slipped. Joseph thought fast.

"Use your dagger to stabilize yourself by stabbing it into soil and climbing back to your position. We will wait for you dont worry." Joseph said with a smile

The knight smiled bitterly with his face filled with guilt. He looked like he was about to give up.

"It doesnt matter if we don't make it in 15 minutes, what matters is that we work hard together and better our skills. You were the best at the other obstacle activities. So what if your slow in this one now? With his highness' help we will become professionals in no time. Preserver and dont give up easily. " Joseph encouraged while smiling with confidence.

"Yeah he's right, cheer up, I myself almost slipped there too. We are all learning, are we not? No one is as good as our Captain's now, so dont worry. Push on." Said another knight smilingly.

The knight looked at Joseph and the rest, and smiled more confidently as if he just had an enlightenment.

"Thank you all", he replied.

As Landon, the Captain's and Lucius heard them, they all smiled and nodded as if acknowledging what was said. It was the main point they were trying to drive home today.

Likewise, as the other knights heard this, they also had a stroke of epiphany and finally understood what the real goal was for this exercise.

Once Joseph and his team reached the top of the cliff, their time was up. Although they had failed in the aspect of time, they had passed regarding their teamwork.

They held their heads high and didn't feel down at all. In their minds they were thinking of how to improve themselves more over time. Infact all the knights, didn't get discouraged, but aspired to improve and become as tough as their Captain's.

Once they were all done with the test, everyone went on with their daily duties excitedly in anticipation for the last exam. Tomorrow was the last day for this hellish exam.

Would it be a normal sword fighting competition? or something else? This question made them ponder deeply the entire day.

-----'-zzzzzzzzzzzz (snore)-----' and finally everyone went to bed with anxious smiles on their faces and a sense of accomplishment in their hearts. They felt strong and confident.