



**FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR**  
**AFTER ANTARCTICA**



**STEGER CENTER**

# ABOUT THE FILM



*After Antarctica* is an award-winning feature-length documentary by Director Tasha Van Zandt and produced by Sebastian Zeck that follows polar explorer Will Steger's journey across Antarctica with an international team of six scientists and explorers on the first coast-to-coast dogsled traverse of the continent. It juxtaposes the historic expedition, with Steger, 30 years later in the Arctic, recounting the life-changing journey that led him to where he is now and ultimate legacy, creating the Steger Center.

At its heart, *After Antarctica* is about the power of what a small group of people can do and accomplish together - Antarctica will never be mined. It also shows the power of being in a wilderness environment and what comes from that challenge and experience.

Will Steger's hope is it inspires others to see the power within themselves to lead.

For more information about the film, visit: [www.afterantarctica.com](http://www.afterantarctica.com)

To set up a group screening of the film, visit: <https://kinema.com/films/after-antarctica-pkbyzk>

## POST SCREENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

**After the credits roll and the lights come up, open the conversation by asking for initial reactions to *After Antarctica*.**

- **What scenes stood out to you from *After Antarctica*? Why?**
- **What was new information or what was a surprise?**
- **If Will Steger were in the room, what would you want to ask?**

**Once the group has finished sharing their initial thoughts, continue the conversation by reading aloud these questions and/or statements from Will Steger and share the discussion prompts.**

# PART I:

## GENERAL AUDIENCES



1. Describe your emotion the moment the plane landed with a giant “thud” on the continent of Antarctica or when the pilot dropped off Will at the age of 75 in the Arctic Circle? Were you excited, scared, nervous, fearful—all of the above or none of the above and why?
2. What issue/problem/opportunity is so big—so important—that you might be willing to reach out to former adversaries and even enemies to help accomplish it? (Recall that Will reached out to Japan, Russia, and China for help to protect Antarctica).
3. Were you surprised that one reason Will went back to the Arctic Circle was to confront his own fears? What is stopping you from venturing out into your “unknown”?
4. What experiences in your life most shaped, changed, influenced or transformed you? What might you still be able to learn from those experiences?
5. *“Your mind is absolutely free.”*
  - When and where is your mind most free? When and where are you most alive?
  - How do you make time and space for such experiences in your own life?
6. Describe how Will and his team might have felt after battling a storm for 40 straight days and being hungry and not knowing if they might find the next cache of food?
7. *“A spiritless state of mind.”*
  - What was your most “spiritless” moment in your life? How did you overcome it?
  - In retrospect, did any positive things come from that experience?
8. *“Exploring your mind. Exploring yourself. That’s what it’s all about.”*
  - What is an explorer’s mindset?
  - How can an explorer’s mindset be applied in your life?
9. When Will talked about his solo expeditions as “a mobile Zen monastery”—rhythmic, disciplined, harsh, calm, aware in the moment—how did you feel? Do you have any activities that are similar in nature? Do you make enough time for such things in your own life?
10. *“No end to the hardship.”*

How might you approach a hardship or challenge in your life (cancer, divorce, loss of job, death of a loved one, etc.) like an expedition.

11. *“Endurance is about giving in. Let it go through you.”*
  - Were you surprised that “surrender” was one of the techniques Will used to overcome his challenges?
  - How might you “surrender” to something as a way to get through it?
12. *“On a tablet of paper I designed doors, windows, and stone work for a wilderness center I plan to construct at the homestead when and if we return.”*
  - Discuss the importance of having a vision or a goal to motivate you.
  - What is your own “wilderness center” idea?
13. *“Hope comes to me in hard times. Hope is the spark of light in the darkness.”*
  - How does it make you feel that the expedition that Will and the team did in 1989–90 couldn’t be done today because the route has now “disintegrated” due to climate change?
  - What can be achieved when you bring a small group of people together in pursuit of a common goal?
14. What gives you hope?
15. Final question: What will you leave behind?

## PART II: LEADERS

1. What did you notice about Will’s leadership style and how can his leadership style inform today’s leaders?
2. What is your personal “why” and how does it motivate you in your role as a leader?
3. What have you learned about leadership transitions from your own experience?
4. Will takes leadership pauses by going on solo expeditions. How can you find ways to pause, reflect, and go slower – in order to reach new ways of thinking and doing?
5. Will talks a lot about his mindset on expeditions – an Explorer’s mind.
  - What is your mindset as a leader?
  - What type of mindsets can you choose for different situations?
6. As you reflect on Will’s approach to leadership on expeditions, how can this be applied in your setting?
 

**Develop an ambitious goal with clear intention**

  - Does your organization/ team have an ambitious goal and common purpose?
  - How can the goal be improved upon? What process will you use to change it?

### **Execute concerted teamwork**

- Does every team member understand the goal and how their work contributes to the outcome?
- Is this the right goal for your team and how well has it been communicated?
- What gets in the way of concerted effort?
- What is the level of trust and quality of relationships on the team? How can teamwork be improved?

### **Calculate each step and think things through**

- Do you have a clear timeline?
- Measures of success?

### **Take time for reflection, observe nature for guidance**

- Do you find time to learn from nature?
- What are your commitments to sustainability?

7. Does your organization take risks? Do you? When is a risk worth taking? When not?
8. How does your organization view and respond to failure?
9. What are opportunities for you and your organization to push to the cutting edge? How can you develop a mindset and culture that allows for courageous failure?
10. What is your personal ambitious goal? What is your professional ambitious goal?



## MORE INFORMATION ON THE FILM:

*After Antarctica* follows the life of Will Steger and his lifelong journey as an eyewitness to the greatest changes to the polar regions of our planet. The film has been celebrated with numerous international awards and was featured during its festival run in The New York Times and at the COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference. The film is now streaming via Amazon, Apple TV, and Google Play. Academic and educational institutions can access via [Kanopy](#).

*After Antarctica* is directed by Tasha Van Zandt and produced by Sebastian Zeck.

The film spans decades of Will Steger's life of exploration and serves as a stunning look into the unbelievable professional and personal highs and lows of Will's life. Shot across the Arctic and Antarctica, in conjunction with archival footage, the film is ripe with lush cinematography and poignant moments.

Will Steger is now committed to completion of the Steger Center, a retreat campus near Ely, Minnesota designed to serve as a place to gather leaders with the imagination and commitment to create a thriving, equitable and sustainable world.

## ABOUT TASHA VAN ZANDT

*After Antarctica* Director

Tasha Van Zandt is an award-winning director, cinematographer, and Emmy-nominated producer who has documented stories across all seven continents. Her award-winning feature-length documentary *After Antarctica* follows the life of Will Steger. Her feature-length documentary film *A Life Illuminated*, embarks on a never-before-seen journey into the mysterious depths of the ocean. Her film *Arctic Women* follows the epic journey of the first two women to

overwinter in Svalbard in history. As a collaborator of the artist JR, she has directed the award-winning films such as *One Thousand Stories* and *The Chronicles of Miami*, and is co-director of the award-winning short film *Tehachapi*. Her work has received numerous awards and has been supported by The Sundance Institute, Film Independent, SFFILM, Sloan Foundation, Library of Congress, Points North Institute, Mountainfilm, and she is a DOC NYC 40 Under 40 honoree.

## ABOUT SEBASTIAN ZECK

*After Antarctica*, Producer,  
Director of Photography

Sebastian Zeck is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, producer and cinematographer based in San Francisco, California. He was a Producer, Writer and Director of Photography on the feature-length documentary *After Antarctica*. In partnership with the Oscar-nominated teams at Sandbox Films and XTR, he is currently producing the feature-length documentary *A Life Illuminated*. Sebastian is a 2019 Film Independent Documentary Lab fellow, a 2020 SFFILM FilmHouse Resident, a 2021 Jackson Wild Media Award winner, a 2021 Film Independent Fast Track fellow and his films have been supported by The Sundance Institute, SFFILM, Film Independent, Library of Congress, and Mountainfilm.

## ABOUT GIANT PICTURES

Giant Pictures is an American independent film distribution company founded by Nick Savva and Jeff Stabenau with offices in New York City and Los Angeles. The company releases feature films, documentaries, and series on streaming platforms, emphasizing flexibility and customization for filmmakers.

## ABOUT WILL STEGER

Will Steger is a trailblazer who defied the odds to become one of the world's most admired explorers and environmentalists. A formidable voice calling for understanding and the preservation of the Arctic, and the Earth, Steger is best known for his legendary polar explorations. In 1995, Will Steger joined Amelia Earhart, Robert Peary, and Jacques-Yves Cousteau in receiving the National Geographic Society's prestigious John Oliver La Gorce Medal. In 1996, Steger became the National Geographic Society's first Explorer-in-Residence, and in 2007, he received the prestigious National Geographic Adventure Lifetime Achievement Award. Having testified with Al Gore before the U.S. Congress on polar and environmental issues, he has become a recognized authority on polar environmental concerns. He has met

with the Prime Minister of Japan, spent an afternoon with President Bush in the White House Rose Garden, traversed Baffin Island with Richard Branson, and made history through his expeditions numerous times. Will established a number of education and environmental nonprofits. Drawing on his knowledge as an expedition leader, Will Steger designed the The Steger Center in Ely, MN, dedicated to solving the problems of our age at a place that inspires clarity and breakthrough innovation. Steger is the author of five books: *Saving the Earth*, *North to the Pole*, *Crossing Antarctica*, *Over the Top of the World*, and *The Steger Homestead Kitchen: Simple Recipes for an Abundant Life*. Today, Steger continues to venture on groundbreaking expeditions and is currently finishing The Steger Center.





## THE STEGER CENTER - ORIGIN STORY

I conceived the designs for the Steger Center during the 1989-90 International Trans-Antarctic Expedition, a 3,741-mile traverse of the Antarctic continent by dog team. The expedition's goal was to draw worldwide attention to the perils the continent was facing, including the impending threat of resolution of the Antarctic Treaty, limiting mineral exploitation. The expedition was a mixture of hardships, adventure, and prolonged periods of monotony, but our unified goal kept us singularly focused no matter the odds stacked against us.

The entire expedition resembled a mobile Zen monastery where survival demanded a mindset of freedom and intuitive awareness. Our days followed a meditative rhythm and strict regimen, guided by simplicity that mandated the elimination of all unnecessary elements. While this might seem arduous on the surface, I discovered an incredible freedom of thought, a state unburdened by the noise of everyday thinking. Traveling in this peaceful state during long hours confined in tents or traversing the harsh polar plateau fostered inspiration and creativity.

For me, architecture serves as a means to capture the beauty of nature. Designing the Steger Center presented the challenge of crafting a space for the human spirit to dwell, one that would evoke awe and mystery. Envisioning a place that would exist in harmony with the wilderness that surrounds it was no small feat.

While crossing Antarctica, my thoughts were consumed by the 5-story leadership structure, a mental haven where I constantly roamed its corridors and experienced every room in all seasons. I observed the moon and sun gracefully traverse through its windows, keenly noting the interplay of shadows, the contours of roofs and railings, and the stars' reflection on the atrium windows. Each morning in the tent, armed with a pencil and a six-inch plastic ruler, I materialized my ideas and plans from the previous day onto paper. This immersive journey was both lengthy and enchanting. Upon concluding the expedition, armed with sketches in hand, I embarked on a lifelong mission to construct the Steger Center, aiming to establish a lasting legacy for the benefit of future generations. - WILL STEGER





The Steger Center sustains Will Steger's legacy in a remote wilderness setting outside Ely, MN for leadership, education, and training to boldly address our global challenges. The Center's vision is to bring together leaders with the imagination and commitment to create a thriving, equitable, and sustainable world. The 5-story Leadership Center stands as an iconic structure, providing exclusive retreat spaces for reflection and collaboration, designed to inspire bold discovery and foster innovative thinking. Nestled within 240 acres of wilderness, forest, and lakes, the Ely campus is a self-contained clean energy microgrid serving as a demonstration model for sustainable existence. Facilities include a woodshop, saunas, and private and shared cabins, as well as trails, gardens, and access to Will Steger's expedition archives.



**STEGER CENTER**

[www.stegercenter.org](http://www.stegercenter.org)

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**AFTER ANTARCTICA CREDITS**

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