



Nathanael Thompson



Maureen Liddell Moore

Conversations

With

Nate

Conversations with Nate

When my father, Eric Liddell, died in an internment camp in China in 1945, a great and gaping hole was torn in the fabric of our lives. My mother, my two sisters and I did our best in our own ways to repair the fabric and often thought we had succeeded. However, as my father's fame and influence increased, we were often made aware of just how much we had missed his presence and how much we each struggled to truly heal our hearts.

As the youngest daughter, who never met him, I was particularly interested in the stories that revealed his personality rather than his athletic feats or the many details of his journey. I longed to know the man, the father, the husband, the warmth and security that had only presented as a monstrous space in my childhood.

Over the years a strong sense of a higher purpose for my father's life emerged with an ever increasing power that was impossible to miss. So many people touched deeply, changed for the better, so many organizations and programs formed and sustained, lives saved and inspired, and mountains moved.

All of this deepened the healing of our hearts, but, once in a while, something personal and dramatic would happen that would literally make the healing tears flow. This was a gift to me.

Just for you, Maureen, from your Dad.

Such were my conversations with Nate

Why did they move me so?

So many people that my father influenced had been young children when they found out about him and then proceeded to live differently and better due to his inspiration. Here I had a real child, who charmed me with his spirit, and I wanted to help Eric come alive for him. In my attempt, my father's presence became palpable and he became ever more real to me. My connection to Nate brought my father into my life in an unexpected and surprisingly delightful way that totally healed that last remnants of that once seemingly never to be filled space.

I realised that although this was a onetime event there must literally be hundreds of children like Nate who might enjoy reading these conversations in searching for more information about that great hero, Eric Liddell, who had captured their fancy somewhere along the way.

Nate and I made a connection of the heart. We will be friends forever. I am quite convinced that every child who seeks to connect with my father's spirit will be enriched in ways beyond imagining. Happy journeying !!!!!!!

From: **Day of Discovery**

To: Patricia, Heather and Maureen

I am one of the assistant producers for Day of Discovery and we received this request from one of our viewers after they watched the program about your father. We were wondering if any of you would have the time and were willing to respond to the viewer. There is a young boy, Nate, in fourth grade who is a runner and is very interested in your dad's life. We were contacted by his school teacher who asked us to pass on the e-mail below. If you are able to respond I know they would greatly appreciate it.

Thank you so much,
Jessica

To: whom it may concern:

I'm a fourth grade teacher at Oak Harbor Christian School in Oak Harbor Washington. I recently assigned a job for my students to find and research their passion. I recently read Eric Liddell's biography to my kids and one student (Nathanael Thompson) took a great interest in Eric. Nate is a runner and chose to do extra research on Eric's life. I loaned him the Day of Discovery video and he loved it. I encouraged Nate to try to contact Eric's daughters to interview one of them as experts. I can assure you it would be an amazing memory for this boy. The spirit is wonderfully strong in him – so much like Eric. I hope to hear from you soon!

Thank you
Julie

To: Heather and Patricia

Just wanted to let you know that this request really caught my heart, so I have responded to Jessica and Julie. I'm sure Nate would love to hear from all three of us. If you want to join in, great, as we each have a different perspective to offer.

Love Maureen

To: Jessica

There are many requests about my father that, I must confess, don't grab my heart. But this one certainly did. Thanks so much for sending it on. I never cease to be amazed how alive and well Eric is, still inspiring people with his passion. It always makes me feel ever closer to him myself, which is a wonderful gift in my life. I will be in touch with Nate and we will see where this leads.

Blessings to you all, Maureen

PURSUE YOUR PASSION!!!!!!!!!!

Name Nathanael

Please think carefully about an area you want to study and learn more about. You can pick anything!!!!!! What do you think about often?

What do you dream about? What's your PASSION?

Area of study

Who was this man

Eric Liddell?

Book I'll read Ten boys who changed the world.

Magazine article or website I'll read

Eric Liddell.org

Expert I'll interview Eric Liddell's daughter

Maureen

The three most fascinating things I learned

a. _____

He's a very very fast runner

b. _____

He's a very good Christian

c. _____

He was a missionary.

The most surprising thing I learned

How nice he was to all
how faithful he was to the Lord
his God.

To: Julie Oak Harbor, Whidbey Island, Washington, USA

Dear Julie,

I was very touched by your story of Nate and would love to be in touch with him.

I am Eric's youngest daughter. My mother was pregnant with me when war broke out in China. At that time my mother and two sisters returned to the safety of Canada where I was born. My father was interned in a Japanese prison camp where he died when I was three and a bit. So, like Nate, I was intensely curious to know my father. It was the anecdotes that revealed his personality that fascinated me. When my oldest grandson heard the story, he said, "But that would mean you didn't know what he smelled like or how it felt to have his arms around you!!! How awful!!!"

Now I feel connected to Eric at all times, and when I am particularly touched by a story like Nate's, I feel his arms around me. Perhaps Nate could e-mail me questions and we could have an on-going conversation. I hope this is helpful.

Maureen

Dear Mrs. Moore,

Hi, my name is Nathanael and I have a very big interest in your dad. And speaking of your dad I, too, am a very fast runner (not trying to boast or anything) with my classmate, Evan. Since the first time I heard about Eric Liddell I said to myself that I will become an Olympic runner one day in my life.

I'm going to be just like Eric when I grow up. I'm going to encourage my classmates to watch the video about your dad. I just loved it. And "Chariots of Fire".

Now, may I ask you some questions? 'Cause if I can, here they are.

1. What kinds of things did your mom tell you about your dad?
2. What did Eric Liddell impact in your life?
3. Have you ever run in track?
4. Have you ever been in Tientsin, China?
5. What would you ask your dad if he was here?
6. What do you think he might say?

From Nate

Hi Nate,

I am impressed with your questions. They are better than I have heard from many adults. So, I believe you when you say you will grow up to be like my dad. You could not have a better role model.

He was a very special man and you sound like a very special young man.

As for the answers to your questions I will try my best to satisfy your curiosity.

1. My mom always emphasised his sparkling blue eyes, his terrific sense of humour, joy and adventure. He always thought the best of everyone and was very humble and deprecating about his own talents. He liked to poke fun at people, (in a kind way) that he thought were being too stuffy or pompous. He once wore shorts to church as it was beastly hot in China, and that made perfect sense to him, but caused a great stir in that very proper society. He also wore a shirt made from my mom's kitchen curtains in the camp as he loved to be practical and poke fun at himself. Most of all, she told me of his very deep love and understanding of people that might be disapproved of. My dad seemed to get people at a very deep level and his compassion was endless.
2. I always experienced my dad at my shoulder like a guardian angel. I think because I so longed to connect with him that I was super sensitive to his presence in my life. At very important moments the music to 'Chariots of Fire' would come on and that would always blow me away. For instance, once when I was trying a competition for a new job the music played on the office radio as I crossed the floor to be examined. That gave me such confidence. I won, of course! Also, whenever I had a difficult decision to make, often against the prevailing winds, I would always talk to him until I felt at peace with my decision. His greatest impact was that I felt very lucky to be his daughter, even though, sometimes I minded dreadfully that he was not here and I had to work so hard to feel connected. I think that experience made me search harder for God and for the truth and that was a good thing.
3. I haven't run track but I am 69 and ride my bicycle like crazy. I am sure I have my father to thank for that.
4. RBC, Day of Discovery, took my two sisters and I to China to film us, tracing our parents footsteps, a couple of years ago. It is the bonus section in "The Story of Eric Liddell". We went to Hong Kong, Tianjin, Peitaiho (the sea shore), Beijing and the Great Wall.

I particularly liked seeing the prison camp which now is a beautiful memorial to my dad and the work of the missionaries. I felt so peaceful in the gardens there.

5 & 6. If my dad were here I would say,

“Could I have a hug that is big enough to make up for all the hugs I had to imagine?”

I think he would say, “Yes, my darling daughter.”

Then I would say,

“I think it all happened exactly the way it was supposed to and it was all good.”

And he would say, “Yes Maureen, it was all good!”

Well, Nate, that’s for starters. I hope I satisfied some of your curiosity.

Talk again soon. Maureen

Hi Maureen

I just have to take a moment to thank you for your wonderful encouragement of Nate. I especially loved your statement: "I believe you when you say you will grow up to be just like my dad." I believe it as well, with all my heart. Nate is a sweet boy with a very sweet and open spirit. He is unique in many ways, but I think the most unique thing about him is that he is willing to do hard things. For example, he chose to do a solo at the Christmas program. It was his very first solo and he was so nervous! But he did it cheerfully and never tried to back out. Usually he wants to do right and please the Lord.

In reading your messages I sense you are on an amazing journey. You describe your search for God and truth and I sense Him emanating from every word you say. I truly wonder if there is a book inside you just pulsating to be brought out. You know, we've all seen "The Flying Scotsman" and the great missionary to China but none of us know anything about the wonderful daddy who loved his baby girl from a continent away. We've never met the man with sparkling blue eyes who shocked everyone by wearing shorts to church! Have you ever considered sharing your heart in such a way???? I am a brash American!

Julie

Dear Julie.

Not brash at all. I love people who speak from the heart.

Thank you for your kind words.

All my life I have been told to write a book but I feel there is more of my journey to unfold before I am ready. It has been quite a trip!!!!

Writing to Nate was pure joy as I sense his wonderful spirit.

Tell Nate to call me Maureen as we are friends now

Blessings

Maureen

Dear Maureen,

I loved your e-mail so much. It just entertained me and filled my heart and soul with joy and laughter. I love the fact that we are friends. It is nice to have new friends. Now I have some questions:

1. Did you like the movie "Chariots of Fire"?
2. Have you told anything about your dad to your kids and grandkids?
3. Have you been to Scotland?
4. Have you seen the remains of the track that your dad ran in the 400meters?
5. When did you go to Tientsin?

Your friend Nate

Hi Nate,

You are so right. There is nothing quite like a good friend.

1. I really loved the movie in spite of some of its flaws.
E.g. My aunt Jennie was quite put out because she was not like that at all but they took artistic liberties to make a good story. I did love the fact that David Puttnam had just finished a very dark movie about despair and evil and he wanted to do a true story that would restore his faith in goodness. Just the job for my dad, don't you think?
Secondly, it was as if my father suddenly sprang to life again after so many years and raced across the big screen in grand Technicolor, with that wonderful music and once again touched everyone's heart just as he had before. Miraculous, really!
Thirdly, so many conversations, experiences and love unfolded for us in the most spontaneous situations that it was impossible not to feel God's hand at work. A wonderful feeling.

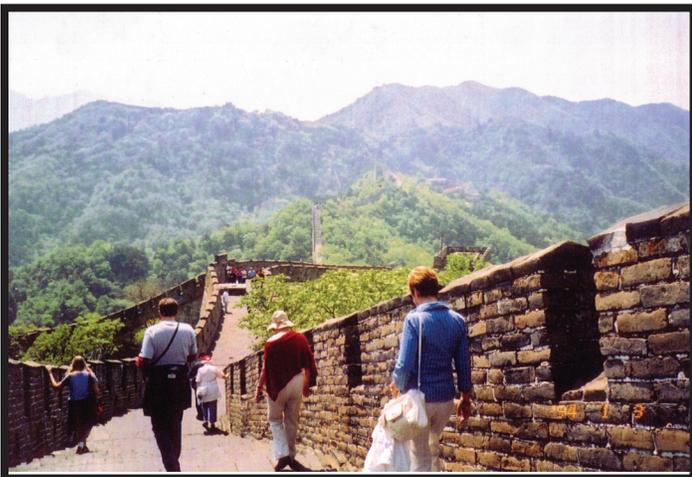
Lastly, it seems that everyone now knows my father when his story could so easily have disappeared into obscurity. What a loss that would have been. David McCasland's book "Pure Gold" is the definitive written story of my dad, but "Chariots" put him on the world stage to intrigue and inspire in an awesome way.

2. My son Brady, once came down stairs after putting his young sons to bed saying, "If I have to tell them the story of you and your dad one more time I'm going to scream." (That's a joke!) The grandchildren all love doing essays of him for school. That's what is called an easy A.
None of them are runners but they all have some of Eric's sweetness, compassion and strength of spirit. I am very proud of them all, children and grandchildren. Daddy's spirit seems to be woven into all of our hearts. We didn't really have a choice.
3. Warner Brothers flew my sister Heather and me to Edinburgh to the opening of "Chariots of Fire". WOW! Then we went to London for a week. It was April and I bought an umbrella for the occasion. We had solid sunshine for a week!!!! (Now that's a miracle). David Puttnam also told us they had only one day to film the Olympic race and the sun shone for them too. We also went to Carcant where my parents and sisters vacationed. Very beautiful.
4. I have not seen any of the actual racetracks. But when we were in China my sisters and I ran on a new track. No Olympic stars there. LOL
5. In May 2008, RBC took Heather, Patricia and I to China to retrace our parents footsteps. I will send some pictures.

I am sorry this package will not arrive before the end of your school year but I am sure Julie will give you high marks for what you have already accomplished. I am very impressed with your maturity and your sincerity. Please feel free to ask more questions. Curiosity, I believe, is one of the most important qualities in human beings and should always be encouraged.

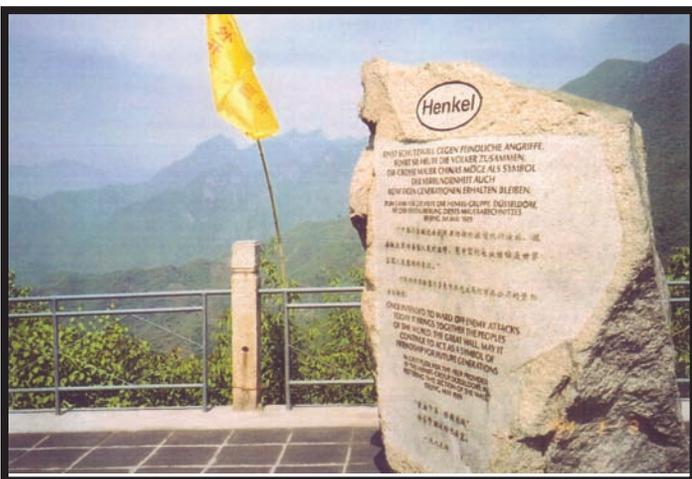


Here we are in China, my two sisters, Heather and Patricia, my aunt Louise and the amazing filming crew from RBC, Day of Discovery.



This picture gives you some idea of the vast extent of The Great Wall of China.

Very impressive.



I loved this monument which changed the wall into a symbol of peace. That is what we experienced when we were there



This is an example of the many accolades to my father that we saw in China. It was a surprise to see how loved he is there.



Here is the monument that now stands at the prison camp where we saw the picture of the small wooden cross on my dad's grave in 1945 and all our hearts were broken.

It is now a place of deep peace.

The healing began.



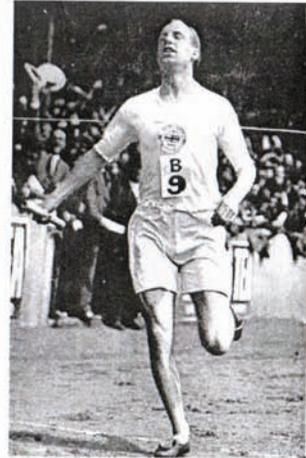
Filming at Peitaiho where Mom and Dad spent many happy hours and we felt our hearts healing more and more. God is good



Don't you just love this picture!!!!
It shows the wonderful sense of humor
And hilarious fun my parents had.

I said to my grandchildren,
"Isn't it a relief to know that your
great- grandparents were capable
of fooling around?"





Eric Liddell

"God made me fast, and when I run I feel his pleasure."

Nathanael Thompson: 2011

Dear Nate,

I am so glad you liked the pictures. Thank you for the wonderful picture you sent in return. Are you sure you are only ten? You picked my favourite line from the movie!!!! My dad never actually said that, but I thought it so captured the astonishing joy that he experienced in loving God with all his heart and soul. *When I framed and hung your picture above my desk, I started to cry.* I could feel my heart totally heal. The last remnants of pain about missing my father just melted away. Now that is a miracle Nate. Thank you.

Love

Maureen

Dear Maureen,

I have been busy with the new school year (5th grade) and playing soccer the first time. Please forgive me for not writing sooner.

I'm sending along a short video clip from our church's Reformation Day celebration last month. I sung the first three verses of the hymn "Be Still My Soul"! It is a favorite of mine now too, and since it is a Luther-era hymn from Germany, it fit into our Reformation celebration. My dad has helped me and also has memorized the verses, and we enjoy singing it with our congregation too during hymn-sing times. Singing it reminds me and my dad of your father listening to the Salvation Army band playing it for him outside the hospital window. I hope to grow to learn how such love God has for us as written in that hymn.

Our soccer season was fun, I played on a team for the first time. We played games on Saturdays and thankfully the weather was very calm, which is unusual for our island! I scored a goal in each of our games and had fun learning from the other boys who had played soccer before. I really like the game.

My dad and I and my brother watched the major league baseball World Series. We were rooting for the Texas Rangers but the Cardinals won in the final game. It was fun to watch the different games with the same players and how well all the players played. It made me want to have my baseball season start soon!

My dad is helping me type this note, especially with sentence structure and ideas!

I hope you are well, that the Lord is keeping you encouraged by his grace.

My brother and I are returning to a "running club" after school several times a week, which is another fun adventure with like-minded kids. My dad likes it because it gets our after-school energy out!

Love,
Nate

Dear Nate,

Thank you for your picture and the video clip. Wow.

As I told you, I will say "and God bless Nate" at the end of my prayers.

He does appear to be doing so!

Next time, could you write in your own words and hand writing.

You are such a lovely writer. Straight from the heart.

Love

Maureen

Dear Steve and Kalyn,

Just a short note to say it has been an honour to communicate with your young son Nate.

I believe he has a big destiny before him.

If his goal is to grow up to be just like Eric Liddell, he has already (at the tender age of ten), reached out and impacted, not only my heart, but my faith as well.

He inspired me, the same way my dad did, to see what goodness looks like, in the world. Not an easy path. He is well on his way.

Keep up the good work. Parenting is not for the faint-hearted.

Sincerely,

Maureen

Dear Steve and Kalyn,

When Nate and I were communicating I knew this was a one- time experience. I did think that there were probably many children who would like this information. Recently, I was told that The Eric Liddell Center was setting up an e-learning center to provide information to young people, and others, who wanted to know more about my dad. I would like to put together my conversations with Nate and see if they are interested in posting them.

I also think Nate would be a terrific first U.S. ambassador to the Center.

What do you think? Let me know.

Love, as always,

Maureen

Saturday 10/20/12
6:55 p.m.

Maureen,

Hi! It's nice to see you again! I just wanted to know what's going on, and that I'm sorry I took so long to respond to you.

My beginning to Middle School has been excellent! I made friends with the new boys in my class. Yesterday one of the new boys' birthday party took place at Oak Bowl. I won 365 tickets! 41 boys came to the party, and I was one of them.

I've also been playing soccer for my school this year. We haven't won yet but we have been having a grand time! One of the new boys is also on the school soccer team. Elias has been playing Rec. soccer this year. Now he's playing in the U-10. Today he played a game against the Sky Blue team! His team won, 7-5. We were all very excited.

Well, I'm very excited about this exhibit about your dad we're doing. I sent back the things that you have sent me in the past.

Again, I'm very excited to be back in touch with you again! Nathanael

Well Nate,

What an excellent writer you are turning out to be!

The very first time we talked, you told me you wanted to grow up to be just like Eric Liddell. That, of course, made me very curious about how your life would unfold. Here's how I see it so far.

Nate's Resume

- 1. Decided to find out as much as I could about Eric Liddell.**
- 2. Learned a lot.**
- 3. Healed Eric Liddell's youngest daughter's heart,
and set her on the road to great happiness.**
- 4. Decided that was all a lot of fun.**
- 5. Wondered what would happen next?**
- 6.**
- 7.**
- 8.**
- 9.**
- 10.**

As you update your resume, Nate, be sure to keep me informed.

I will be dying of curiosity.

Much Love,

Your friend, always,

Maureen