

Climbers-for-Climbers chains of interviews

Inga P¹ and Russ Hodge²

¹ClimbersForClimbers

²Affiliation not available

January 11, 2019

Abstract

At the beginning of 2018, I initiated “Climbers-for-Climbers chains of interviews” by inviting my friends (climbers) to fulfill a questionnaire with uniform and mostly climbing-related questions. Interview questions were divided into six categories: facts, history, motivation, opinions, questions, recommendations. Each invited climber should, at the end of the questionnaire, recommend the next climber to fulfill the same interview. Climbers are limited to recommend only their close friends or acquaintances with whom they share at least one climbing experience. I initially invited four different climbers: (1) a Croatian climber (where I am originally from) - Enna Peros, (2) a German climber (where I live at the moment) - Stephan Vogt, (3) a World Cup winner climber (who is my dear friend) - Stasa Gejo, and (4) and a +50 climber - Rafa Vellido. In the meantime, I invited other climbers as well, but their interviews will be published separately from the chain of interviews.

Results: to be continued.

Introduction

or motivation

Here, I briefly describe the cornerstones of my motivation to start “Climbers-for-Climbers chains of interviews”. My initial idea was:

1. To interview climbers who are originating from the different climbing (social) classes

With this system of interviews, I can interview climbers who belong to different “social classes” within our community of climbers. Climbers are recommended regardless of their climbing status, number and importance of their sponsors, or number of [8a.nu](#) posts written about them. By carefully initiating “Climbers-for-Climbers chains of interviews” I can interview climbers, and their life-partners, who are top-performers, as well as those who are commonly assessed as not being top performers, since they are being too old, too young, too weak, too something ...

I am curious to interview & preserve stories from “normal/average” climbers,



Figure 1: *A climber vulgaris*

especially since our Western culture of success strongly lowers the probability of an individual to be interviewed, if he/she has not been, at some point in time, assessed as the top performers. The stories of us, “normal” climbers, hardly reaches anyone except our closest friends & family, but many of us, as I believe, could share an inspiring and beautiful stories full of climbing with wider audience. Thus, with climbersforclimbers website and interview section, I am providing a platform for all of us to tell stories, aka share our MIIRO (motivation, inspiration, ideas, reflections, and opinions).

2. To encourage climbers to share bad moments & experiences to influence and help the community of climbers

Ooh, boy, we all have bad moments .

But... Are we are aware of the fact that we ALL have bad moments? Not just you – WE ALL, regardless of the climbing or life rankings, have bad experiences and moments.

I, had bad moments, as well.

Sometimes, I would feel bad, hurt, or just wrong. However, at the same time, I was not aware of the fact that it was okay to feel that way, particularly in that moment . I would not realize that my life circumstances were hard enough “to feel bad”, and that feeling bad was a natural consequence of the obstacles/problems in life. Being hurt was my (natural) response to shitty times. Silly me, but I was not aware of the fact that it was okay to feel bad. Thus, I would end up feeling bad, and then feeling bad for feeling bad. Alternatively, I would end up questioning myself again and again if it was okay to feel bad, or I was just overthinking because I misunderstood the whole situation. Does it sound familiar to you, as well?

We shall heal our wounds with a pill of friendship,..., and keep fighting

“Inga, how are you feeling?”, a friend of mine asked in the hardest moment of my life. Such a simple question, but, it helped me to realize that it was okay to feel hurt. Sad. Life can be shitty sometimes. Being aware of the fact that someone else successfully closed the similar life situation could only help us to successfully recover as well. Some of our stories could produce an aha moments in others. In the interview form, I am trying to encourage climbers to share their bad moments. I hope these interviews will be a small

step towards overcoming our Western culture upbringing that steers us only towards the success and hushes when bad moments are the topic. Thus, let's talk/write about bad times*.

3. Sharing life/climbing motto's can trigger recognition & put a smile upon your face, right?



Figure 2: Once, there were the three of us: 58, 28 & 68. Together we had more than 100 years of climbing experience.

Once, there were the three of us: 28, 58 & 68.

Together we had more than 100 years of climbing experience.

I was the 28 (and still am).

We went mountaineering and climbing together in Monserrat National Park near Barcelona for one day. Naturally, it was an amazing experience, a beautiful day, interesting rock, stunning nature; I was so psyched, etc. . . The highlight of that day was my fascination with two “grandpas” who performed equally good as I did.

I walk, they walk.

I climb, they climb.

I jump, they jump.

I am sweating, they are not ;)

I learned that age was but a number. The biggest difference between us, these enormous +30 or +40 years, was written with small letters only in our ID cards. Our spirits, our love and our passion for climbing, mountaineering & nature has been a fire that equally strong burns in our hearts.

“How is it possible to stay healthy, and climb without any major problem at such a considerable age?”, I asked them as a PhD Student wishing to learn the formula of a life-long healthiness.

Their answer was:

You shall never STOP.

The level is not important.

The only important thing is never to stop (climbing).

I have shared this story many times in the meantime. Moreover, I feel I should never stop doing it.

4. To provoke beautiful stories about friendships, mentorships & relationships.

I do like reading stories about someone’s beginning. Who influenced/help him or her? What was the dream he/she fulfilled throughout their climbing career? These stories can make us smile, remember us of our nice moments in mountains, of our friends, of our partners; or these stories can motivate us to be better climbers, right?

5. To motivate climbers to improve as people, partners and climbers.

Read interviews, no further explanation will be needed.

6. To interview the older generation of climbers and preserve their thoughts for our youth.

When I started climbing, or as a young climber in Croatia, I was privileged to spend my time with senior climbers (since age is nothing but a number, I should not finish this sentence, but 16+ towards no general age limit). Members of our climbing society were, on average, much, much older than I was and thus, much more experienced in the life, Universe, climbing... everything. I provoked their stories. I remember all the details of their life. I learned about the life myself.

Many years after, I am still surviving without any deeper understanding of the Universe, but I do understand that the time spent with some of these climbers, at a very young age, shaped my moral, ethics, and life-views tremendously. They provided me with the opportunity to try to live my life according to the high moral expectations, which I am still trying to keep as my life-style, despite many years and kilometers of separation between us. Some of these stories can be save for the future - for our youth, if I manage to reach +50/60/70 climbers. I do not know whether I can preserve the spirit of people with “Climbers-for-Climbers chains of interviews”, but I gave my best while conducting questions. In addition, I will give my best while trying to identify and reach these life-wizards/sources of positive energies.

7. To satisfy my sheer curiosity, or perhaps serendipity about who we are...

Where are these interviews going to lead us all? At least for me, I assume interviews will bring me to the places I would never visit otherwise...



Figure 3: Meet the older generation of climbers

Methods

a. Guidelines for climbers:

1. Interview questions are uniform [for all climbers].
2. Each interviewed climber needs to recommend at least one climber whose interview he/she would like to read.

3. Climber(s) whom you recommend should be either your close friend(s), or acquaintance(s) with whom you climbed at least once (meaning do not recommend Adam Ondra if he has no idea who you are :)
4. After the interview is over, please, send me an email with your photos (or links to your photos), which can be used to supplement your interview. Video links are welcome as well. Add a photo, which you would use in your CV.
5. Please fill up this questionnaire ASAP. The chain should keep going.
6. climbersforclimbers.com (in the process of development) will be used as a platform to publish these interviews. I should start publishing interviews in the spring/early summer of 2019. However, I would like to get as many interviews as possible, before publishing them, since I would prefer that you write your thoughts/ideas without any influence.
7. I initially invited 4 different climbers to fulfill this questionnaire:
 - (1) a Croatian climber (where I am originally from) - ENNA PEROS
 - (2) a German climber (where I live at the moment) - STEPHAN VOGT
 - (3) a World Cup winner climber (who is my dear friend) - STASA GEJO
 - (4) and a +50 climber - RAFA VADILLO

-> Thus, these climbers initiated four different chains of interviews.

b. Guidelines for myself:

Give your best, however, to be continued...

c. Recommendations for each climber:

Chain 1.

Enna Peros – puts a my smile upon my face

In my neurons labelled with happiness, Enna, as a thought, causes an explosion of neurotransmitters. My brain initiates a cascade of memories connected with her cheerful family of climbers. Her family equals my family.

I recall all six full-time members of her family: Enna's boyfriend Gogo, their two kids: Margo and Malik, their dog Coci, and Mikre - the cat. I access the memory of Margo when she started sitting. I remember her when she started talking and walking. I imagine Margo playing in dirty, sandy floor, just below one of the overhanging 8b routes in Buzecki Kanjon (a climbing sector in Istra, Croatia). She was trying to play an Irish whistle. However, I am still missing a memory of Margo climbing - because Margo is still a toddler.

An eight-year-old brother of Margo, Malik, is a very talented painter. He once gave me the biggest treasures I currently own - a drawing of me climbing (attached ;). Malik, on the other hand, climbs regularly. He

just entered elementary school, but one should never be too careful when talking to Malik. He understands. Everything. Moreover, he will fool you, if you are not careful enough.

Enna's small family is every weekend outside in nature. Saturday, in the morning, they pack their climbing gear, kids, food, and stuff that only climbers with families know they should take with them, and, they start their climbing trip to the nearby climbing area. They are locals in Kompanj, Pandora, Buzetski Kanjon, Misja Pec... All around Istra. They usually come to the rock, unpack their stuff, and if they are lucky, they climb that day. If they are not lucky, they do not climb, but they still spend a beautiful day in nature with their kids. Every Sunday, they repeat the procedure.

Enna has a big extended family as well – us, climbers - whom she likes to adopt. She is delighted to live in the house full of climbers, regardless of our nationality, gender, skin color... and/or flaws. In her free-of-charge “hotel“ for climbers, in the heart of Istra, Enna is a housekeeper, servant and chief at the same time.

“Open-hearted climbers are always welcome.” I imagine her saying.

Once upon time, in my middle age crisis, Enna adopted me as well. I spent over two and half weeks climbing in Istra together with my friends from Berlin - Stephan Vogt and his girlfriend Lisa Friedrich. Within a day, we became members of Peros-Matika family. All nine of us did everything together: we would wake up, play with kids, climb (or not), prepare food, talk about the life, climbing and future, and eventually fall asleep hugging either Coci or Mikre. In the family environment, we healed our souls, and went back to Berlin radiating with happiness.

Nevertheless, transferring her happiness to other members of climbing community is not the only way Enna has been helping and supporting us for years. She has been a photographer, camerawoman, and director of many climbing movies shot in Istra. She is an author and administrator of local climbing-related web sites. She is responsible to find sponsors for their local climbing society in Pazin and her partner Gogo, one of the best Croatian climbers.

If that was not enough, Enna motivated me to finalize this web site. I can always count on her excitement regarding my climbers-for-climbers ideas. I know I have her 100% support. Enna, my mom #2, thank you!

Chain 2. Stephan Vogt

If Stephan Vogt sounds familiar to you, it is likely so, since you probably heard or watched a movie about of one of his greatest life achievements – Steph was the first climber from Berlin who managed to climb the grade 9a. Moreover, it is not just any 9a route that Steph managed to climb, whereas he is a member of the Wiki list of an Action Directe repeated ascents; or the 21st climber in the line who repeated the Action Directe.

I know Stephan, before gaining all this popularity, as a pesto boy, the most ardent Nutella consumer, Rotkäppchen red wine fan, less-training-more-climbing climber, a cinematographer, my flate-mate, and a climber who introduced me to the world of climbing in one of the most famous climbing areas in the world – Frankenjura. Luckily, we met each other within the first week as I moved to Berlin. Luckily, since Steph, as a climber, has always been the closest to the life-style climber that you can get in Berlin. Another since... Since, to live in Berlin, a great city in the middle of nowhere in terms of climbing, is not the most optimal

thing you can do for your climbing carrier :/ Thus, “*climbing as a life style*” climbers are notoriously hard to find in Berlin. However, I did observe that the climbing community in Berlin improved tremendously over the past three years, and that Steph was one of the key climbers who inspired/led the improvement. First, it is quite impressive to see Steph climbing (jumping) in the local gym, so I believe that he is an excellent motivator for all of us, mostly Berta Block but all other climbers from Berlin, to try hard to make progress. Second, he demonstrated that it is possible to leave far, far away from the closest rock, but still to be able to fulfill your climbing dreams – as he did with his. Third, it is soooo hard not to love Stephan. Even though Steph is very unorganized (unlike many Germans), and Steph likes leaving things messy, but it is hard not to love Stephan

So, we all just love him :*

Chain 3. Stasa Gejo

Stasa Gejo

“*Ajmooooo, sineeeee!!!*”, shouts Slobodan as he cheers Stasa to climb Aglaja, an 8a+ route in the gorge of Paklenica, Croatia.

It is an early morning in July, 2012. Just before 8am, temperature is already around 30°C. We both project our 8a wish-routes. We need to rush to give it try. If the Sun catches us up in our routes temperature will increase over 35°C. We will hardly give our best tries. Even now, early in the morning, our palms are sweating profusely.

Stasa and I are living the hardcore culture of climbing: wake up early, quick breakfast, hurry up to reach the rock ASAP, warm up, try our projects, and then... go to the beach. Remember, we are in Paklenica, which means hundreds of routes, climbing sectors easily reached by foot from the nearest village Starigrad, a Mediterranean climate, and mountains rolling directly into the turquoise Adriatic Sea.

“*Ajmooooo, sineeeee!!!*”, her parents cheers us both. Many partner cheers us both.

She does it. I fail. But, not for long ;-).

In 2012, Stasa was living in Serbia. Her biggest role in life was to be a daughter of Slobodan & Vesna. At the same time, she was a promising and not-at-all famous climber. Oh, I shouldn't lie, she was a famous climber, but only locally, in Croatia and Serbia. For the international fame, this year is the early in her carrier.

At that time, she did not have super-fancy climbing gym next to her apartment. She did not have a high-quality crag next to her city. She did not have a superstar trainer to help her with training. Slobodan and Vesna built an excellent climber themselves. They had to travel much more, work harder and longer than many other superstar climbers needed to work at the same time. She grow up as an old-school climber who had to fight to climb.

This is exactly the reason why I had an opportunity to meet Stasa in the first place and to share some relaxed evenings and motivated climbing mornings with her family.

Slobodan & Vesna raised her to be a *climbing-as-a-life-style* climber:

Stasa does not climb exclusively to compete, though she indeed is a great competitor.

Stasa does not climb exclusively to be recognized as a climber, though she is famous.

Stasa is a climber who burns for climbing. She lusts for climbing itself. Just as I do.

In the meantime, I have always enjoyed meeting Stasa (un)expectedly in different cities across the Europe, and talking to her. As a climber and human being, I can only say it is fabulous to have someone like Stasa at the top :-)

Her amazingly smiling personality was the best recommendation for Stasa to be the first in the chain of C4C interviews. Success she achieved in the meantime did not change that.

“Samo hrabro naprijed, sine!”

;-)

Chain 4. Rafa Vadillo

I love Rafa, but Rafa loves us all.

Rafa is a person from/for people, a climber for climbers.

Rafa simply enjoys helping people.

Rafa make us all smile.

Rafa motivates us to be better people.

Rafa, thank you for making our community of climbers happier J

Rafa's greatest award is the awareness of the fact that he did help us somehow. Whatever life role he will need to play to help us, he will play it. He will be an organizer of climbing competitions and meetings, a rescuer, a nurse, or a host, or just as a friend. . . When I go to Barcelona, I have a feeling that I am visiting my extended family there – Rafa's family. When I go to Barcelona I am 100% relaxed about my trip, because I know that Rafa will handle every obstacle along the way, and that he will do everything for me so that I/we can spend some nice time (evenings) together.

When I go to Barcelona, I have a feeling that I am visiting my old friend, although I met Rafa approximately five times in my life. A friend who taught me one of the most important lessons in life:

You should never STOP.

The level is not important.

The only important thing is never to stop (climbing).

All this make him a perfect start point for a chain of interviews, from climbers to climbers. . .

Wildcard the interview

I am liable to recommend other climbers.

Results

to be continued...

Acknowledgements

to be continued...

Supplement

Consent for Participation in the CFC interviews

As a researcher & climber, I would like to request your consent for participation in a chain of interviews about us - CLIMBERS.

1. This consent form asks you to allow me to record and view the interview and to use your answers and comments to enhance understanding of who climbers are these days, and what motivates them to do climbing.
2. The form also asks your permission to use related observations, photos as a data in this, and further studies, and to publish them either on my web-site: climbersforclimbers.com, as a book, or to gather these info into a database of answers that can be analyzed and published in various ways in the future.
3. However, I will maintain the confidentiality of the research records about date of birth and email addresses. These can be used only a part of statistical analysis about the cohort of climbers I interviewed, e.g. an average age of interviewed climbers.
4. Participation in the "CFC interviews" is completely voluntary.

Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question.

5. By submitting this form you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, are over the age of 18, and that you agree to the terms as described.

If you have any questions, or would like a copy of this consent letter, please contact me at inga.patarcic@gmail.com or climbersforclimbers@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Inga Patarcic