# 226: How I Became the First Blind Person to Kayak the Grand Canyon

Lonnie Bedwell, Joel Canfeld

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Lonnie Bedwell (U.S. Navy, retired) shares his incredible and inspiring true story of becoming the first blind person to navigate a kayak through 226 miles of dangerous whitewater river flowing through the Grand Canyon.

Bedwell embarked on this brave and historic undertaking to raise public awareness of the plight of disabled veterans, and to show these veterans, many of whom suffer from clinical depression, what they could achieve by taking advantage of adaptive sports programs like those offered by volunteer vets organization Team River Runner.

Lonnie has been helping inspire a lot of his fellow veterans with his exploits and, whenever someone asks him if it makes him feel good to help them, his reply is always the same: Those veterans did (me) and all of us a favor by fighting for us and (I'm) just paying them back.

-Richard Seppala, The R.O.I. Guy

Bedwell's story includes insightful comments and recollections from his family, other veterans, and the men who helped him prepare and complete his remarkable journey.

Bedwell's amazing accomplishment is a testament to the limitless scope of the human spirit and our ability to overcome life's most daunting obstacles.

You can learn a lot from Lonnie. I did. I learned so much from him that by the end of our time together in the Grand Canyon, I realized that the trip was really as much about Lonnie guiding me as it was about me guiding Lonnie.

Alex Nielson, Lead River Guide



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