

SELF PROFESSED ADVENTURER SOPHIE RADCLIFFE HAS A NOSE FOR ADVENTURE THAT SHE'S PREPARED TO FOLLOW WHEREVER IT TAKES HER



TEXT SOPHIE RADCLIFFE
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“WHERE DO YOU GET THESE IDEAS FROM?” A FRIEND RECENTLY ASKED ME AFTER I TOLD HIM THE CONCEPT FOR MY NEXT ADVENTURE.

In August I'm embarking on my most demanding adventure to date 'The Alpine Coast to Coast'. The plan is to cycle through the Alps, from Slovenia to the South Coast of France and climb the tallest mountain in each of the 8 countries the Alps travel through. My husband, Charley, and I have been working on this plan for over a year and at Christmas we decided to just go and do it.

I'm always on the look out for the next awesome adventure that I can organise and train for without too much hassle or time off work. I've cycled from London to Paris in 24 hours 4 times. Raced through the Jungle of Borneo, climbed Mont Blanc and completed the 3 Peaks Challenge - with a twist - I cycled the 450 miles between them and climbed them in 3 days. These are some of the best days of my life.

FINDING INSPIRATION

I prefer planning my own events rather than paying to join organised events, which means I've always got 'something a little crazy' cooking. When I tell people about

my passion for challenging myself in the outdoors and what I get up to, they can find it difficult to absorb and often ask me to backtrack; “Wait a minute, you swam 1.2 miles, cycled 112 miles and then ran a marathon? In one day? Are you insane?” As I also do a little bit of Ironman racing, it could be perfectly valid to question.

Inspiration isn't always simple; my ideas don't always come easily to me. The kind of things I do for fun were things I would previously have considered as way too extreme for me. When I first took up cycling, I made friends with a bunch of guys who would cycle from London to Brighton and back on a Saturday and then go out partying all night. I could only dream of the days I could do something like that. Now, that's what I would call a good looking Saturday!





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ADVENTURE MINDSET

I had to practise opening my mind up to the possibilities in front of me. I had to learn how far out of my comfort zone I was willing to push myself - I haven't found my limit, yet. I had to understand that adventure was not a thing you did, but rather a way of thinking and looking at the world. Sean Conway, who recently swam the length of Britain taught me that. Leading me nicely into the importance of having adventure buddies, people to show you the ropes; I had to make friends with people who were willing to take me under their wing and wait for me at the top of hills in the pouring rain until I became a stronger cyclist, runner and mountaineer.

THE SEED OF MOTIVATION

I learnt that the idea for an adventure all starts with the seed of motivation. If your motivation is there, the rest will flow and you can do anything. I mean it. If you don't believe me, try it. Challenge yourself to find something that truly motivates you and go for it, you will surprise yourself.

It starts with a conversation you have in the pub, something you read or an idea that comes to you on your daily commute. Either way, once that seed pops into your head, there is no turning back.

FALLING IN LOVE

You know you've come up with the right challenge for you because it's the first thing you think about in the morning and the last thing on your mind at night. You only came up with the

idea yesterday and you're already getting up at 6am for pre-work training sessions.

It feels like falling in love. You are in love with your adventure. You are inspired, motivated and you feel alive. What is it that makes you feel this way? Motivated, excited, alive! Ready and willing to make sacrifices, change habits and raid your piggy bank for funds?

RAISING THE BAR

For me, the challenge is to raise the bar and to see what I can produce and deliver when I set my mind to it. It's an opportunity to take control over my life, to accept where I am now and know that the responsibility to get to where I want to be lies solely within my hands. It makes me nervous and excited. It's motivation to prove to myself that I can do it. To learn that nothing comes without hard work and dedication. I love it.

DON'T LET LIFE GET IN THE WAY

Every day, life tempts and teases us to settle for mediocrity. To adhere to the expectations of society and succumb to our excuses. I'm on a mission to break down those excuses and make adventure accessible to the masses. You don't need to quit your job, live on a shoestring or sell your worldly belongings to have an adventure. You don't need to spend less time with your family or stop doing the things you love. You don't need to spend your life in lycra or even step foot in a gym if you don't want to, getting fit outside rocks!

ACCEPT THE RISKS

What you do need is to embrace the ups and downs. You need to commit to the unknown and be pre-

pared to put yourself in a situation where you may fail. You need to be open to meeting new people and sharing experiences with them that may change you. You need to get familiar with being cold, wet, muddy, tired and hungry because you will see a lot of each other. If you smile through the pain it will help.

COMMITMENT

Once I'm all fired up and motivated, I set about putting wheels in motion and commit to the challenge. If you decide you're going to cycle from London to Australia, there's nothing more committing than buying a one way ticket from Australia to London. That's it, you're doing it now, just the small matter of training and logistics to tend to.

TODAY YOU ARE YOU

Above all, you will learn that an adventure allows you to be you. When I'm out there cycling, climbing, running and exploring there is no time or space to be someone I'm not. All my energy is spent on what I'm doing, on completing the challenge I've set myself. It's raw energy and emotion. It's me at my very best, because I'm being myself. I learn how to overcome obstacles, to drive forward and to succeed. Even when I fail I have still succeeded because I took a chance and challenged myself. This is what I love to do and why I do it.

I adventure because I want to be the best possible version of myself, to understand what I'm capable of and have fun in the process. I do it for the love of adventure.

It's all there for the taking, go challenge yourself and find out who you are. In the words of Dr. Seuss: "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?"

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