

180 Degrees South

1. “The best journeys answer questions that in the beginning you didn’t even think to ask.” Comment on this quote from the film.
2. Yvon and Doug talk about climbing Mt. Everest. They compare the true climb with the pseudo-climb of people wanting to claim the experience without the true nature of the experience which is the hard work to get there. (It’s like reading the cliff notes of a book rather than reading the book – you aren’t changed.) Comment.
3. Jeff mentions Jared Diamond’s book *Collapse* is mentioned: As the story of Easter Island goes, so goes the planet. Then he quotes Aldous Huxley: “Men do not learn very much from the lessons of history, and that is the most important lesson from all history.” What do these ideas mean for us as modern Americans?
4. The trajectory of the movie is similar to the ideas behind it. The film meanders along to allow the viewer to fall into the rhythm of the travels. Why do you think they made the movie this way? How successful is the strategy?
5. Encroaching progress – over consumption elsewhere – we blindly consume when not seeing the consequence. Discuss the environmental concerns presented in the film.
6. There is a claim offered “To know a place you must love it first.” What is the significance of the idea?

7. The climbers have to stop short of the summit after their long journey. Have they succeeded or failed in their quest?

8. Do you agree or disagree with the claim that simplifying life the hardest thing to do? Why?

9. Yvon says that leading an examined life is important because most of the damage we cause is by unintentional acts. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living. Explain.

10. The title of the film comes from Doug's comments at the very end – People say that you can't go back. Yet if you get to the cliff, you can take one step forward or turn 180 degrees around. How might this help us respond to the environmental situation we face in the modern world?

11. Yvon claims that we shouldn't keep trying to make a flawed system work. What are our options? Is the path Yvon and Doug have taken in life a viable option for us?

12. Someday you're going to get to your last "climb" – that moment may lead you to ask how have you lived your life? Is there value in asking that question earlier in life? How might asking that question earlier change you?

13. What's the moral of the film?