

Owusu, Josephine
EL 104/CRN 36556
Prof. Satrom
March 11, 2011
Revision: #1
Exemplification Essay
Word count: 1,395

Philippe Petit: the Risk Taker

On August 7th 1974, a French man named Philippe Petit, a wirewalker from Paris, was to accomplish his dream of walking on a wire between New York City's Twin Towers, the tallest building in the world at that time. Petit, a man of tenacity, discovered his future in the news paper when he was 17 years old. The newspaper had a picture of the World Trade Center that would be built someday. He was obsessed with the towers even before they were fully constructed. He started to dream of a moment for the whole world to see and believe in. He started practicing, walking on the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Sydney Harbor Bridge. Petit traveled to the United States of America and sneaked into the World Trade Center several times to determine the equipment he needed to accomplish his daring feat. A movie called *Man on Wire*, which was directed by James Marsh, is about wirewalker Philippe Petite's achievement. Although Petit said, "There is no why," he walked on the wire between the Twin Towers for several reasons, actually. To create a work of art, to achieve fame, and to perform an event that no one had ever done before are the three main reasons that motivated Petite to take such an unbelievable risk.

The first reason is Petit wanted to create a work of art. Annie, his girlfriend, said, "Each day is like a work of art for him." Philippe is a purist, and creating interesting scenes for people is what matters most to him. For example, he performed on the wire by dancing and moving

back and forth for nearly an hour between the two towers. Petit lay on the middle of the thin wire; both hands were placed across his chest, and his rolling stick was placed under his neck. Few minutes, he moved to the right hand side of the wire closed to the end, placed his rolling stick at the middle of his palm, and started to roll it gently and slowly with marching footsteps to their other side of the rope. Then, he kneeled on the wire to watch the crowd below him with a beautiful smile.

Another reason that motivated Petit was to become famous. After he walked on the wire between the Twin Towers, he became popular everywhere he went. For instance, a lot of people started pointing fingers at him and news paper writers begun to publish articles about him. TV and radio stations invited him for interviews. Also, he captured the world's attention while he was on the wire. All eyes were on him while he walking on the wire. The entire sidewalks were occupied with thousands of people. Workers and traders had left their shops and their officers assembled around the Twin Towers; their heads were raised and hands were pointed into to the sky to watch the performance of Petit. After he walked on the wire a lot of people admired him, he felt very proud of himself. Some of his actions and the way he approached questions from strangers showed that he enjoyed being world known. For example, after the event, a lot of people tried to be sure if he was the one who walked on the wire; he would not wait for them to complete their questions, "Are you the one who walked on the wire." Petit rushed to give them the feedback so quickly. He said, Yes, yes I am the one," by raising his hands, shouting, and smiling to identify himself to the people. Based on his attitude toward strangers, friends, and relatives communicated to the world his popularity and valued.

Finally, what motivated Petit was to accomplish something that had not been done before. Petite demonstrated to the world that no dream is impossible because he was able to walk

on a wire between the tallest buildings in the world. Philippe said, "If you want something, nothing is impossible." Walking on the wire 200 feet between the Twin Towers and 1,350 feet from the ground without fear was an incredible experience. When Petit stepped on the wire at point of death and life, he did not give up. He said, "When you are framed by death, it is great because you have to focus your attention." Philippe continued to walk on the wire until the New York police department asked him to come down. Petit said, "What a beautiful death to die in the exercise of your passion." Philippe see himself as charismatic and brave. Jean-Francoise, a friend of Philippe, said, "It is illegal, but it is not wicked or mean. It was wonderful." Petit achieved his dream and desire to be the best wirewalker in the world after successful walking on the wire between the World Trade Center, achieving what had not been done before.

In brief, Philippe Petit said in the film, "It was magical and mysterious. There is no why." Why did he walk on the wire. Should we believe him? To be an artist, to become world known, and to create a unique event are the basic reasons that motivated Petit to take such an unbelievable risk. To make dreams in to reality, someone must believe that nothing is impossible. They have to consider who they are, what they are capable of, and to be relentless toward their desire. The most essential priority is to stay focused, self-assured, and to be motivated. Without motivation and drive, success is impossible in life. As Philippe Petit said, "As a child, I wanted to climb, to escape, to see the world from a different perspective. I was and explorer at heart."