BIO:

In 2020, James was named by Canadian Geographic as one of the “90 most influential explorers in the nation’s recorded history.”

As the son of Scottish midwife and an English Surgeon-Lieutenant in the Royal Navy who emigrated to Canada in the early 50s (flipping a coin to decide if they would go west to Montreal or south to Johannesburg), James has spent his life exploring the country of which he is an accidental citizen. In doing so, he has travelled to more parts of the country by more means of conveyance—from snowshoes and bare feet to skis, dog sleds, canoes, snowmobiles, sailboats and nuclear-powered icebreakers—than almost anyone else on the planet. And along the way, he has woven stories about the places he has travelled and the people he has met along the way into books and articles, films and television programs, blogs and radio documentaries, becoming a much sought after speaker, storyteller and public presenter.

Recognized for his community activism and volunteerism, he is a Fellow International of the Explorers Club, Past Chair of the Arctic Institute of North America as well as a Fellow and Past Governor of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, service for which has been awarded many honours including Canada’s Meritorious Service Medal and an honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Guelph.

PRESENTATION:

The magic of James Raffan’s presentations is his unique blend of insight, experience and erudition, usually sprinkled with with humour, always stirring emotions. He curates his presentations from a trove of immediate first-hand stories drawn from a lifetime of exploration, always spun with surprising sounds and spectacular images he’s collected along the way. James will introduce you to voices you’ve never heard or places you’ve never been, or show you things you’ve never seen in familiar locales. He’ll teach you about the world. He’ll teach you about nature and human nature. And he’ll leave you thinking, smiling, feeling informed and empowered but always with questions about how you might engage more fully in personal growth, community building, or making the world a better place.

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