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# THE CONTEXT OF SUCCESSFUL NAVIGATION OF GENDERED NORMS IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE RECREATION: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL FEMALE ADVENTURE ATHLETES

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THE CONTEXT OF SUCCESSFUL NAVIGATION OF GENDERED NORMS IN  
OUTDOOR ADVENTURE RECREATION: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL  
FEMALE ADVENTURE ATHLETES

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

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by  
Katherine Elizabeth Evans  
May 2014

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## ABSTRACT

Females have long found it difficult to find entrance to and acceptance in the outdoors because of socially engrained gender expectations, a lack of female role models, and fear. Despite the hurdles, research indicates that females who participate in outdoor recreation are more empowered, and have higher levels of self-esteem, self-trust, self-worth, assertiveness, self-sufficiency, independence, confidence, and body image (McDermott, 2004; Pohl, Borrie, & Patterson, 2000). Therefore, it is important that females are not only encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation, but empowered to do so. Current research on females' leisure in the outdoors largely focuses on women who are casual or amateur participants (e.g., Little, 2002). What has not been investigated is how women who participate at the highest levels of their sport have successfully negotiated the many constraints to their outdoor recreation participation. Three main theories acted as a framework in guiding this study: the social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), leisure constraints (e.g., Crawford & Godbey, 1987), and poststructural feminism (as applied by Aitchison, 2003). In addition, the research was conducted in the spirit of Parry's (2003) call for a sixth phase of feminist leisure research. That is, this study seeks to move beyond simply understanding the experiences of women's leisure in a gendered society, and towards a focus on how these gendered norms can be broken down and challenged. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand what specific constraints professional female mountain guides have faced and their methods for successfully navigating through them on their way to an elite level of participation and performance in mountaineering.

Data analysis revealed that the professional outdoor athletes face the same types of constraints to outdoor recreation as amateur participants. These constraints include fear, a lack of confidence, and gender relations. The findings also indicate that the professional athletes identified similar negotiation strategies including a reliance on social support, the development and use of resiliency strategies, and an unwavering passion for the outdoors. The results of this study provide a starting point for improving on or creating interventions aimed at increasing women's participation in outdoor adventure recreation.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation, and all it represents, is dedicated to my daughter, Winslow.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I, first and foremost, would like to thank my committee. Denise, I'm not sure I will ever be able to adequately express my appreciation for the support and guidance you have provided for me over the last 9 years, but I will certainly work on finding a way to try. To start, I will strive to serve my students in the way that you serve yours. Dart, thank you for your friendship, guidance, and for always pushing me every step of the way. Bob, thank you for your guidance on this project and some amazing learning experiences working with professionals throughout the state. Cynthia, thank you for teaching me the value and importance of qualitative research. This research would not have been possible in any other format.

Next, I would like to thank my participants. Thank you for taking this journey with me and being willing to share your experiences with me with such honesty and clarity. I know that the contributions you have made here and in your professions will help to open the outdoors for many women to come.

Finally, I must thank the person without whom this goal may never have come to fruition, my husband. The selflessness and love you have provided for the past four years is what allowed me to take this crazy step of following my dream. Thank you for your countless sacrifices and unending support.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Problem Statement**

Females have long been taught that certain types of leisure are inappropriate for their participation because of their gender. Even with the passage of legislation dictating equal access to physical activity opportunities (e.g., Title IX) and softening gender expectations in society, socially engrained gender roles remain a barrier to participation in physical activities for many women. One specific type of recreation in which females' participation is discouraged, both actively and passively, because of their gender is outdoor recreation. Females have long found it difficult to find entrance to and acceptance in the outdoors because of socially engrained gender expectations, a lack of female role models, and fear (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993; Culp, 1998). Despite the difficulty females have in finding entrance to and acceptance in the outdoors, the literature highlights that female's participation can provide endless benefits. Females who participate in outdoor recreation are more empowered, and have higher levels of self-esteem, self-trust, self-worth, assertiveness, self-sufficiency, independence, confidence, and body image (McDermott, 2004; Pohl, Borrie, & Patterson, 2000). In addition, research has suggested that females who break down social gender norms and participate in outdoor recreation may be helping to deconstruct social norms beyond the scope of the outdoors (Pohl et al., 2000). Therefore, it is important that females are not only encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation, but empowered to do so. While research that seeks to understand, specifically, how females experience leisure in the outdoors, and

how they successfully negotiate constraints to their participation exists, it is limited in its scope.

Current research on female's leisure in the outdoors largely focuses on women who are casual or amateur participants (Little, 2002). Findings have indicated that women have to renegotiate or restructure their ideas of adventure and outdoor recreation in order to negotiate the constraints they face to participation (Little, 2002). What has not been investigated is how women who participate at the highest levels of their sport have successfully negotiated the many constraints to their outdoor recreation participation. Women who do participate in outdoor recreation at a high level (i.e., professionally) have done what few women are able or seek to achieve. By understanding how women who have turned their passion for outdoor adventure recreation into not only their uncompromised leisure, but also their livelihoods may shed important light on how women may successfully overcome constraints to their participation in the outdoors. Three theoretical frameworks guided this study: the social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation, leisure constraints, and poststructural feminism.

Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation specifically outlines the social forces theorized to help create and maintain gendered norms in society. Through modeled behavior, enactive experience, and direct tuition individuals are taught (and rewarded or reprimanded for) their adherence to appropriate gender roles and expected conduct throughout their lives (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). By examining these environmental factors present throughout the lives of professional outdoor adventure recreation athletes, a more clear understanding can be

drawn of not only the current social forces impacting their participation, but also the socially constructed barriers or facilitators that have been present throughout their lives.

In addition to understanding the gendered social forces at work in the lives of professional female athletes, it is also important to understand the specific types of constraints that females face or have faced and successfully negotiated in reaching their professional level of involvement in outdoor recreation. Leisure constraints are structural, intrapersonal, and interpersonal in nature and can inhibit, limit, or change the ways individuals participate in leisure (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). In addition, these three types of constraints do not necessarily exist independently of one another, but may be hierarchically linked meaning that the most basic constraints must be negotiated before higher levels of constraints will even need to be considered (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). Constraints can be negotiated, but may have an impact on leisure in complex ways including affecting interest in leisure activities and the motivation necessary to overcome constraints (Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993). The literature also suggests that women may face leisure constraints in a unique way as compared with men (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1993). For instance, for women, structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal constraints may, rather than acting independently, interact, working together to impact women's preference formation, negotiation of constraints and participation in leisure (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1993). Shaw and Henderson (2005) have also asserted that in understanding women's constraints, it is important to incorporate broader social structures and may be more difficult to discern specific categories of constraints for women, as they are likely intertwined.

Poststructural feminist theory provides a feminist lens addressing the construction, legitimation, and reproduction of power between the sexes. Based on the notion that power is created and recreated through each interaction between individuals and relying on the concepts of surveillance and self-surveillance, poststructural feminism has been applied widely in leisure research (Aitchison, 2003; Wearing, 1998). Applying a poststructural feminist viewpoint also provides an understanding of how individual women work to overcome gender norms and traditional constructions of power in their leisure. The tenets of poststructural feminism allow for the view of leisure for its use by women as resistance to social gender norms. The application of poststructural feminist theory to leisure research can provide “a lens through which to view the potential for reworking, disruption, contestation, transgression and transformation of the dominant codes and behaviors of society such that change is possible over periods of time and across different spaces” (Aitchison, 2003, p. 21).

### **Rationale**

Leisure research has substantially evolved in its focus on and understanding of women’s leisure over the last 30 years. A consistent discussion has taken place throughout this time on how to best continue this evolution and keep moving forward in both our understanding and our exploration of women’s leisure (e.g., Henderson, 1994; Henderson & Gibson, 2013). Parry (2003) recently made a call for the next step in this evolution, a “sixth phase of feminist leisure research” (p. 49). Fundamental to this next phase is the idea that it is no longer enough to simply “*interpret* the world, it must be *changed* as well” (Parry, 2003, p. 49). In order to address this necessary element in

leisure research, Parry (2003) suggested that leisure researchers must move beyond simply understanding the experiences of women's leisure within a gendered society, and must focus on how gendered social norms can be broken down and challenged. Parry's framework for approaching research from this perspective requires research that not only studies women's leisure from a critical perspective, but also articulates clearly the type of change hoped to be initiated by the research. The present study is being undertaken with Parry's (2003) sixth phase in mind. That is, while the core focus of the study is to better understand how women have negotiated their way to the peak of professional participation in the gendered world of outdoor adventure recreation, the larger goals include a focus on social change. The findings from this study will be used in direct application to improving upon and creating interventions and programs aimed at helping all females overcome gender norms to fully engage with outdoor recreation at all levels.

### **Purpose Statement**

Females are underrepresented in outdoor recreation for a wide variety of reasons. Yet, research has shown these constraints to include the social norms regarding the gender appropriateness of participation in activities, a lack of role models, a lack of confidence, and even fear. Research also indicates that when females do participate in outdoor recreation, they experience heightened self-esteem, self-sufficiency, independence, self-trust, and confidence. By better understanding how females have successfully reached the professional level of various outdoor recreation pursuits, recreation professionals may better be suited to introduce outdoor recreation to females and support their involvement in the outdoors. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to

investigate how professional female outdoor adventure recreation athletes have navigated their way to a professional level of participation and performance in their sport and in what specific contexts their experiences were set.

### **Research Questions**

In seeking to gain an understanding of the experiences of professional female outdoor adventure recreation athletes, the following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. What are the specific experiences of professional female outdoor adventure recreation athletes in reaching their current level of participation in outdoor adventure recreation?
2. What constraints did the professional level athletes face in beginning and increasing their participation in outdoor adventure recreation?
  - a. Specifically, what constraints were most salient in the athletes' entry into their chosen pursuit?
  - b. What specific negotiation strategies were critical in the athletes gaining entry to and increasing their level of participation in their chosen pursuit?
3. What contextual or structural factors influenced the athletes' entry and increasing participation in their sport?

### **Delimitations**

The focus of this study was to understand specific contexts in which women have achieved the highest level of success in professional outdoor recreation. As such, the focus of this study was delimited to professional mountain guides and professional

kayakers. In addition, because the study followed a multiple case study design, the number of participants was limited to four based on methodological recommendations (Stake, 2006). Stake (2006) asserted that multiple case studies typically require four or more cases, but less than 15. Three or fewer cases does not provide a broad enough view, while more than 15 cases tends to cloud data analysis and conclusions as this many cases “provide(s) more uniqueness...than the research team and readers can come to understand” (Stake, 2006, p. 22). While this design choice will limit the generalizability to analytic rather than statistical generalization, the qualitative focus will allow for a deeper and more context specific understanding of the journeys of professional outdoor adventure athletes.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **Gender Socialization**

Research has provided clear evidence that society is inherently gendered. That is, from birth, children are socialized into understanding appropriate dress, emotions, actions, and life trajectories based simply on their sex. Martin, Wood, and Little (1990) proposed a multi-step process through which children develop gender stereotypes. In the first stage, children learn very basic differentiations between the sexes (such as the types of toys each plays with). In the second stage, children begin to learn more about their own sex and the appropriate roles they are supposed to fulfill. At this point, and in early childhood in general, children are more aware of the complexities attributed to their own sex than that of the opposite sex. By the third stage, children become more fully aware of the role of the opposite gender and have a more complex understanding of masculinity and femininity. Additionally, as children age, they make harsher judgments based on the sex of another individual (Martin et al., 1990).

A wide range of research has examined when, exactly, children begin to understand and identify gender roles. Levy (1999) examined 20-28-month old children and found that they were able to identify both non-gender and gender-typed categories. The results also indicated, in support of Martin et al.'s (1990) findings, that the children were more acutely tuned in to their own sex categories than other's sex categories. The research indicates that children at this age have begun to develop gender role awareness,

but have greater awareness of their own sex role. Messner (2000) examined the ways children deal with gender roles by examining their actions within a broader context.

Messner (2000) examined, among four and five-year old children, how children “do gender” including the ways in which interactions, structures, and cultural meaning work together (p. 765). Messner (2000) concluded that these three perspectives best illustrate how gender roles are activated in social interactions. First, by examining how people interact, Messner (2000) argued one could better understand how and why people define clear boundaries between genders. Next, it is important to examine the structural components in place (e.g, the gendered division of children’s sports leagues) that reinforce appropriate gender roles. Finally, Messner (2000) argued that it is also necessary to consider the cultural forces at work in defining and reinforcing gender roles including symbols that clearly demarcate females from males (e.g., Barbie). Messner (2000) went on to argue that one cannot simply view gender division through one of these lenses (interaction, structure, or culture), but rather must understand how all three of these work together in socially constructing gender.

Messner (2000) also identified that parents are likely to identify gender differences as natural rather than socially constructed. This, however, may not be true in every case. Kane (2006) found that parents consciously work to engender masculinity in their sons as they see gender (and masculinity in particular) as a specific role that their sons must accomplish. While Kane (2006) identified some feminine traits that are encouraged in males (domestic skills, nurturing, and empathy), parents are quick to define boundaries within which males must remain. That is, masculinity must be marked

by a lack of emotion, high activity levels, and must not include any “material markers of femininity” (e.g., playing with Barbie dolls) (p. 172). Kane’s (2006) study also concluded that while some change is occurring (such as parents’ openness to a boy’s need to know domestic skills and be more nurturing), there is still an overall negative view of feminine activities.

In line with parental attitudes towards the crossing of gender lines, research also indicates that children recognize when their peers cross these lines. Blakemore (2003) identified that children recognize when others have crossed the lines of social norms as they relate to gender. The most egregious violations occur when males cross the line of gender norms. When boys, for instance, wear girls’ clothing, the act is viewed as negatively as immoral acts like stealing (Blakemore, 2003). This finding is in line with other research that it is more acceptable for females to cross gender lines than it is for males (Blakemore, 2003; Lobel et al., 1993). This may be due to the general sense that masculine traits are viewed as more positive than feminine traits (Hull & Hull, 1986). Lobel et al. (1993) also concluded that for boys, masculinity is as much about being masculine as it is about rejecting femininity. In line with this hierarchy of acceptable traits, boys and girls may be assessed more negatively depending on the specific gender norm they violate. For males, playing quietly or playing jump rope is viewed as less negative than girls who play loudly or roughly or play highly physical sports like football. Blakemore (2003) concluded, “when gender norms seem related to basic gender identity, violations of these norms are seen as very undesirable” (p. 419). However, “if the gender norms are either valued in themselves, or not seen as essential to gender

identity...” violations of these norms are more acceptable (Blakemore, 2003, p. 419). Lobel et al. (1993) also found that children who violate gender role expectations are subsequently ascribed a broader range of traits and roles of the opposite sex. That is, if a boy plays a feminine game with girls, he is viewed as possessing more feminine traits. This seems to indicate that gender roles and the extent that violating them is seen as negative is not clear-cut. In line with this, Messner (2000) concluded that social construction of and appropriate conformity to gender roles is a convoluted and complex process.

Holub, Tisak, and Mullins (2008) extended this query into the realm of children’s hero choices. Boys were found to be more likely than girls to identify their hero as a public figure rather than a private figure (e.g., friends, parents). The authors discussed that this may be due, in part, to the fact that boys are socialized to envision their future roles outside of the home (e.g., working, social circle beyond their family); girls are more inclined to view their future role within the home (e.g., as a wife, mother, homemaker). Further, females were more prone than males to choose opposite gender heroes. This is in line with Kane’s (2006) contention that males are actively socialized away from feminine traits or preferences. In this same realm, Fisher-Thompson (1990) investigated how adults generalize toys as being for males or females. College students still follow beliefs about the gender appropriateness of toys with males being more likely to categorize toys as appropriate for one sex or the other. Fisher-Thompson (1990) identified that the type of play required for the toy helped to determine if it was classified as masculine or feminine. Those toys rated as appropriate for males were classified as requiring higher

levels of activity for play (Fisher-Thompson, 1990). Auster and Mansbach (2012) found similar trends in a review of toys being sold on a Disney Store website. Toys that were marketed for boys were typically red, black, brown, or gray and included action figures, toys that required building, weapons, and vehicles (Auster & Mansbach, 2012).

Conversely, toys that were targeted to girls were most likely pink or purple and included dolls, cosmetics, jewelry, or domestic-related toys. Karniol (2011) found that just as children are being marketed toys based on color, so too do they choose gender appropriate crayons while coloring. Such research indicates just how engrained gender norms are in the day-to-day lives of children. While a wide range of research and theoretical approaches to gender socialization exist, the social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation will provide the framework for understanding the experiences of this study's participants.

### **Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation**

Bussey and Bandura (1999) applied social cognitive theory to provide an acute theoretical explanation of ways in which society socializes children into gendered adults. Broadly, personal factors (notions of gender, standards of behavior and judgment, and self-regulation), behavior patterns (gendered activity patterns), and environmental factors (social influences) intersect to provide children with feedback that establishes appropriate gender behaviors and roles (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Bussey and Bandura (1999) hypothesized three modes through which children acquire gender-linked roles and conduct: modeling, enactive experience, and direct tuition.

Modeling is the mechanism through which people get a great deal of information related to gender-linked practices. Models are those in one's environment who pass on behaviors, rules, and structures related to gender. Models include parents, peers, teachers, mass media, and any other significant individuals that one encounters in social, educational, or occupational environments. Modeling is not simply an individual's imitation of the behaviors he/she sees, but provides a broader context of rules and structures that can be learned in a specific situation and applied to future situations. Because, even as infants, people pay special attention to the actions of those around them, modeling is the fastest mode through which individuals learn gender social norms (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Next, individuals learn appropriate gender behavior through enactive experience.

Enactive experience is based on the feedback that individuals receive from others based on their actions. In all stages of development, gendered behavior is highly socially regulated. Throughout childhood, children put forth behavior and determine the appropriateness of that behavior by evaluating the social responses they receive. This process allows children to develop and refine conceptions of gender based on the reactions of those around them. These responses can be as simple as a frown or a smile, or can include more severe negative reactions such as voiced disapproval (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Children "extract, weigh, and integrate diverse reactions" from different people in different settings in using enactive experience to help form their understanding of gender (Bussey & Bandura, 1999, p. 689). Enactive experience requires a greater amount of time in helping facilitate conceptions of gender. It requires the application of

different gendered conduct in different situations in order to receive feedback, and then this varying feedback must be compiled and evaluated before one can determine which actions were appropriate. Further, one may not always recognize the effects of their behaviors thereby slowing the process even further. Finally, direct tuition helps dictate how children acquire their conceptions of gender.

Direct tuition refers to the direct verbal explanation of gender and appropriate and inappropriate gender behaviors (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Direct tuition requires the most sophisticated set of skills, as language is a requirement of this mechanism. As such, direct tuition does not have as great of an influence as modeling. This is also true because individuals may model behavior that is in conflict with the verbal information they are teaching. In this case, children are more likely to rely on the modeled behavior than the direct tuition. These three modes provide the social influence through which children acquire gender conceptions and competencies. Bussey and Bandura (1999) argued that these mechanisms impact not only the ways in which children develop gender knowledge and competencies (outlined above), but also the ways in which individuals regulate their conduct related to gender.

Bussey and Bandura (1999) outlined three main ways through which individuals regulate their gendered conduct and role behavior. These include: social sanctions, self-sanctions, and self-efficacy. Social sanctions are among the first types of regulating behaviors individuals encounter. Children see how others are treated, how they themselves are treated, and what they are told will happen to them if they do not follow prescribed gender norms of behavior. Children see others and are, themselves, rewarded

or praised for gender appropriate behavior while being punished or criticized for gender inappropriate behavior. These forms of feedback provide a clear view of the social norms and the sanctions that are in place if the norms are crossed. This leads individuals to anticipate certain outcomes for specific types of behavior. Individuals are inherently driven to seek behaviors that will bring them social reward and avoid those that will bring social punishment and are, thus, incentivized to pursue gender appropriate behaviors (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Through this system of social knowledge acquisition and regulation, children become both aware of the appropriate gender behaviors and motivated to abide by them.

Bussey and Bandura (1999) indicate that the next level of regulation falls upon the self. As children develop, their regulation systems move from primarily extrinsic to more self-directed. Through an interplay between self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction, children learn to monitor and regulate their own gender behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Self-efficacy (people's belief that they can "produce desired effects by their actions") also plays a role in the self-regulation of gender behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 1999, p. 691). Bussey and Bandura (1999) highlight the self-efficacy differences that exist between males and females in educational and career choices. Male students are more likely to have the same level of efficacy for both male- and female-dominated occupations than females who are likely to have higher efficacy for female-dominated occupations (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). For females who view themselves as highly gendered (i.e., more feminine), the disparity between efficacies for gendered career paths is even greater. This efficacy differential is also apparent in the emotional

well being of females as they are more prone than males to suffer from depression (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). This may be due to the fact that females are less likely to believe they have the power to affect positive outcomes, positive social relationships, and to control negative thoughts in their lives (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Because people tend to make choices for activities for which they have high efficacy, people tend to make gender appropriate choices in their education and careers (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Bussey and Bandura (1999) also offer insight into the particular ways in which parents facilitate this complex socially normative process.

Even before children can necessarily label themselves or others as male or female, they are still able to make a distinction between the two and begin to participate in gender-appropriate conduct and activities (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Bussey and Bandura (1999) note that, from the first days of an infant's life, his/her physical environment is already providing social feedback relating to gender. Female infants are viewed and treated as "finer featured, weaker, softer, and more delicate" than their male counterparts (Bussey & Bandura, 1999, p. 695). In addition, the names, clothing, toys, and decorations parents choose for their child's room tend to be highly gendered. While boys' rooms are often supplied with machines, trucks, and sporting goods, females are provided with dolls, domestic-related toys, and floral decorations (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Parents act as the first sex role models for their children and provide the first social feedback for their children's actions in the form of smiles, frowns, excitement, and tone of voice. These early social cues set the stage for the broader social context in which we all exist as gendered individuals throughout our lives. As children age, these parental

influences do not lessen. In general, parents encourage their sons to be adventurous and independent while emphasizing manners and nurturing to their daughters. Fathers tend to be more focused on appropriate gender roles than mothers with their children. They are more likely to encourage play that is physically active for sons than daughters, and react more negatively to boys who step outside of gendered norms than girls who do the same. Mothers, however, do encourage gender role stereotypes as well. Mothers include more emotional references in their conversations with daughters, encourage their son's independence and openly discuss anger with their sons, a topic avoided in conversations with daughters. Moreover, parents are more open to cross-gender actions by girls than boys. For instance, typically feminine toys/games are viewed as appropriate only for girls, but masculine toys/games as appropriate for either gender. Research has shown that even parents who self-describe a lack of gender bias have typically been so engrained with gender stereotypes that they enact them with their children anyway (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

### **The Socialization Effect: The Gender Frame**

Ridgeway (2004; 2009) proposed that gender acts as a background frame through which all of our social interactions occur. In all social interactions, humans rely on making quick judgments about others. People sort others into common categorizations such as gender, race, or age so that we may “anticipate how each of us is likely to act and coordinate our actions accordingly” (Ridgeway, 2009, p. 147). Along with race and age, gender is one of the primary categories we rely upon in this action and, thus, gender acts as a backdrop from which we move forward in our expectations and judgments about

those with whom we interact. As Ridgeway (2009) noted, after categorizing others as male or female, the subsequent assumptions we make about them are “nested in our prior understandings of the[ir] [gender] and take on slightly different meanings as a result” (p. 148). This is largely because positive traits such as being proactive, competent, and worthy of status are typically related to males while females are typically associated with more negative traits like being reactive, emotionally expressive, and less competent at important tasks (Ridgeway, 2009). When individuals are framed as male or female, they are automatically associated with these culturally pervasive traits, which colors how others believe they will behave. The extent to which these frames bias individuals’ behaviors is based on several factors. First, when people’s gender is different than the person with whom they are interacting, this gender frame is more likely to cause a quantifiable change in behaviors. Next, the more relevant gender is to a specific situation, the more it will impact the way people in those situations act. Finally, these beliefs can be heightened to the degree that the individual doing the framing believes that gender is relevant to his/her interest in the given situation (Ridgeway, 2009).

Ridgeway (2009) also pointed out that while these biases begin in what she deems the more vague “primary person frame” (a person’s gender, race, or age), they are typically enacted within the more concrete, role, and expectation-filled institutional frame (family, workplace) (p. 152). This application of biases in these institutional frames can lead to small or cumulative impacts resulting in significantly different outcomes based on one’s sex. The scope of the impact that such framing can have within institutions is dependent on two major factors: the salience or relevance of gender in the situation and

the organizational rules/procedures in place. First, if the context in which gender biasing is occurring is one that is particularly dependent on gender, the biasing will have a greater impact. For example, in traditionally male-oriented contexts (management, math, science), gender bias and the accompanying expectations will lower expectations for females and heighten them for males. Next, if the context has particular rules or procedures in place that limit individual judgments about behavior, then there is a lower chance that gender framing will impact behavior. The more lax these regulations, the more likely gender framing will impact behavior. Ridgeway (2004) provided specific examples of what form these biases could take in action.

The act of gender framing creates “self-other competence expectations” or the expectations one has for his/her competence and performance in a situation compared to others in that situation (Ridgeway, 2004, p. 518). First, people, when acting from self-other expectations, are less likely to confidently share their thoughts, or may wait until others act before responding. Next, individuals may avoid soliciting the advice of others or may not listen to what others have to say when they share ideas (Ridgeway, 2004). This gender framing bias not only impacts social performance, but also the ways individuals’ performance is evaluated. To begin, there is a general presupposition of male competence. This is especially evident when men and women are performing tasks that are viewed as typically masculine (e.g., engineering, management). When the task is related to typically feminine domains (e.g., caretaking), this male bias is weakened, and females may gain a slight competence bias (Ridgeway, 2004). Finally, Ridgeway (2004) conferred that framing bias can impact people’s actual performance on tasks as well. If a

group is reminded that members of their category should have lower or higher abilities on a certain task prior to attempting that task, they perform accordingly. Additionally, following a person's performance of a task, the frame bias also changes the extent to which individual's accomplishment is ascribed to themselves or others. For instance, males are more likely than females to be viewed as having ability for the task. For females to be viewed in the same way, they must outperform the men (Ridgeway, 2004). These beliefs hold true even though men and women have the highest rate of interaction between any social collectives (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Research has focused on the impact of this high level of interaction.

### **Gender and Interaction**

Gender and the ways it creates or diminishes power can also possibly be based on the interactions that occur between men and women everyday. This high rate of interaction is unique to the varying social roles that we exist within (vs. class or race, for instance) in that the gender divide creates two equal sized groups. Men and women also interact at such high rates due to the fact that within family units, both males and females are often present. Beyond the family unit, men and women are likely to interact due to sexual and reproductive behavior (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Because of this frequent contact between men and women, Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (1999) contended that interaction can be a powerful arena for change.

Because of gender framing, as outlined by Ridgeway (2004; 2009), men and women's interactions are inevitably shaped by gender. As adults, most peer friendships are same-sexed. For women, childbearing and familial obligations tend to reduce even

further the likelihood that women will have cross-sex acquaintances. While men are drawn into a more family based network when they have young children, they are much more likely than women to move beyond this small network as their children age. As a result, women tend to end up with smaller, more interconnected networks while men have larger, disconnected networks and, in turn, more opportunities to create power (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). In the workforce, women are more likely than men to know their spouse's work friends and are also more likely to move for their husband's work than husbands are for their wife's employment opportunities. Women typically end up in less attractive jobs than males and when they do interact with men, women are typically in positions of subordination (e.g, nurses interacting with doctors or secretaries with managers). When women are in high-status positions, they share fairly comparable networks with their male colleagues. However, women are usually a minority and so their network includes a smaller number of other high-status females. Thus, women's supportive contacts end up being with mostly men, or other women that are lower status than them. These types of networks make it more difficult for women to leverage their networks for career advancement (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Within these networks which are highly male and in which the power lies primarily with the male members, females also tend to reinforce this power structure through the ways they interact.

Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (1999) outlined a number of socioemotional behaviors that women exhibit in mixed sex social interactions that help to maintain this traditional power hierarchy. First, all other aspects being the same, in mixed sex groups,

women are less likely than men to talk and tend to talk less and make less suggestions when they do speak. Men are also seen as more influential and are more likely than the female members of the group to be identified as a leader. Next, men are more likely than women to display visual dominance in mixed group settings. This means that men are more likely to make eye contact while speaking and show disinterest by looking away while others are speaking. Women also use more tentative speech patterns by using tag questions (ending statements with questions), hedging their statements, making disclaimers about their ideas, and through hypercorrection (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Men also tend to interrupt women at a higher rate than men in mixed sex interactions. Finally, when the gender frame is applied in mixed sex interactions, women receive less credit for their ideas or performance than men (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). These interactions lead to the reinforcement of gender beliefs.

### **Gender Typing of Leisure**

As addressed by Bussey and Bandura (1999), gender socialization extends into all realms of our lives, including the perceived appropriateness of particular leisure activities for each sex. Research on the gender typing of activities can be found extensively in the literature. Such focus began nearly 50 years ago. Metheney (1965) was among the first to identify sports as socially acceptable for either males or females. Metheney (1965) categorized activities as socially acceptable or unacceptable for each sex based on the types of movements the activity required (e.g., physical contact vs. graceful, flowing movement). Those activities that require physical contact were classified as acceptable for men, but not for women. Conversely, aesthetic physical activities such as figure

skating and swimming are most acceptable for women. While Metheney's (1965) focus was on college-aged adults, subsequent research has identified, just as Bussey and Bandura's (1999) theory asserts, that such gender typing occurs and is socially reinforced long before adulthood.

Another early researcher exploring the gender typing of activities, Lever (1976) identified that males are more likely to play actively outdoors while females are more likely to play passively indoors. In addition, males are more likely to play games with a larger number of people (e.g., team sports and fantasy games) while females tend to play in smaller peer groups. Lever (1976) also concluded that the types of games children play prepared them for their future adult roles within society. For instance, males were more likely to participate in competitive games with a large number of people because this would best prepare them for their work in the competitive business world. Males, Lever (1976) suggested, had to know how to interact, competitively, with a wide range of people outside of the home to be successful in the professional realm as adults. For females, whose futures were in the home, their non-competitive, small group play prepared them for their role as nurturers and mothers. Playing in pairs also prepared them for their future role in marriage.

Lever (1978) also went on to identify the differences in the complexity of the games being played by children based on their sex. Lever (1978) concluded that boys tend to participate in more highly complex forms of play than girls. For instance, boys are more likely to play in larger groups, on teams, and with more concrete and complex sets of rules and goals. Additionally, girls were found to participate in more single role

activities (e.g., riding bikes, roller skating) than boys who tended to participate in sports requiring acting in multiple roles (e.g., team sports). Lever (1978) also hypothesized that the differences in the ways boys and girls play leads to real differentiation in outcomes for each sex. For instance, boys are more likely to learn social skills such as dealing with diversity, the coordination of actions of group members, the ability to work within a set of guidelines, and the ability to work towards larger group goals while also focusing on personal goals (Lever, 1978). In addition, Lever (1978) contended that boys were also more likely to learn to handle confrontation with others in a depersonalized way and had more opportunities to experience and practice interpersonal competition.

Thirty year later, research has continued to explore, and confirm, such fundamental differences in the types of play seen as socially appropriate for each sex. Even as more opportunities have opened up for female participation in a wider range of activities (e.g., through the passage of Title IX), certain divisions still exist today. Current research continues to indicate that sports like football, wrestling, and rugby are seen as most appropriate for male participation while those such as dance, aerobics, and gymnastics remain the realm of females (Colley et al., 1996; Riemer & Visio, 2003). Colley et al. (1996) also found support for the findings of Lever (1976; 1978) in the ways children participate in leisure. Boys are still more likely to play competitive games with large groups while females still tend towards small group, noncompetitive games. Much of this division is rooted in the types of skills seen as requisite for participation in a particular game or activity. For instance, activities requiring traditionally masculine skills such as strength, power, and competition are less socially acceptable for female

participation just as those requiring graceful movement are off limits to males (Lee et al., 1999).

Further, in line with research that has demonstrated that boys are held to stricter gender lines than girls (e.g., Blakemore, 2003; Kane, 2006; Lobel et al., 1993), Riemer and Visio (2003) found that females are more likely than males to identify sports as appropriate for either gender. For instance, females were not only more likely than males to identify specific sports (e.g., tennis, basketball) as gender-neutral, but also more likely to participate in traditionally masculine sports than males were to participate in feminine sports (Riemer & Visio, 2003). While females are freer than males to cross gender lines, they still face social consequences for doing so including a lack of acceptance (Riemer & Visio, 2003). Lee et al. (1999) identified that this lack of social acceptance can prevent girls from trying more masculine sports because of a “fear of being unsuccessful and embarrassment” (p. 172).

Landers and Fine’s (1996) study of a youth tee ball team identified some of the same realities identified in other realms of life such as education. Bussey and Bandura (1999) found that teachers treated males and females differently from the start regardless of demonstrated skill. In line with this, Landers and Fine (1996) found that coaches of the tee ball team had decided and acted from the notion that “None of the girls want to be there. Not one.” even stating that the girls would rather be coloring than playing tee ball (p. 90). The coaches in the study also tended to relate poor play to girls rather than to boys. For instance one coach, after dropping a ball during his throw, stated, “Look, I throw like a girl” while yet another, after dropping a ball, commented, “I’m a little girl. I

can't catch the ball" (Landers & Fine, 1996, p. 91). Such actions and comments by adults reinforce to both boys and girls the socially appropriate roles and capabilities of each sex. Landers and Fine (1996) suggested that the way to help move children past the notion of gendered leisure is through the application of gender neutral expectations by adults, from early on in children's lives.

Research has also indicated that an individual's gender role self-concept can play an important role in his/her gender perceptions regarding leisure activities. For instance, men who rate as more highly masculine tend to rank competition as a greater motivation for participation in activities. Highly gender-typed women tended to rank appearance as more important than men in leisure participation while more gender-neutral rated women tended to rank competition as a higher motivation for participation (Koivula, 1999).

Athenstaedt, Mikula, and Brecht (2009) drew similar conclusions in noting that adolescents' leisure choices were dictated more by their gender role self-concept than by their physical sex. That is, the more an individual associated with his or her gender, the more likely he/she was to make gender-appropriate leisure choices. Leversen, Torsheim, and Samdal (2012) also found that an individual's gender role self-concept acutely impacted how closely his/her leisure choices aligned with socially accepted gender roles. In fact, the authors concluded, gender socialization may even lead to individuals disregarding certain leisure choices out-of-hand simply because they may not align with their gender role self-concept. Leversen et al. (2012) concluded by noting "in order to maximize the perceived availability of and thereby developmental opportunities through leisure activities, it seems pertinent to obtain a better understanding of mechanisms

preventing and stimulating adolescents to cross gender-typical borders of leisure activities” (p. 369).

A final issue that has been addressed more recently in the literature is the notion of the lesbian stigma that exists when females participate in traditionally masculine activities. That is, females tend to fear being perceived as lesbian because of their association with cross-gender activity participation. Generally, females who more closely align with traditional notions of femininity are more socially accepted than those who are perceived as masculine. Those perceived as too masculine also tend to be perceived as homosexual. When women are stigmatized as too masculine or as lesbians, they are at an increased chance of suffering from depression, lower self-esteem, higher rates of substance abuse and suicide, and unhealthy eating and exercise behaviors (Krane & Barber, 2005). Within the context of sports, this lesbian stigma is especially salient. As such, when females participate in physical activities, many work hard to emphasize their femininity so that they may avoid negative stereotypes or reactions (Krane, 2001). However, the difficulty for females does not end there. Females must also be careful not to overemphasize their femininity, or they tend to become sexualized and are not taken seriously as athletes (Krane, 2001). In addition, because of the negativity associated with being perceived as lesbian, both heterosexual women and lesbians who have not yet publicly shared their sexual orientation share the fear of being viewed as lesbian (Krane & Barber, 2005; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). These impacts of gender socialization extend into many forms of leisure participation, but are particularly prominent in the realm of outdoor recreation.

## **Gender and Outdoor Recreation**

While specific participation rates by sport are difficult to ascertain, what is clear is that females are participating less in outdoor recreation than their male counterparts (Outdoor Foundation, 2012). A wide range of research indicates that women are likely to avoid participating in outdoor recreation because of gender expectations, a lack of role models, a lack of awareness, and fear (e.g., Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993; Culp, 1998). As the previous review of literature has indicated, many leisure choices individuals make are highly influenced by gender socialization. Traditionally, the outdoors has been viewed as the domain of males in which women are unwelcome and out-of-place (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993; Culp, 1998; McDermott, 2004). Beliefs as simple as the fact that females should not get dirty help to engrain this idea in both males and females (Culp, 1998). Such gender role beliefs can, in fact, stop women from ever viewing the outdoors as a potential domain for leisure pursuits. As Culp (1998) stated, “gender roles function as a ‘subtle undermining’”, rather than overt discrimination, of female’s intent to participate in outdoor recreation (p. 366). Even when females do participate in the outdoors, they tend to do so in the most feminine role available. For instance, if canoeing with men, women tend to take their position at the bow of the canoe allowing the man to take the control position at the stern. That is, women tend to conform to gender norms and expectations within activities even while they may be overcoming those norms in participating in the outdoors at all (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993). Additionally, females’ perceived familial roles can prevent their participation in outdoor recreation. These can include their role as caretaker (over children, elderly family members,

significant others) or as dependent upon the males in their families (Little, 2002). These role pressures can lead females to experiencing guilt for leaving children, husbands, and friends behind in order to participate in outdoor recreation (Little, 2002).

Females also do not have role models in the outdoors to which they can aspire to emulate. Both within popular media and social circles, females rarely see other females participating in outdoor recreation (Culp, 1998). When females are found in popular media, they are few and far between and depicted in very traditional ways (Vodden-McKay & Schell, 2010). That is, females' role as a wife/girlfriend and mother are reinforced and a heavy focus is placed on their physical appearance. Females are "(re)positioned... into hegemonic patriarchal ideals of proper feminine behavior" rather than being depicted as masculine or aggressive (Vodden-McKay & Schell, 2010, p. 149). Additionally, the females depicted are typically white, thin, feminine, and able-bodied. Vodden-McKay and Schell (2010), in their study of the depiction of women in a popular rock climbing magazine, argued that these minimal types of depictions of women in popular media not only discourage females from participating in outdoor recreation, but also help perpetuate the idea that females are lesser athletes and should not be welcomed into the outdoors. For other women viewing these images, the message is also that climbing is not open to a diverse range of women (Vodden-McKay & Schell, 2010).

In addition to the necessity for females to overcome gender expectations and role requirements as well as a lack of role models, females are also less likely than males to be introduced to outdoor activities. The skills necessary for outdoor recreation are often passed down within families from father to son while the female members of the family

are not included (Culp, 1998). Culp (1998) contended that when these outdoor skills are not learned early in life, females are less likely to begin participation in these activities later on (Culp, 1998). Because of this lower instance of familial support, females may turn to resources outside of the family for outdoor recreation participation. Such opportunities, however, are also less prevalent for females than for males. Research has indicated that, while Boy Scout troops learn outdoor skills and activities, Girl Scout troops often focus more heavily on artistic (i.e., sewing and art) projects (Culp, 1998). Without opportunities for skill building, females are less likely than males to participate in outdoor activities. In turn, females have high levels of self-doubt and fear of embarrassment and rejection when participating in outdoor recreation in mixed sex environments (Culp, 1998; Little, 2002).

Research also indicates that even when females are given the opportunity to learn the necessary technical skills for outdoor recreation participation, many of these same social limitations and stigmas are still at play. Warren and Loeffler (2006) concluded that female's self-doubt often hinders their recognition of their own expertise in outdoor recreation. Research has also indicated that females experience gender stereotypes and social stigmas through their interactions with males in the outdoors as they may be viewed as less capable than male participants (Little, 2002). Gender role socialization, a lack of a sense of competence, a lack of formative training, and sexism play into the difficulty females have in developing and confidently applying their technical skills in outdoor recreation (Warren & Loeffler, 2006).

A lack of perceived physical and psychological safety is another constraint that prevents or limits female's participation in outdoor recreation. In short, women fear for their safety in the outdoors. This may be closely linked to the ways in which females are socialized to believe that the most appropriate realm for them to dwell within is the home and that the outdoors is inappropriate for their use (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). This socialization begins early on even through children's stories, such as "Little Red Riding Hood". Such tales can play a role in socializing females to believe that the outdoors is a frightening and dangerous place for them to be (Powch, 1994). In reality, outdoor recreation typically occurs in secluded areas away from, not only other people, but also potential help should something go wrong. This may lead females to fear getting lost, wild animals or dogs, theft, and to fear for their safety from both accidents and injuries and physically or sexually violent or harassing behaviors of others (Coble, Selin, & Erickson, 2003; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). Closely related to this fear of physical safety is the sense of objectification and violation that females feel leading to a sense of vulnerability in the outdoors. Females have indicated encountering overt sexual advances, flirtation, "catcalls" and general feelings that "someone is looking right through [their] clothes" (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004, p. 655). Because of these dangers, real or perceived, fear can be a major contributor to reasons why females do not choose to pursue outdoor recreation (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993; Culp, 1998). Though the literature clearly indicates a wide range of barriers that may prevent or limit female participation in the outdoors, research has also uncovered a host of beneficial outcomes that women can achieve through participation.

Research has demonstrated the importance of helping females overcome the gender typing of outdoor recreation as participation in such pursuits has been shown to play an important role in the empowerment of females (McDermott, 2004; Mitten, 1992; Pohl, Borrie, & Patterson, 2000). By participating in outdoor recreation, females may achieve higher self-esteem, self-trust and self-worth, and greater assertiveness (Pohl et al., 2000). Pohl et al. (2000) noted, “participating in wilderness recreation may play a great part in deconstructing gender roles and improving the status of women in society in general” (p. 428). The authors asserted that this might occur for women because “wilderness experiences contribute to recognizing [their] importance and rejecting some of the institutional regularities that oppress [them]” (Pohl et al., 2000, p. 429). Participation in outdoor recreation can also lead females to heightened self-sufficiency, independence, confidence, and improved body image as well as a greater sense of authority for not only themselves, but all females (Mitten, 1992; Pohl et al., 2000; Whittington, 2006). Pohl et al. (2000) postulated that participation in outdoor recreation offers females “freedom of body, freedom of mind, freedom of movement, and freedom *from* societal constraints” (p. 430). This freedom of body, the ability to divert focus “to an ideal of body function over body fashion” is reflected elsewhere in the literature as well (Pohl et al., 2000, p. 430). Schmalz and Davison (2006) asserted that females who participate in both traditionally feminine and traditionally masculine sports have a “higher physical self-concept” than females who limit participation to traditionally feminine sports (p. 350). Whittington (2006) demonstrated that adolescent females who participated in an outdoor recreation program felt free from societal norms and began

questioning typical beauty norms. These outcomes demonstrate the importance of opening the outdoors as a welcome place for female participation.

While the constraints to and benefits of female participation in outdoor recreation are clear, what has not been a large focus in the research is how, specifically, leisure professionals can work to move past these constraints to widespread female participation. Some research, focused primarily on amateur outdoor recreation athletes has sought to understand the ways women negotiate constraints to participating in adventure recreation (Little, 2002). Such findings have suggested that women have to compromise their level of participation, reconstruct their ideas of what constitutes adventure, or focus on the anticipation of the adventures they may experience again in the future in order to stay connected to their sport (Little, 2002). Some research has focused on more serious levels of women's participation in outdoor adventure recreation including Bartram's (2001) study of women on serious leisure whitewater kayaking career trajectories. Dilley and Scraton (2010) also examined women's rock climbing from the perspective of serious leisure and how their participation related to the current context of their lives. What seems to be missing from the literature, and the hole this study aspires to begin filling in, is a focus on *professional* outdoor adventure recreation athletes and the specific *lifetime* contexts that have enabled their success. By understanding how women in a variety of outdoor adventure recreation careers have succeeded at the highest possible level in the face of the many well-documented constraints to participation, may help to open the doors to the outdoors for all females.

## **Poststructural Feminist Theory**

A feminist lens guides this study and the assumptions herein about the construction, legitimation, and reproduction of power between genders. Within this feminist lens, the focus is on poststructural feminist theory, particularly as it has been applied in leisure research. Poststructural feminist theory moves beyond the notions inherent in traditional feminist theory (e.g., liberal, Marxist, and structural). Rather than focusing on the social, economic, or political forces that create a gender hierarchy, poststructural feminist theory focuses on the way cultural relations shape gender relations in everyday life (Aitchison, 2003). Poststructural feminist theory is most typically used in leisure research for its perspective on the body. The notion of the body within poststructural feminism is founded on Foucault's ideas of the body. Foucault's premises of the body were based on basic ideas such as "power and resistance, bodily discipline, surveillance and self-surveillance" (Wearing, 1998, p. 185). Foucault argued that it is through self-surveillance and the surveillance of populations that bodies are controlled and power is exerted. To illustrate this point, Foucault has pointed to the example of a panopticon, a circular prison that has a central viewing tower within which prisoners never know if they are being watched by guards. The idea then becomes that because prisoners do not know when they are being watched, they begin to self-surveil themselves and surveil each other to ensure that the rules of the prison are being followed. In this way, it is the micro-level cultural practices (self-surveillance, surveillance of others) that dictate the macro-level social structures (social order) (Aitchison, 2003; Wearing, 1998). This arrangement, Foucault argued, is much like the

surveillance that occurs in modern society. Because people are aware that others are observing their behavior, they are more likely to fall in line with cultural norms in their actions. Or, as Aitchison (2003) described, individuals' knowledge of this surveillance, this "gaze of others" influences their behavior (p. 21). It is this gaze of others that leads us to act in accordance with social norms for fear of being marginalized or viewed as an outsider.

In addition, Wearing (1998) points to the idea of "dominant discourse" in Foucault's work as applied by Smith (1988) (p. 106). According to Smith (1988), this discourse refers to the ways women's bodies are portrayed in "textual discourse" on television, in magazines, in fashion, and even through cosmetic counters (p. 43). Smith continues that textual discourse "connected the production and distribution of clothes, furnishing, education, etc., the skills and work (paid and unpaid) of women, and the norms and images regulating the presentation of selves in social circles" (p. 43). This textual discourse "not only supplies standards and practices" but also "created a common code among readers vested in languages and images which could be referenced in conversation and in interpreting behavior and events" (p. 43). It is also through this "discourse" that women's bodies and femininity are constructed to be different from masculinity because the female body is portrayed as never being perfect. Women are constantly in need of changing their appearance in order to conform to the image portrayed through this discourse. That is, women must lose weight, exercise, wear makeup, or even have plastic surgery in order to fit the appropriate image (Wearing, 1998).

This dominant discourse may direct members of society in how to act, how to portray themselves, and what to expect of others, but this power does not necessarily come from men or even from a central structure or institution. As Foucault contends, power does not come only from above, rather it is “relational, it is omnipresent; it is constantly produced among and between persons” and as such, “power comes from everywhere; it is exercised from innumerable points” (McLaren, 2004, p. 219). It is based on this premises that Wearing (1998) argues that this discourse that pressures women to seek an ideal body is not simply something perpetrated against women. Rather, women choose to “practice this discipline on and against their own bodies, so in a sense the choice is theirs” (Wearing, 1998, p. 106). It is through this compliance that women practice “a form of obedience to patriarchy” and through these discourses enact “their collusion to the objectification and inferiorization of women’s bodies” (Wearing, 1998, p. 107).

As a result of this dominant discourse that dictates what a woman’s body should be, women tend to use their bodies differently than men in order to align with these social expectations. Young (2005) concluded that, when comparing the movements of males and females, females typically fail “to make full use of the body’s spatial and lateral potentialities” (p. 32). Such restricted movement is apparent in the way men and women stand, walk, sit, and in the ways they use their bodies in physical activity. Young (2005) illustrates this difference in body use/movement in physical activity: “most men are by no means superior athletes [to women]...[but] the relatively untrained man nevertheless engages in sport generally with more free motion and open reach than does his female

counterpart” (p. 33). According to Young (2005) the trepidation demonstrated by women can be the result of a sense of a lack of the requisite skills, a fear of injury, and a knowledge of the “gaze of others” (p. 39). This gaze of others as referred to by Aitchison and alluded to by Foucault results in women believing that they are an object over which they have little control and to whom actions are being done. For example, rather than having the sense that an object (a baseball, basketball, or soccer ball) is “coming *toward* them”, women view the object as “coming *at* them” (Young, 2005, p. 38). As such, women fear getting hurt because they believe actions are being done to them rather than having control over the actions. This premise is in line with the works previously outlined of Metheny (1965), Lever (1976), Bialeschki and Henderson (1993), and Culp (1998), among others. Young’s (2005) interpretation of the way women use and view their bodies within society as well as more general findings about physical activity illustrate one realm in which Foucault’s ideas of self-surveillance and the surveillance of others may impact individuals (women) in society (physical activity).

However, Foucault also does not believe that people are ever simply victims. Rather, while individuals face social constraints, they “are ‘free’ in the sense that they can choose to resist...to struggle against the form of power which pervades everyday life” (Wearing, 1998, p. 145). This resistance, in the case of gender, allows women to work to overcome the limiting discourse on what a woman is supposed to be and the way she is supposed to use her body (or not). Leisure, both Aitchison (2003) and Wearing (1998) argue, is particularly adept at allowing for such resistance. Through the lens of poststructural feminist theory, it is viewed that precisely because of individuals’ collusion

in living out socially accepted roles (i.e., the fact that women choose to participate in self-surveillance) that power is not simply a top-down entity. Through this notion, poststructural feminist theory asserts that all individuals have the power to change the way they enact their roles. Based on this notion, poststructuralist feminist theory allows a new way to approach and view the power of leisure.

### **Leisure as Resistance**

One aspect inherent in poststructural feminist theory is that individuals have the power to create change individually in their lives. One realm that scholars have focused on as uniquely positioned to accomplish such change is through leisure. Wearing (1998) argues that the poststructural theoretical framework has the potential of allowing leisure researchers to investigate how leisure can be used as resistance to “minimize the culturally constructed, gendered hierarchy, [and] to equalize power” (p. 114). Aitchison (2003) agreed that poststructural theory can provide “a lens through which to view the potential for reworking, disruption, contestation, transgression and transformation of the dominant codes and behaviours of society such that change is possible over periods of time and across different spaces” (p. 21). As such, poststructural feminist theory may be best positioned (as compared with other feminist viewpoints) to understand individual women’s successful use of leisure in overcoming gender norms. This focus on the power of the individual also allows for women to be understood within the specific contexts of their lives.

Aitchison (2003) points out that other major feminist theories (including liberal, Marxist, and structural feminist theories) focus on the subordination of females by males.

In contrast, poststructural feminism goes beyond this focus on domination by males to seek an understanding of the way social and cultural relations shape the relations between the genders. This focus, Aitchison argues, is what makes poststructural feminist theory such an important and necessary lens in leisure research. Wearing (1998) shares a similar argument: “one of the dangers with the socialist feminist position in the late 1980’s was that such thorough documentation of women’s oppression, theoretically linked to structural causes, implied that nothing that individual women could do would make any significant change in their lives” (p. 37). Wearing (1998) found that in her work, she was consistently finding women who were “constructing survival strategies, struggling, negotiating, contesting and sometimes transforming power relationships at an individual and group level” (p. 37). Shaw, while sometimes being critical of the application of poststructural feminism in leisure research, has also acknowledged the applicability of studying leisure as resistance by noting, “one person’s resistance may well have implications and outcomes that affect others in similar circumstances” (Shaw, 2001, p. 198). In addition, while identifying both the weaknesses and possibilities of poststructural feminist theory, Shaw also provided three future foci for future studies of resistance (each of which this study is well-suited to address): (a) documentation of types of leisure and the specific contexts in which resistance happens (including a detailed analysis of the types of oppression/constraint being challenged); (b) the intent of individuals in resisting that power (did they set out to resist, or was it by happenstance?); and (c) the outcomes related to the individual’s resistance and how the type of oppression, the individual’s intent, and the outcome interrelate. Poststructural feminist theory opens the door through

which we may be able to better understand how women use leisure in resisting their larger socially constructed roles and behavior norms. By exploring and gaining an understanding of how individual women, within their specific life contexts, use leisure to resist gender norms, we may better understand broader implications for how, why, and in what circumstances women are best positioned to do so.

Leisure researchers have agreed, and have documented the contexts within which leisure has been used as resistance to traditional gender norms and this resistance's related outcomes. Yarnal, Hutchinson, and Chow (2006) conducted an ethnographic study seeking to better understand the experiences of resistance of women participating in a firefighter training camp. Framed by poststructural feminist theory, the authors concluded, "campers had the opportunity to reevaluate the role their bodies could play in everyday life outside the camp by becoming aware of the limitations and strengths of their own bodies. Reevaluation was empowering" (p. 157). The authors go on to note that this reevaluation that took place during the camp allowed participants to gain confidence in their ability to take on challenges in their lives. Additionally, campers were able to move beyond the gendered norms regarding the potential of their bodies and "assumptions of negative gender identity" (p. 157). Cronan and Scott (2008) drew similar conclusions from their study of participants and coaches of an all-women's triathlon training group. Following a grounded theory approach, Cronan and Scott (2008) concluded that their participants, due to their participation in triathlon training, began to view their bodies less as objects and more as tools over which they had power and could use to achieve whatever goals they set out. This willingness to "challenge themselves

physically became a vehicle for challenging their minds, their role in society and their acceptance of societal norms and dictates” (p. 31). In addition, the results of the study also indicated that, in addition to redefining their own bodies, the participants also began to “supplant typical male ideas of sport” (Cronan & Scott, 2008, p. 33). In addition to these examples, scholars have focused on women’s participation in a wide-range of non-traditional activities including ice hockey, motorcycle riding, boxing, bodybuilding, rock climbing and solo travelling (Dilley & Scraton, 2010; Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Porobert, Palmer, & Leberman, 2007; Roster, 2007; Theberge, 2003). The research in this area has largely concluded, in line with the findings of Yarnal et al. (2003) and Cronan and Scott (2008), that women were empowered through their participation in these activities, as they were able to resist and overcome traditional gender norms in and through their participation in these activities. By overcoming these norms, women are not only more empowered in the rest of their lives, but they are also opening up doors to a wider range of leisure opportunities for themselves and others.

### **Leisure Constraints**

While a poststructural feminist lens will guide this study, it is also important and necessary to acknowledge the additional forces at work in limiting women’s participation in outdoor recreation. Beyond the gender-typing of leisure activities lie a wide array of constraints that may limit, change, or derail individual’s leisure choices. Leisure constraint research is focused on factors that limit or prohibit individuals from forming preferences for, participating in, or enjoying leisure. The study of the constraints to leisure began as far back as the 1960’s. However, true focus on leisure constraints did not

begin in earnest until the 1980's (Jackson, 2005). According to Jackson (2005), the three main goals for leisure constraints research is to (a) understand both positive and negative influences on individuals' leisure choices and behaviors; (b) generate new understandings about leisure participation, motivations, satisfactions, and conflict; and (c) as a realm of research through which researchers from varying backgrounds within leisure studies can communicate. Three main studies are consistently pointed to as laying the groundwork of leisure constraints theory as it exists today with the first being published in 1987.

Up until 1987, research on leisure constraints, or as they were largely referred to at that time, barriers to recreation participation, focused on constraints as, essentially, insurmountable. Constraints were only seen and investigated as factors that blocked or limited individuals' participation in leisure. That is, while the focus of theoretical development and empirical investigation would later turn to the impact of constraints on preferences for, motivations for, and experience within leisure, until 1987, the only outcomes being investigated were either participation or nonparticipation. In addition to this view, researchers had honed in on structural constraints as the focus of their work, while not investigating a wider array of possible constraints. Additionally, the research on constraints had been largely atheoretical in nature. By the late 1980's, however, major shifts in the field of leisure studies related to constraints research began. These changes included: (a) a focus on the development of constraints theory; (b) an application of a wider range of research methodology; and (c) a healthy scholarly discussion within the field about the state of constraints research (Jackson, 2005). Arguably the most

“important conceptual development” in the field of leisure constraints research was Crawford and Godbey’s (1987) study (Jackson, 2005, p. 5).

Crawford and Godbey’s (1987) study on constraints in family leisure broke theoretical ground on a few key points. First, Crawford and Godbey asserted that constraints impacted not only an individual’s likelihood of participation or nonparticipation in leisure, but also their formation of preferences for leisure pursuits. Next, they expanded the discussion on the types of constraints that may impact individuals’ leisure. While still including structural constraints, the new model also included intra- and interpersonal constraints. Crawford and Godbey’s (1987) work was also the first to introduce the notion that these varying types of constraints may be interrelated. Leisure barriers were defined as “internal (intrapersonal) psychological states, attributes, and characteristics, and external (interpersonal and structural) circumstances which are experienced as individual behavioral ‘restraining forces’” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 122). In addition, these barriers were “not conceptualized to be insurmountable determinants of leisure preferences or behavior, but as influences upon them” (p. 122). In more fully explaining their model, Crawford and Godbey (1987) noted that models conceptualizing constraints “must locate the construct of barriers in the context of the leisure preference-participation relationship” (p. 122).

The main proposition of Crawford and Godbey’s (1987) research is that leisure barriers impact the relationship between preferences and participation in three main ways: intrapersonal barriers, interpersonal barriers, and structural barriers. Intrapersonal barriers are described as “individual psychological states and attributes which interact

with leisure preferences rather than...between preferences and participation” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 122). Intrapersonal barriers include such factors as stress, anxiety, depression, and the attitudes of friends and family. Interpersonal barriers were described as being the “result of interpersonal interaction or the relationship between individuals’ characteristics” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 123). Examples of this included a spouse’s preference for an activity or any barriers arising from the interaction of spouses. Expanded beyond the family relationships that were the central focus of the study, interpersonal barriers were described as including any interpersonal relationships that affect leisure participation (e.g., an individual’s inability to find a partner to play tennis). Finally, Crawford and Godbey (1987) outlined structural barriers as “intervening factors between leisure preference and participation” (p. 124). Structural barriers were described to include socioeconomic resources, time commitments, climate, and the perceived appropriateness of activities. In the models included in the study, Crawford and Godbey (1987) asserted that intrapersonal constraints directly impacted preferences that, in turn, affected leisure participation, interpersonal constraints impacted both preference and participation, and structural constraints directly impacted the relationship between an individual’s preferences and participation in an activity. While Crawford and Godbey (1987) acknowledged that their conceptual framework was “too simple to wholly reflect the complex nature of the factors which may deter participation in leisure activities” it was nonetheless groundbreaking in broadening the theoretical view of leisure constraints research (p. 124). The next important theoretical step in the understanding and empirical

examination of leisure constraints was Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey's (1991) hierarchical model of leisure constraints.

Crawford et al.'s (1991) work took the next major stride in the theoretical understanding of leisure constraints. The author's focused on building directly on the model put forth by Crawford and Godbey (1987). They asserted that a more thorough understanding of leisure constraints could be gained by, rather than keeping separate Crawford and Godbey's (1987) three models, integrating the models into a more complete picture of leisure constraints. The hierarchical model of leisure constraints laid out three propositions. First, the authors proposed that "leisure participation is heavily dependent on negotiating through an alignment of multiple factors, arranged sequentially, that must be overcome to maintain an individual's impetus through these systematic levels" (Crawford et al., 1991, p. 314). This suggested that leisure participation is dependent on an individual's "successful confrontation of each constraint level in turn" (Crawford et al., 1991, p. 314). The author's second proposition was that that individuals' encounter these constraints hierarchically. That is, individuals must first overcome intrapersonal constraints. It was at this level, the author's argued, that leisure preferences are formed. It is only when intrapersonal constraints are not present or "have been confronted through some combination of privilege and exercise of human will" that leisure preferences can form (Crawford et al., 1991, p. 313). Next, dependent upon the leisure activity, individuals may face interpersonal constraints (e.g., finding a partner with whom to play a sport). Next, when a person has overcome any interpersonal constraints, they will face structural constraints. Leisure participation then becomes

dependent on individuals' abilities to successfully negotiate any structural constraints they may be faced with. If these constraints are too strong, or the individual cannot successfully navigate through them, they will not participate in the activity.

In addition to the integrated hierarchical model, the authors proposed that social privilege might play an even more important role than previously believed. While not downplaying the importance of social privilege, the authors posited that "this influence is not direct...rather...it is channeled through variations in the ways in which people perceive and experience constraints" (Crawford et al., 1987, p. 315). Crawford et al. (1991) also raised the issue that constraints not only impact preference formation and participation or nonparticipation, but also present complications after an individual has participated in an activity. These factors included "frequency of participation, level of specialization, level of ego involvement, and even his or her definition of the situation" (p. 315). Recent literature has also reinforced the efficacy of the hierarchical model of leisure constraints. In a re-examination of the model, Godbey, Crawford, and Shen (2010) concluded that the conceptualization of the theory remains valid, is indeed consistent with a psychosocial understanding of the decision making process, and the three main tenets (based on Crawford and Godbey's (1987) work) of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints are still "appropriate and useful" (p. 129). The third and final major research that laid the foundation for current leisure constraints research was Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey's (1993) theorization on how individuals negotiate constraints.

Jackson et al. (1993) extended the notion of leisure constraints negotiation suggested in previous research (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford et al., 1991). The authors posited six propositions describing the process by which individuals negotiate leisure constraints. The first proposition was that, although it may be true in certain instances, participation in leisure is not dependent upon an *absence* of constraints. Rather, it is dependent upon an individual's ability to negotiate through constraints. In addition, negotiation of constraints may simply change the nature of, rather than preventing, participation. The second proposition put forward by Jackson et al. (1993) stated that "variations in the reporting of constraints can be viewed not only as variations in the experience of constraints, but also as variations in success in negotiating them" (p. 6). That is, people may fail to report constraints to leisure not only if they do not experience constraints, but also if they have successfully negotiated through them. The third proposition states that when people do not report wanting to take on new activities or wanting to change their current participation in leisure it may be simply from a lack of interest, *or*, it may be that those individuals have successfully negotiated one of a number of structural constraints. Next, proposition four states that "anticipation of one or more insurmountable interpersonal or structural constraints may suppress the desire for participation" (Jackson et al., p. 7). Prior to this study, antecedent constraints had typically been viewed as those arising from cultural or social variables (e.g., gender stereotypes regarding an activity), but Jackson et al. (1993) put forth that antecedent constraints should also be considered as those that "may be manifested through feedback

loops...whereby the expectation of encountering an interpersonal or structural constraint” that seems insurmountable may also stem an individual’s desire to participate in a leisure activity (p. 7). Proposition five addresses the fact that the way individuals anticipate their ability to *negotiate* constraints may impact their participation just as much as their anticipation of the actual constraints.

Proposition six highlighted the introduction of a new factor, motivation, to the discussion on leisure constraints negotiation. Based on the idea that some people are successful at negotiating constraints while others are not, the authors enumerated three subdivisions of individuals who experience leisure constraints. In response to leisure constraints, the first group of people enact a “reactive response” (Jackson et al., 1993, p. 8). That is, they are unable or unmotivated to overcome the constraints with which they are faced and do not participate in the activity. The second group described by the authors have a “successful proactive response” through which they are able to overcome the constraint without altering or limiting their participation (Jackson et al., 1993, p. 8). The third group are people who experience a “partly successful proactive response” to the constraint(s) with which they are faced as they are able to participate in their chosen activity, but do so in an “altered manner” (Jackson et al., 1993, p. 8). Based on this differentiation, the sixth proposition states: “Both the initiation and outcome of the negotiation process are dependent on the relative strength of, and interactions between, constraints on participating in an activity and motivations for such participation” (Jackson et al., 1993, p. 9). Like the hierarchical model, recent literature has tested and reaffirmed this model of constraint negotiation providing further support of its theoretical

efficacy (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; White, 2008). While a number of contributions to the theoretical base on leisure constraints continue to be published, these three articles laid the theoretical groundwork from which the vast majority of constraints studies, to this day, draw their focus (Jackson, 2005).

### **Gender and constraints.**

Notable work has also been done in identifying specific models of women's constraints to leisure. Based on Crawford et al. (1991) and Jackson et al. (1993), Henderson and Bialeschki (1993) provided an expanded model addressing women's leisure constraints, specifically. Henderson and Bialeschki (1993) included four additional propositions in expanding the previous models. First, they concluded that in women's leisure experiences, antecedent and intervening constraints were not mutually exclusive, but rather interacted to impact women's "preferences, negotiation, and participation in leisure activities" (p. 247). Next, constraints, both antecedent and intervening, influenced the leisure preferences of women. Third, constraints (largely intervening, but also antecedent) impacted women throughout the process of making decisions related to leisure. Finally, women's preferences interacted with their participation throughout the constraints negotiation process. Henderson and Bialeschki (1993) concluded that for women, "constraints are not sequential and hierarchical, but dynamic and grounded" (p. 247). In addition, the authors concluded that their model most closely mirrored Jackson et al.'s (1993) leisure constraints negotiation model as it too identified the feedback loops through which multiple constraints categories interact throughout the process.

Shaw (1994) outlined contemporary approaches to understanding women's leisure constraints and suggested a more comprehensive conceptualization. Shaw's framework was based on three principles. First, for women, leisure can be contradictory being neither inherently positive nor inherently negative. For example a woman can participate in and find enjoyment from a leisure activity while also reinforcing sexist notions through her participation (e.g., in family leisure). Second, not only can women face constraints towards leisure in their lives, but leisure itself can also be constraining. Much like the example from the first principle, women's participation in leisure may work to reinforce gender norms or beliefs about femininity based in the social conceptions of gender. Finally, Shaw (1994) introduced the notion of resistance through leisure. At the time of the publication, Shaw acknowledged that little research had been completed on resistance, but that it should not be viewed singularly as a way for women to empower themselves and resist societal norms. Rather, resistance may also serve as a framework to understand how women negotiate constraints to their leisure. These three principles also provide a lens through which Shaw felt researchers could move beyond a focus on white, heterosexual, Western, middle-class women to better understand the diversity of experiences and constraints women face in their leisure participation. Through this broader lens, Shaw (1994) argued that not only could leisure researchers gain a better understanding of women's leisure experiences, the constraints they face, and the role leisure plays in their lives, but also may "facilitate positive social change directed towards improving the lives of women in diverse life situations" (p. 7).

Shaw and Henderson (2005) revisited constraints on women's leisure arguing that while the focus on the research had largely identified a leisure gap between men and women because of a myriad of constraints on women (e.g., a lack of access to resources and societal expectations about women's roles and responsibilities), most research had thus far lacked a true constraints focus. Even so, much of the existing research on constraints to women's research fits well into the constraints framework. For women, structural constraints (e.g., lack of financial independence, lack of opportunities, a lack of time, and familial responsibilities), intrapersonal constraints (e.g., the ethic of care, a lack of a sense of entitlement, a lack of self-esteem, embarrassment, and fear), and interpersonal constraints (e.g., social views on the appropriateness of certain activities for women and social control of women by spouses) are well-established. Shaw and Henderson (2005) identified what she deemed an "uneasy alliance" between gender and constraints researchers (p. 27). They outlined four main reasons for this unease. First, much feminist research focuses on sociocultural determinants of gender relations (and gender constraints). In contrast, most constraints and constraint negotiation research fails to address these broader social structures, as it tends to focus mostly on individual experiences. Next, it may be more difficult to discern specific categories of constraints for women, as they may be more likely to overlap (e.g., family responsibilities, body image, or fear may be viewed as structural, intrapersonal, or interpersonal constraints). Third, the way constraints have historically been conceptualized may be too narrow of an approach for viewing and understanding women's leisure constraints. Finally, constraints literature largely focuses on the impact of constraints on participation. For women, a key

focus may also be to understand how constraints impact the quality of their leisure experiences (Shaw & Henderson, 2005).

Shaw and Henderson (2005) offered the following pieces of advice for how to bridge the gap between constraints research and gender research. First, they suggested broadening analysis to include not only individual determinants, but also societal determinants of constraints and leisure experiences. Second, Shaw and Henderson (2005) suggested that an examination of the relevance of the core concepts of constraints to women's leisure might be necessary. In addition, researchers should also seek to identify any "hidden constraints" not yet recognized (p. 30). Third, in understanding women's leisure constraints, simply broadening the definition and conception of *leisure* may be in order. Doing so may allow researchers to more fully understand how constraints may affect women's experiences and enjoyment of leisure. Finally, Shaw and Henderson (2005) pushed for the inclusion of a broader range of demographic and "social structural" factors. This included more fully investigating how gender impacts men's leisure and understanding the ways that age, race, class, and other markers of diversity may intersect in creating constraints to leisure (p. 30). While these are just a few examples of the important dialogue happening around issues of gender and constraints, they provide a snapshot of some of the important considerations and conceptualizations that have been undertaken and will help to guide the data collection procedures of this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how professional female outdoor adventure recreation athletes have navigated their way to a professional level of participation and performance in their sport and in what specific contexts their experiences were set.

The research questions for this study were as follow:

1. What are the specific experiences of professional female outdoor adventure recreation athletes in reaching their current level of participation in outdoor adventure recreation?
2. What constraints did the professional level athletes face in beginning and increasing their participation in outdoor adventure recreation?
  - a. Specifically, what constraints were most salient in the athletes' entry into their chosen pursuit?
  - b. What specific negotiation strategies were critical in the athletes gaining entry to and increasing their level of participation in their chosen pursuit?
3. What contextual or structural factors influenced the athletes' entry and increasing participation in their sport?

#### **Case Study Design**

This study followed a multiple case study design. For the purposes of this study, four individual cases (four separate professional female outdoor adventure recreation

athletes) were studied. Each individual outdoor adventure recreation participant was considered a single case within the study. Within each case, the focus was be on the lifetime journey of the athlete; how they first became involved in their respective sport, the steps they took to increasing their skill level and professionalism within the sport, and their current experiences within the sport. Each individual participant stood alone as a case and there were no embedded units of analysis. Stake (2006) pointed out that the strength of case study research is that it requires, and in turn, allows for an understanding of each case “as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situation” (p. 2). As such, each case is to be understood within its particular situation, a depth that quantitative measures fail to adequately address. Because the goal of this research was to understand the journey of professional outdoor adventure recreation athletes and the particular contexts in which they successfully ascended to the height of their sport, this qualitative case study design is best suited to address the research questions.

### **Context**

The context of this study was the specific life contexts of each participant (case). This context included her experiences growing up, when she began participation in her sport, and as she excelled to a professional level. As such, there were four unique contexts of study. A goal of the study was to understand four key points in the athletes’ lives: prior to beginning participation in their sport, initial entry into the sport, transition to and attainment of professional status, and the experience of their current professional status. As such, one purpose guiding the data collection was to transport the participants back to those specific times in their lives. For instance, the researcher worked to have

participants relive previous expeditions, trip, or competitions, seeking to hone in on their specific life contexts, emotions, and experiences at the time. In doing so, one may argue that those specific contexts were also a part of the study at specific points in the data collection process. However, data collection took place via telephone and Skype, so no singular context was the foundation for the study.

In addition, the participants were chosen based on their professional involvement in either mountaineering or whitewater rodeo kayaking. As such, these sports provided another specific context within which the participants' experiences were set. Mountaineering is highly dominated by male guides and climbers leading to a preponderance of masculine influence and norms. Whitewater rodeo kayaking, a competitive version of playboating, is also highly dominated by male participants and competitors. Female athletes are outnumbered and often train and compete side-by-side with men. Focused on big tricks, extreme boat control, and physicality, rodeo kayaking is arguably the most highly masculine form of whitewater kayaking.

One other context that is important to note is the gendered backdrop that influences all of the experiences of the athletes in this study. As discussed by Ridgeway (2009), gender works to frame all social interactions affecting the expectations, judgments, and assumptions individuals make in immediate response to another's gender. Because women are an anomaly in the outdoors, the women in this study have had to navigate the outdoors as a gendered leisure space. As discussed by Wearing (1998), leisure space is fluid, "composed of intersections of mobile elements with shifting often indeterminate borders" (p. 133). This view "allows for people to construct their own

meanings in relation to the self, identity and subjectivity in leisure process which is ongoing and changing” (Wearing, 1998, p. 133). Understanding this leisure space as an additional context of the participants’ experience is important in working towards a fuller understanding of not only how the athletes have experienced their careers in the outdoors, but how this gendered leisure space has affected and been affected by the participants. Wearing (1998) posited, “the self that goes away from the space is rarely the same as the self that enters” (p. 133). Thus, it was important to understand the journeys of the participants throughout the various phases of their careers rather than focusing on a singular portion of their experience to more fully capture the complexities this backdrop creates.

### **Researcher Subjectivity**

My personal beliefs are important to acknowledge so that I, and readers, may fully recognize them and work to prevent them from biasing the findings of the study. Physical activity has always been a central focus of my life. From my participation in organized sports starting in second grade through my collegiate softball experience, athletics was the dominant force in my life through my first 21 years. After my college career was over, I found new outlets for staying fit and staying physically competitive. Because of my experiences, I believe in the importance of physical activity for the physical, emotional, and social benefits it can provide. As such, I am aware that I may concentrate on the benefits associated with physical activity pursuits and must work to stay open to negative outcomes associated with participation.

In addition, I participate on a novice level in a number of outdoor adventure recreation pursuits. Having not begun my participation until after college, I have experienced first hand many of the constraints and societal norms associated with female participation in the outdoors. These experiences may heighten my focus on constraints and seeking out the constraints faced by others even if those constraints have not been a significant part of the participants' experiences. By being aware of how my personal experiences have colored my view of female acceptance and success in the outdoors, I can more clearly work to search for the truth of each participant's experience.

Finally, my personal experiences, research, and reviews of relevant literature have led me to believe that females face greater obstacles in not only becoming involved in physical activity, but also in maintaining their levels of participation. I believe that some of the most salient factors in this adoption/attrition issue are the gendered social norms that are in place. Physical activity itself is often seen as a realm most appropriate for males, especially when outdoor adventure recreation activities are considered. While this may in fact be true for many females who choose to participate in outdoor recreation, I must work to maintain focus on the specific contexts in which each study participant experienced entry and increased specialization in her sport. I also utilize specific techniques such as memoing, multiple sources, and member checks throughout the data collection and analysis process to limit the impact my bias has on my study's findings.

### **Participant Recruitment and Selection**

The participants for the study were four female professional athletes from two distinct outdoor adventure sports: mountaineering and whitewater kayaking. Each sport

was chosen for its highly gendered nature. Initial participant selection was based on a purposive sampling technique (Babbie, 2002). Babbie (2002) described purposive sampling as selecting participants based on the “knowledge of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the study” (p. 178). Participants were identified based on their professional status in their respective sport. The professional kayaker is a sponsored athlete (e.g., sponsored by a kayaking company such as Dagger, Liquid Logic, or Jackson Kayaks) and an active competitor in professional races and competitions. The mountain guides were required to be certified guides with either a national (e.g., American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA)) or international certifying body (International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA)). The initial mountain guide was identified based on these criteria and was known to the researcher prior to the study. Upon initial contact with the first mountain guide participant, sampling turned to snowball sampling, whereby the initial mountain guide contact put the researcher in touch with additional personal contacts acquired through her association with the sport (Babbie, 2002).

Also included in this study were interviews conducted with the primary early socialization agents in the participants’ lives. The participants were asked to self-identify the individual they felt had a significant influence on their earliest general (rather than sport specific) socialization. These socialization agents ended up including three moms and a family friend. The socialization agents completed one in-depth interview regarding their athlete’s experiences. While the socialization agents’ influence and perspective on the experiences of the athletes were valuable to understanding the athletes’ experience,

the socialization agents were, themselves, not participants in the study. Rather, the socialization agents and the interviews they completed were an additional source of data collected in understanding the journeys of the athlete participants.

### **Participant Profiles**

#### **Mountain guides.**

Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect her confidentiality.

#### ***Hillary.***

Hillary, a white 44-year old, has been professionally involved in the outdoors for over 20 years. Hillary is a fully certified IFMGA mountain guide. Since 2002, she has taught avalanche classes and guided backcountry skiing, rock, ice, and alpine climbing for guiding companies in the US, Canada, and New Zealand. After transitioning from a career in professional adventure racing, Hillary transitioned into professional mountain, ski, and rock climbing guiding throughout the world including Utah, the Alps, and the Himalaya. Hillary was raised with a younger brother who died in 1994. Married, Hillary has an 8-year-old son.

#### ***Ashley.***

Ashely, a white 40-year-old, has been professionally involved in the outdoors for 17 years. Ashley is an AMGA Certified Ski Mountaineering Guide and has been guiding professionally since 2000. Ashley has guided in Nepal, Mongolia, Antarctica, South America, and the Western United States. Ashley has guided for three separate major American guiding companies. In addition to her professional guiding successes, Ashley

has climbed Ama Dablam in Nepal, Mt. Hunter in Alaska, and the Grand Jorasses.

Ashley has an older sister and a younger brother, is married, and has a 7-month-old son.

***Erica.***

Erica, a white 54-year-old, has been professionally involved in the outdoors for 32 years. Erica is an IFMGA certified mountain guide and has been a heli-ski guide for a Canadian guiding company for more than 20 years. In addition, she has led international expeditions around the world for more than a decade. To her credit, Erica has summited a number of notable peaks including Choy Oyu, Ama Dablam, Mustagatah, Mt. Logan and Mt. Fairweather. Erica has a younger brother.

**Whitewater kayaker.**

***Lindsay.***

Lindsay, a white 23-year-old, has been a professional whitewater kayaker for eleven years. Lindsay sponsored by a prominent American kayaking company, is a world-class kayaker. Lindsay's accomplishments include being a World Cup Champion and Women's World Freestyle Champion and silver medalist. In addition, Lindsay has placed in the top three in every freestyle kayaking event she has entered since 2006. Lindsay is also a member of the US Slalom team and formerly ranked #1 in Women's US Slalom. Lindsay, the oldest of three children, has two brothers ages five and 20, is married, and has an 8-month old son.

**Data Collection**

Following the advice of Yin (2009), Stake (2006), and Miles and Huberman (1994), multiple forms of data were collected within each case. For the purposes of this

multiple case study, the multiple forms of data collected from each participant included: a questionnaire, interviews, written documentation, and artifacts. Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. This helped to ensure accurate quotations and allows for increased credibility and dependability of the findings.

### **Open-ended questionnaire.**

Prior to the first interview, each participant was asked to fill out an open-ended questionnaire to obtain specific information that helped in informing and guiding the subsequent interviews. The questionnaire also provided the researcher with a basic overview of each participant's demographics, family information, number of years participating in her sport, number of years as a professional in her sport, etc. This allowed the researcher to have a basic understanding of the participants allowing for more efficiently guided interviews.

### **Interviews.**

The three interviews completed with the participants provided the greatest amount of detail in the research. The first interview was focused on building a foundational understanding of and rapport with the participants (see Appendix A). That is, the focus was largely on informing the researcher about the general course of each participant's career and experiences and helped to build a level of comfort and trust with the participants. The interview focused on the participants' current experiences in their sport, greatest accomplishments, future goals, etc. The researcher also actively worked to avoid topics that were too personal or potentially sensitive at this stage in the process. By treading lightly in the first interview, the trust and rapport built in this first interview

allowed the researcher to dig deeply in the subsequent interviews. Upon completion of the initial interview, the recordings were transcribed and initially coded. The information collected in the first interview was used to make any necessary modifications to the second interview and informed the researcher in most effectively building a complete picture of each participant.

The second interviews with the participants were in-depth in nature (see Appendix A) (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) described that an in-depth interview allows the respondent to discuss “facts of a matter as well as their opinions about events...propose her or his own insights into certain occurrences...[and] suggest...other sources of evidence” (p. 107). More specifically, in the second interview with the athletes, the technique of photo elicitation was employed. Photo elicitation is simply “inserting a photograph into a research interview” (Harper, 2002, p. 13). This technique, as detailed by Harper (2002), is a technique that “evokes information, feelings, and memories that are due to the photograph’s particular form of representation” (p. 13). Harper (2002) continued “images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain’s capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words” (p. 13). As such, the use of photo elicitation facilitated a deeper dive and an elicitation of different types of information than could have been evoked based on traditional interview design. Each participant provided pictures from three specific points in their career (initial entry into the sport, initial professional entry into the sport; current professional involvement). By using this technique, the goal was to tap into the specific contextual factors that supported/hindered

their entry into/progression in the sport as well as specific emotions, fears, etc. that were present at that particular time in each athlete's career. Harper (2002) argues that photo elicitation can uniquely succeed in this goal because by using pictures of the participant, "elicitation interviews connect 'core definitions of the self' to society, culture, and history" (p. 13).

Photo elicitation has been used in similar studies exploring social organization, lending credibility to its use in this case. Researchers, for instance, have used photo elicitation on studies examining the role that having children plays in impacting the dynamics of a family. In the familial role study, as is proposed in the present study, the photos were used to evoke memories about specific points in time during which varying transitions were occurring (e.g., the addition of a child, family moves) (Harper, 2002). Because a main goal of this study was to understand specific transitions that the participants made throughout their career (e.g., entry into the sport, increasing skill level), using the technique of photo elicitation allowed the researcher to trigger the feelings, emotions and memories that helped to inform the study. In addition, photo elicitation has been used effectively in the context of outdoor adventure recreation experiences further augmenting the argument for its efficacy in achieving the purpose of this study (Loeffler, 2004).

The photo elicitation interviews were the most extensive of the three. During this interview, the goal was to seek an understanding of the path the individuals took to reach their current level of expertise in the field. Each participant was asked to provide a group of pictures from three distinct phases in their outdoor adventure recreation participation.

First, participants were asked to collect and share with the researcher pictures from their “amateur stage” of participation, or when they first began participation in their particular sport. The second set of pictures were pictures from their “novice stage” of participation, or when they began participating at a higher level in the sport. The novice stage was defined for the participants as being inclusive of seeking/gaining a higher level of skills, their direct identification with the sport as a part of their identity, and a greater time commitment to the sport. The third and final set of photos were current photos from the participants’ “professional stage” in their respective sport. Participants were asked to supply pictures from their most recent trips, expeditions, and/or competitions. At each stage of the interview, the questions remained the same. The goal was to attempt to get the participants to revisit the feelings, emotions, concerns, constraints, triumphs, failures, and specific contexts within which they were participating in each stage. This interview also focused on specific constraints faced and negotiation strategies employed by each participant in competing in her sport. This technique ostensibly allowed for a vivid and rich understanding of what the participant experienced at each stage in her development. The technique of photo elicitation seemed to help the participants recall accurately the time frames being discussed as Harper (2002) supports. Upon completion of the photo elicitation interviews, each interview was transcribed and initially coded. The information obtained in the first and second interviews were used to inform the final two interviews: the socialization agent interview and the third, follow-up, participant interview.

The third and final participant interview was saved until all other data collection had been completed (see Appendix A). This follow-up interview addressed any topics

that needed further discussion or clarification, more depth, or any additional information found to be necessary after completing an initial analysis of the data. This interview followed the format of a focused interview (Yin, 2009). The final interview was shorter than the first two and followed a more prescribed set of questions, as each participant required specific topics that needed follow-up. This interview was used differently for each participant as each had their own unique story with differing topics for follow-up, but there was a core set of follow-up questions used for all participants. All told approximately five to seven hours of interview data were collected from each participant.

In addition to the three interviews that were completed with the athletes themselves, an interview was conducted with the athletes' identified "socialization agent(s)" (SA). This interview focused on the athletes' SA's perceptions, reactions, and role in their athlete's initial involvement in outdoor adventure recreation as well as their experiences in her entry and increased specialization in the gendered domain. This interview allowed the researcher to dig into each athletes' early socialization seeking to grasp her SA's mindset in raising her from the beginning (e.g., the toys she played with as a toddler, if/how she was introduced to the outdoors), the activities each athlete was enrolled in when she was too young to choose, what activities she was naturally interested in, etc. The purpose of this interview was to understand, more deeply than each participant may, the socialization, as well as early contextual and structural factors that influenced her participation in a highly gendered sport. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and an hour and a half.

### **Written documentation/artifacts.**

Next, the researcher examined written documentation made available by the participants. This documentation included any first-hand accounts of the participant's participation in her sport written by the athlete herself. This included blogs, journal excerpts, and magazine articles detailing her professional involvement with the sport. This documentation provided another first-hand glimpse into the mindset/experiences of the participants at specific points in time and helped provide additional insight into the participants' experiences within the sport. Additionally, the written documentation was used to help verify the experiences the participants discussed in the interviews. This portion of the data collection was self-selected by the participants. As such it was limited by the written documentation the participants had on hand and were willing to make available for examination. The final type of data collected were publicly available documents relating to the participants' careers. The researcher was given copies of these documents by the participants and also completed electronic searches for additional documents. This included newspaper/magazine articles, interviews, blogs, and website posts. All of these documents either included an interview with an athlete or were written specifically about the athlete; many included direct participant quotes (see Appendix C for examples).

### **Timeline.**

Data collection began in August 2013. Interviews were planned and completed around the particular needs of each participant based on the requirements of her professional guiding/racing and personal responsibilities (see Appendix B). In addition to

the formal interview schedule, the researcher collected artifacts and written documentation throughout the process.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was completed in two parts and followed the analytic recommendations of Yin (2009), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Stake (2006). The first step was to complete single case analyses of each case. To begin, summary sheets for each interview were created as the interviews were completed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This technique allowed the researcher to quickly review the notes from each interview and create brief summaries on the main themes arising from the interviews immediately upon their conclusion. This allowed for the identification of potential codes for the subsequent deeper analysis and a revision of the a priori codes (i.e., codes pre-identified based on the literature review of the central issues of the study) prior to data analysis. After constructing an initial list of codes from the summary sheets (inductive codes) and the study's theoretical underpinnings (a priori codes), more intensive data coding was completed allowing for the creation of additional inductive codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This secondary coding was conducted on the interview transcripts, written documentation, and artifacts collected. Using the a priori codes and continuing to identify new inductive codes, each data set was examined until saturation was reached, or, "when all of the incidents can be readily classified...and sufficient number of 'regularities' emerge" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 62). Following this initial round of coding on each individual case, the focus of the data analysis moved on to pattern coding in which the initial codes were grouped into like categories identifying emergent themes.

In addition to this general format in analyzing the data, a chronological approach was followed. Seeking to understand the participants' careers chronologically allowed for what Yin (2009) asserted is a "major strength of case studies", tracing events in the athlete's lives over time (p. 148). By comparing the experiences of the athletes over time to the theorized constraints, assets, and negotiation strategies identified in previous literature, the analytic goal of this study was more effectively addressed (Yin, 2009). To this point, all analysis remained at the individual case level.

Next, the researcher focused the analysis on the advice of Stake (2006) in analyzing a multiple case study. Because the research questions were aimed at describing the "quintain" or the greater context of the study (contexts within which females successfully overcome gendered norms in reaching elite levels of participation in outdoor adventure recreation), a rich understanding was first gleaned at the individual case level (Stake, 2006, p. 4). Thus, the first step in the analysis, through the aforementioned descriptive and pattern coding, was to describe and interpret the contexts of each of the cases. In addition, triangulation was sought within each individual case before attempting to begin cross-case analysis. Triangulation was possible because of the multiple sources of data gathered within each case (interviews, documents, artifacts). Upon the completion of coding, theme identification, and triangulation, each case was written up individually prior to beginning cross-case analysis. Using these initial single case reports, member checking with the participants was also employed to ensure that appropriate interpretation and representation of each case was achieved (Stake, 2006). Minor revisions were made based on the member-checking feedback. The revisions were largely focused on

corrections in the timeline of the participants' careers. From this foundation, the cross-case analysis was completed.

To begin the cross-case analysis, the researcher re-grounded the analysis in the general purpose of the study. Doing so was helpful in keeping the analysis on track to fulfilling the purpose of the study and to answering the research questions (Stake, 2006). That is, the analysis was grounded in the general purpose of cross-case analysis: understanding the quintain. In understanding the quintain, both the commonalities and the differences between the individual cases were explored. Next, as recommended by Stake (2006), the researcher outlined the specific research questions, to which she referred throughout the analysis process. From here, each single case report was reviewed. Using a worksheet similar to the summary sheet from the initial single-case analysis, notes were taken while reviewing each case relating to specific research questions, specific facts about the case, or other important sections of the original case that were relevant in the cross-case analysis and write-up. This initial work allowed for conclusions to be drawn about the important findings of each case. After reviewing the individual cases, each was evaluated for its usefulness in addressing specific research questions allowing the researcher to draw initial conclusions.

In the next step, these initial conclusions were filtered through Stake's (2006) Matrix for Generating Theme-Based Assertions (p. 51). Having now identified the most important findings from each case and the research questions they addressed most fully, a more formal process of sorting and rating these findings and aligning them with the study's research questions was completed. Through this process, preliminary assertions

about the quintain were identified and, by the conclusion of this process, confirmed. Once the assertions were formalized, the analysis moved to Stake's (2006) Multicase Assertions for the Final Report worksheet. This worksheet helped to organize and compile these assertions along with the findings and evidence supporting them. This stage also allowed the researcher to reflect upon each assertion by examining the various ways each assertion might be reinterpreted or how others may misinterpret them. In addition, at this point, all of the evidence used to make the assertion were re-examined, and any cases that may not support the final assertions were identified.

Once all of the assertions were organized, examined, and finalized, work began on the final case report. Part of this process was ensuring that the best evidence was chosen to support each assertion and that the findings could be triangulated. Just as with the triangulation within each case, analytic procedures were followed to ensure the validity of the findings across cases. Through the multiple types of data collected, multiple cases compared, and member checking, triangulation was used to ensure that the researchers bias has not overtly colored the findings. Following Stake's (2006) rigorous analytic techniques for cross-case analysis helped to heighten both the reliability and validity in the conclusions of the study.

### **Validity and Reliability**

In addressing the issues of validity (trustworthiness) and reliability (dependability), the researcher followed the recommendations of Yin (2009) and Stake (2006). In addressing the issues of trustworthiness, the study relied on a thorough literature review used in "identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being

studied” (Yin, 2009, p. 40). Next, data triangulation was achieved through the collection of information from multiple sources, which allowed for “multiple measures of the same phenomenon,” a method advocated for by Stake (2006) and Miles and Huberman (1994) as well (Yin, 2009, p. 117). In this study, interviews with the female athletes, their parents, and documentation/artifacts related each participant’s career (e.g., newspaper articles, interviews) were used. This facilitated the triangulation and corroboration of the study’s findings, thereby allowing the results to be more accurate, convincing, and trustworthy (Yin, 2009). Also following Stake’s (2006) recommendations, triangulation was achieved across cases. Upon completion of the individual case write-ups, member checking was used to verify the trustworthiness of the initial conclusions. Finally, in addressing validity, both evidence supporting and challenging interpretations were included where appropriate in the final write-up (Yin, 2009). A final note regarding the validity of this study is Yin’s (2009) emphasis that case studies rely on *analytic* rather than *statistical* generalization. For the purposes of this study, the goal is to generalize the findings to a broader theoretical application rather than to the population.

To address the reliability issues, the researcher followed Yin’s (2009) recommendations for demonstrating the rigor with which the study was completed. To do so, the researcher utilized a case study protocol for every collection phase and included an overview of the project, data collection procedures, and a guide for the case study report (Yin, 2009). In addition to the case study protocol, a formal, electronic case study database is being maintained (Yin, 2009). This database organizes and documents all of the data collected for the study. The formal database helped to ensure that no data were

lost or misplaced. This database is also helping to keep safe and accessible all of the raw data not included in the final report. Keeping a formal database in place, Yin (2009) argued, “markedly increases the reliability of the entire case study” by allowing for the possibility for review of the evidence by investigators external to the study. In addition to helping to enhance the reliability of this study, the database also made the data analysis and report writing more streamlined. Finally, a chain of evidence was maintained throughout the data collection process (Yin, 2009). Providing this chain of evidence will allow an outside investigator the ability to “follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions” (Yin, 2009, p. 122).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

Analysis was completed following Stake's (2006) recommendations of individual followed by cross-case analysis. As such, the findings of each case are presented individually followed by the cross-case results. In each instance, the findings are presented in the order of addressing each research question. In addressing the first research question, a chronological structure was utilized to present the findings (Yin, 2009).

#### **Research Questions**

1. What is the unique experience of professional female outdoor adventure recreation athletes in reaching their current level of participation in outdoor adventure recreation?
2. What constraints did the professional athletes face in beginning and increasing their participation in outdoor adventure recreation?
  - a. Specifically, what constraints were most salient in the athletes' entry into and increasing level of participation in their chosen pursuit?
  - b. What specific negotiation strategies were critical in the athletes' gaining entry to and increasing their level of participation in their chosen pursuit?
3. What contextual or structural factors influenced the athletes' entry and increasing participation in their sport?

## Individual Case Results

### Hillary: RQ 1: The experience.

Hillary, a white 44-year old, has been professionally involved in the outdoors for over 20 years. Hillary is a fully certified IFMGA mountain guide. Since 2002, she has taught avalanche classes and guided backcountry skiing, rock, ice, and alpine climbing for guiding companies in the US, Canada, and New Zealand. Hillary was raised with a younger brother who died in 1994. Married, Hillary has an 8-year-old son.

Hillary's professional career in the outdoors began as an adventure racer. One day, while running in a high-profile adventure race, Hilary recalled the moment when she knew she was ready for a change:

I was just doing the run for training and I was running and it was a beautiful day and I just felt like I was running up this river valley and I couldn't really see anything like because I was just in a river valley. And I turned, I just didn't want to do it. I was like, oh this is really boring, I'm just running this run again. I don't want to go through that, I want to explore more...And then I knew that what I was gaining from adventure racing would take me further for climbing and things like that...This was kind of the moment where I'd walked away from adventure racing and was transitioning into the climbing, taking those skills...they weren't necessarily technical skills, but movement skills into the climbing, you know from adventure racing realm into the climbing realm.

Upon graduating from college, she decided to follow her gut and cease competing as an adventure racer knowing that she was interested in getting into meeting climbers and going on climbing trips. One early experience on a climbing trip helped to boost her confidence in the outdoors. She describes one of the earliest trips she took with two men and a fairly experienced woman climber:

She'd done quite a lot of climbing and she and I went to do some climbing and it became really quickly apparent that I was the more capable climber. So even though she'd done quite a lot more rock climbing, was quite an experienced rock

climber. I was much, much more comfortable in the mountains. And at the end of it, she was like “oh, Hillary’s a natural, Hillary should keep climbing” kind of a thing. Like...it was quite remarked on that I... It clicked for me.

Hillary described an important moment in her guiding career that occurred shortly after this earliest trip when the mountains began to feel like home:

I reckon the watershed moment, after I’d been adventure racing, I won quite a lot of money and quite a lot of tickets overseas when I was about 21 and I went to India on a ski touring expedition with some mountain guides...I got really inspired by the mountain guides and their lifestyle... And so that was quite a groundbreaking moment. I thought, ah, I’d like to be a mountain guide, but then I knew I didn’t have enough experience in the mountains.

In a 2004 interview, Hillary recalled this moment in India: “I was traveling in India and telemarking down big lines with a guide friend...We were chatting away—as you do in a tent at 19,000 feet—and I decided that I could become a guide, too.” Following this watershed moment, Hillary, unsure of exactly how to pursue guiding would wait four additional years before digging in to pursue her guiding career. She describes feeling “reasonably disorganized. I didn’t really have a strategy. I kind of went hand-to mouth and kind of minute-by-minute. I was a little bit of a goof.” Hillary, who eventually committed and relocated out of the city and to the mountains, began working for a mountain search and rescue team and pursuing recreational climbing heavily. This step was critical in allowing Hillary to feel that she could begin her professionalization in guiding: “I got quite a lot of mileage on some really good climbs [with a] really good climbing partner.... And then [the next year], I kind of got the confidence I could do the ski touring, ski exam.” Successfully completing this first certification had gotten the ball rolling for Hillary, but she would find difficulty finding work professionally for a few more years. She described this struggle:

So, despite having the qualification I couldn't get any work, I'd just keep on ski patrolling. There wasn't that much work available; it was a little bit of a closed shop. You kind of had to know people to get the heli-skiing [jobs]. For some reason it just didn't work out for me. And it wasn't until I went overseas that I started to work in the ski realm.

Hillary, hesitantly, further described her perception of why she had such troubles

breaking into the heli-ski guiding world:

I had these two friends...and they started to guide with me...and they got jobs as heli-ski guides and I couldn't get a job. But both their boyfriends worked as heli-ski guides as well. And I hate to say it, I hate to do it because they're both really good skiers and good guides, but definitely, it was definitely a factor. If I'd been sleeping with the right person, I probably would have got the job. And, it pains me to even have to admit it to you.

In reflecting on these initial difficulties and the experience of her friends, Hillary

acknowledged that an easier path might not have necessarily been better for her career though.

They've stayed as assistants these 15 years. In the meantime, I got myself through all of my exams, paid for them myself. I'm like, I couldn't get my foot in the door, [but] there's no point in being resentful because it's all worked out perfectly.

A key in this successful journey was moving her career from her home country to Canada. Hillary made this transition, in part, to live closer to Cory, her boyfriend who would eventually become her husband. Cory, an American, lived in Utah, but Hillary was unable to obtain the necessary visas to work in the US, so she settled on living in the US and working in the Canadian Rockies. Hillary reflected on the importance of this move in her career:

I think if I would have stayed in [the town where I was working], I probably wouldn't have seen it through as well as I have because I moved countries. I got really inspired by Canadian mountain guides and their professionalism and my husband's motivation...I knew I wanted to be a full mountain guide, but it was

quite hard to do [where I was], it was quite hard to...get the work and make money and it just got easier once I moved to North America.

In addition, Hillary reflected on the importance of learning to trust her intuition and her instincts when heli-ski guiding in her home country did not work out:

I think when I couldn't break into the heli-skiing world that that was actually symbolic. That I was actually not supposed to for some reason. Like that was not supposed to happen...And so rather than trying to force it and being really desperate about it, I was just like maybe this is just not supposed to be part of my journey. So that's what I tell other people. Tune into that, tune into the journey and look for...signs of what you should be doing.

The transition to Canada for work not only helped Hillary find work, but also laid the groundwork for the skills and professionalism she needed to be successful.

That was definitely groundbreaking for me. Like just to work with Canadians and their professionalism and learn lot of tricks at this whole different mountain range. And I would return [home] every year to do some work and do exams. But I reckon I had more formative experiences probably in my training and being in Canada than I did being [at home] in some ways.

Her husband inspired not only her geographic move that helped to spur her career, but also helped to motivate her, indirectly, in her pursuit of her guiding career. She described how his focus on his own career as a director of photography capturing expeditions and natural history inspired her.

It's not like he really encouraged me, he's actually a super quiet guy. It's that he led by example, he inspired by example. He was doing his thing and he was really focused on it, so it made sense for me to focus on my thing. He gave me the space. He didn't do any rah-rah, he just gave me the space and was very accepting....He was just doing his thing so there was space for me to do mine.

Following these earliest years, Hillary continued to travel between her home country and North America completing her guides' exams through her eventual certification as an IFMGA guide. Balancing this global career presented its own difficulties:

Living in the US and Canada, like that commuting back and forth was really tricky, timing, trying to spend time with Cory. And then having to figure out how to get back [home] for my guides exams as well. And, then Cory and I, we were going to get married and then I went back [home] for like 8 months. So I didn't see him for 4 months. Like he came back like one month before we got married. . It was unbelievable...but we pulled it off.

According to Hillary's mom, as captured in an interview with a rock climbing website only four years before her death, Hillary's "...sheer determination, confidence and hard work have gotten her where she is today." The various difficulties Hillary has faced in reaching her current level of professionalism in guiding has led her to realize that the process was as much a part of the experience as actually working as a full guide.

I reckon that, one of the great things about training to be a mountain guide was the training to be a mountain guide. It was super fun. Like, it was great camaraderie and make really good friends, like lifelong friends. And got to go on really cool trips and things like that and that was really fun. And I felt like there was always that goal, but at the same time I really enjoyed the journey.

Even after becoming an IFMGA certified guide, Hillary has continued to face change in her career path in getting to her current position.

So 2006 and then 2007, I'd just had a little baby so I couldn't really do hardly any work and then I did a little bit in 2008 ski guiding. And then middle, towards the end of 2008 you know Cory was travelling quite a bit and working and then, so there wasn't always space for me to go guiding because Nash was still only 1 ½, and then my mom got sick and 6 months later she died and then it wasn't until 2009 that I could start guiding again really.

Since 2009, Hillary has continued to evolve in her participation as a professional guide moving towards more selective guiding and focusing on her work as a guides' trainer in her home country.

## **RQ 2: Constraints & negotiation strategies.**

### ***Constraints.***

### *Ethic of care.*

Of all the constraints Hillary has faced throughout each phase of her career the pull she feels towards caring for her family has had the most direct effect on her ability to maintain her high level of guiding.

[I'm] often quite stressed about going to work. Leaving the family, leaving my husband to take care of my dad seems like a big ask so that I can keep on with my career. It seems sort of felt like something I had to do, but selfish at the same time. So I was being this real kind of slightly unpleasant dichotomy. So my life nowadays is a bit more, is a lot more complicated than it [used to be] because, you know, I'm a mom, I've become like a parent to my parents. That full circle, that happened so fast, and wanting to support Cory in his career in his dreams, but sort of doing it in a sort of in the wrong way. Like being quite resentful and um, yeah, it's been really [difficult].

Hillary discussed posing a question to herself quite often: "I'm always like ok, am I doing the best for everybody?" In particular, her concern lies with ensuring she's around enough for her son: "he's a little kid and I don't want to miss him being a little kid because I was so busy working."

This need Hillary feels to care for her family has caused real and direct change to her guiding and participation in the outdoors. For instance, Hillary talked about how being a mom has impacted the types of guiding jobs she can accept:

[I can't] go on far-flung trips very easily. Like I would love to go to the, try to get work on a boat down in Antarctica and... it's just not that easy for me to be available to do that kind of thing. Or, Himalayan guiding... I just can't do that kind of stuff these days. But I get asked to and I can't. I can't, I have a young child now. So I guess, it's, on a bad day, it's frustrating.

### *Logistics.*

Hillary talked about a number of logistical stumbling blocks that made finding her way into the outdoors and into her guiding career sometimes difficult. For instance, after

the ski touring expedition in India that helped catapult her interest into pursuing guiding as a career, Hillary had to make a number of major life changes to pursue her dream. Just to get started, she withdrew from a graduate school program in which she was enrolled (against her mom's wishes), broke up with her long time boyfriend, moved away from home for the first time, and had to scramble to find work to support herself financially. She described this time in her career with one word, "uncertainty." She described: "not having much money. And sometimes it just felt really complicated...My life was complicated logistically...and I knew I was unsettled." After transitioning her career to Canada, the logistics of being a professional guide continued to plague her. Living in the US, while working in Canada and completing her guide's exams in her home country continued to cause logistical difficulties for Hillary. She relayed the story of one particularly low moment related to the logistics of following her career:

I showed up in Canada expecting a job at [a guiding company] and didn't get a job and I'd run out of money. That was pretty bad. Like I couldn't even get a hotel room and it was like 25 below and so I had to sleep in my car in my down suit...because I didn't even have a freaking sleeping bag.

In continuing her explanation of this event, Hillary was unable to hide her frustration with the experience:

The [job] thing was so bullshit...Don't just kind of cold shoulder me. I seriously was out penniless on the street and it was 25 below. It was really nasty. It wasn't kind...Here I was like, foreign, 29 years old. Just expecting, getting back, no money and thinking I had a job and not getting one. I was like, oh my God, what should I do?

In addition to the logistical difficulties, Hillary explained not feeling as though she had the mentorship that she needed.

*Lack of Mentors.*

Hillary kept coming back to this notion of wishing more mentorship had been available to her, especially in the early stages of her career. In describing her formative training years she noted, “I reckon back in the ‘90’s...the guide training was quite disorganized, it didn’t have a lot of mentorship or feedback or things like that.” She continued:

I saw other guides getting mentored and I didn’t really get mentored. Yeah, not that much guidance from the guiding community, like necessarily from employers or whatever. I didn’t feel like there was that much guidance on what I was supposed to be doing or not doing. It was quite loose.

She felt that, beyond the lack of organization or formal mentoring programs, she may have been partly to blame because she did not commit to a single company, or even a single country for so many years. She reflected

Gosh I really needed more mentorship. Like I should have really stayed in one place for longer and got more mentorship...Because the thing is if you don’t have a mentor you don’t really have anybody to kind of discuss the pros and cons of what you’re doing with.

Beyond these structural constraints, Hillary has fought an ongoing battle with lack of confidence throughout her career.

*Lack of Confidence.*

Hillary expressed lacking confidence throughout her career. When first trying to get involved in mountaineering, Hillary acknowledged, “I had confidence issues [I] didn’t really know where to go and what to do.” Even after gaining experience and climbing with others who were less experienced, Hillary talked about how she continued to limit herself: “I didn’t do anything more involved because I didn’t feel experienced enough. Like, I was more experienced than [people I was climbing with], but I didn’t

want to lead them because I wasn't experienced enough." Following her mom's death, Hillary discussed how difficult her confidence issues made getting back in the guiding game:

But, my mom, her words always echoed and I was like, I've got to kind of get my career back on track. I've got to keep on keeping on. Trying to do quite easy work but feeling quite nervous about it. Like, getting back into it. Not that, not feeling that on my game any more.

Hillary, in discussing her current role as a guide, after 20 years of experience, continued to express a lack of confidence in herself. In discussing an upcoming training she would be leading in the US, she remarked, "When I'm in the US I'm frickin' no one, I'm no one. I'm not from there, I talk funny, I don't have a great climbing resume. You know, there's so many great climbers there." Hillary also questioned her ability to be ready to teach this course being worried about her "currency" in her climbing skills. The constraining nature of Hillary's confidence aligns closely with the next constraint that has been a part of her journey, fear.

#### *Fear.*

Hillary described the constraining effect of the deaths of close colleagues has had on her career. A number of guides with whom her career was aligned have been killed on the mountain. In one accident, two of her close friends, attached to the same rope, fell off of a mountain and were killed while guiding. Feeling that she could not completely step away from guiding because she had only recently completed her IFMGA certifications, but being concerned about the risk involved with guiding, Hillary temporarily stepped away from guiding and back into competitive adventure racing. "After they died I felt really phased about mountain guiding...I stepped out of that, the level I was guiding at."

Hillary, in a magazine article, acknowledged the effect the risks involved in her sport have had: “Oh yes, I have quavered—becoming a mother caused me to question my choice, as did the deaths of colleagues over a black, multi-year period.”

When asked about her current concerns about being a mountain guide, the effect of these deaths and the risks inherent to mountaineering still colors her view. Hillary noted being nervous about “getting hurt or killed. Making a bad call. Hurting someone else through one of your decisions.” This fear had reared its head even the weekend before our interview: “I got quite nervous this weekend because conditions were quite tricky and I just got worried that these people overestimated their ability, and it makes me quite nervous.” In addition to the intrapersonal and structural constraints Hillary acknowledged, she also pointed to issues with interpersonal constraints, in the form of others’ assumptions, she has dealt with at varying points in her careers

*Assumptions of others.*

To begin, Hillary recognized that gender and sexual undertones are a reality in her profession. In identifying her “strengths” as a mountain guide, she responded with the following:

[I’m] average looking, not too good looking. I think if you’re a really good-looking female mountain guide, you’d have more problems. And I’m not, I’m not a knockout. But I’ve got a few friends, female mountain guides, that I reckon they’ve had a harder time because they’re kind of knockouts. They’re noticeably pretty and things like that. And not that I’m completely unattractive or anything like that, but I’m not like you look and go wow or anything like that. Some of these girls are like Norwegian beauties, with long blonde hair. And so I think it’s actually easier to be taken seriously when you’re not so good looking. Isn’t that a terrible thing to say?

Hillary also described having run-ins with a male guide for what she perceived at the time to be due to her sex. First, she discussed that generally, women have a more difficult time working in guiding largely because of the assumptions people make: “I think it’s harder to be a female guide than a male guide. The numbers demonstrate it. It’s harder for women... You have to be a little bit better to be half as good kind of thing.” Specifically, she pointed to an experience with a supervisor early on in her career: “I worked with this guy and he didn’t like me...and he didn’t really respect my decisions or anything...and it was just him and I working for the operation and we did not get along.” In addition to issues she credited at least partially to her gender, Hillary also described some frustration from another supervisor in more recent years in her career:

Our boss seem[ed] to have a real respect for hiring these young fit guys to guide people who really want to go for it. You know...I could all guide those people and he seems to give an undue amount of respect to these people because they’re young and fit. And I’m kind of like, well, he doesn’t necessarily respect professionalism or, you know, that doesn’t really say they’re really professional or have expertise, does it? It just, they’re young and fit.

Interestingly, later on, when Hillary revisited both of these topics she wavered from her initial opinion that these run-ins were due to her gender or age. In discussing what she had initially described as discrimination, she backed off of the position a bit and put the onus on herself:

He was really, but I think he, I don’t know that it was discrimination... Looking back I wasn’t that experienced, I was working on a continental snowpack which I hadn’t worked on, I was possibly being a little cavalier and have made him nervous... I thought at the time I felt like I was being discriminated against, but I don’t think I was. Arrogant, I think I was being a bit arrogant.

Likewise, in revisiting her statement about the boss who chose youth over experience, she remarked: “Even though they get those young guys and sing about the praise of those

young guys, I think it's more like, maybe they're just encouraging those young guys to come up through the ranks."

**Negotiation strategies.**

*Balancing strategies.*

Hillary talked extensively about the strain of being a daughter, wife, and mother and finding balance in such a demanding career. While acknowledging the difficulties, she was also able to articulate the ways she has been able to work within those demands in continuing her professional involvement. She noted, "...I finally felt like I've got the balance, but it's been very difficult to achieve and I've had to get help...I just have to tell myself, one thing at a time."

She acknowledged that it doesn't always work, but that her flexible schedule helps:

"...unfortunately I often work on weekends and Nash is off school on weekends. I could rearrange that a little bit and take at least one day a weekend off if I can." Her schedule also allows her to take larger pieces of time away from work to spend it with her family. For instance, this year she made the choice to take time off during the winter: "ok I'm not going to work. Like I just thought to myself I'm going to barely work in December because I've got quite a lot of work October." She also takes full advantage of the time her son's time is occupied. In discussing preparing for an upcoming training, while concerned about making it all work, she knows, "once I put my mind to things and Nash is at school 30 hours a week, there's 30 hours a week I can [prepare]." In addition to working around her son's schedule as much as possible, she and her husband have also integrated him right into their trips, bringing him along on trips throughout the world

including a recent trek in Nepal. Hillary's blog detailed this trip and included a follow up providing advice to other parents interested in trekking with young children at altitude. Combining her role as a professional guide with her role as a mom, she provided advice such as "really emphasize no nose picking and eating (seriously) and to keep hands away from mouth unless eating with clean hands." In addition to finding balance, Hillary reflected on having to come to a realization about her career as compared with her husband's: "Like this, at least, my money, what I earn is kind of a bonus. What he earns is the bread. You know, so, and that's just really important to recognize that."

*Sense of adventure/passion for the outdoors.*

One point that Hillary kept coming back to when asked how she was able to deal with varying constraints that she faced was her passion for the outdoors. She referred multiple times to her career as "a calling." When asked about overcoming multiple constraints including quitting graduate school, moving away from home, ending a long term relationship, going against her mom's wishes, and dealing with unemployment as she moved from amateur involvement in mountaineering to a professional role she responded,

I just had a really strong sense of adventure, and really into experiencing different things. I was really kind of chameleon like that. I would just, just willing to kind of try new things. And see where life would take me kind of thing. I knew it would take me, I'd stay outdoors, but I was kind of random. It wasn't like I was always in the mountains, but I was always trying to be in the mountains.

She also discussed how her passion always drew her back to guiding even at times of uncertainty:

Seriously it's like a calling. I honestly, I've tried to fight it so bad. Like, I found this book yesterday and it had pages and pages of research into universities, like

going to do my masters again. Like pages... all this different stuff I could do and then I would go so far as to get all my transcripts...and got accepted to a couple schools and then say nah, nah. I'm going to keep going. And so just little bit by little bit, I pull myself back to guiding life. Back to being able to be a guide.

Hillary's mother recognized her passion when interviewed in 2004: "She works in the mountains doing what she loves with people with the same dreams." In an article she wrote for a regional magazine approximately a year before our interview, Hillary reflected on this same notion, detailing what keeps her motivated at this point in her guiding career:

Any guide will tell you that exceptional moments come when you participate in the realization of a goal or a dream or a perfect (or even average) powder run. My top days at work are the days where someone tells me they just had the best day of their life or that the trip exceeded their expectations or, in tears, they tell me that the top of this climb has been a great dream...my life is richer for these shared alpine experiences. It is a calling and perhaps for those who listen to the calling, there isn't any other way.

*Social support.*

In detailing how she was able to work through a variety of constraints including a lack of mentorship, her familial duties, and the ups and downs along her journey, Hillary referenced a mixture of supports upon which she relied. First, she discussed that even though she really felt like she lacked mentorship, she acknowledged that some mentors had actually been there for her and were crucial in her success. Two early mentors were climbers that Hillary had known from her adventure racing days. She described their relationship: "they took me under their wing and taught me some mountaineering skills. They did lots of, taught me lots of sensible things." Another mentor who Hillary met later on in her career after moving to Canada helped her grow in her technical skills and confidence:

In Canada we had to bike in and then we climbed these peaks and [she] gave me heaps of really good support. She got me to lead a lot as a guide training exercise and she said you're super solid, you're really good, you're doing really well. And I had never had anybody literally let me train with them like that...

Another crucial support Hillary looks back on was a guiding company that helped her finally plant roots.

One guy wrote to me from a guiding company and said, look we would like for you to come and work for us and just, be solid. So I worked for them for a couple of years and that sort of settled me down in my 20's, late 20's. Yeah and that settled me down a bit.

She also spoke about how important the support from her parents had been. Her mom, who Hillary described as a "worrier" was nervous for her daughter's chosen pursuit.

Hillary described how her mom did what she could to support Hillary in her own way:

She didn't really, she tried to understand what I was doing, but she didn't truly understand I guess. But she tried really hard and she did, I mean you've got to really commend her on just kind of...she didn't harp on about it.

Her father, on the other hand, was more directly supportive of her career. Shortly after completing her certification, Hillary's brother was killed in an avalanche. Following this, her father helped to keep her on track urging her to keep pursuing her dream of guiding, "My father sat me down and was like, you can't live half a life, you've got to follow your dreams."

Hillary recalled the importance of the supports of friends and clients in her career. From friends, the support was often tangible. When Hillary was living, working, and training between three countries, her friends were what allowed her to stay on track. She described, "I relied on others to kind of, leave my cars at their place or pick me up from the airport." Without these supports, the difficult logistics of her life and career at that

point would not have been possible. Hillary also talked about how important supportive feedback from clients had been throughout her career. Since the birth of her son, death of her mother, and her father's Parkinson's diagnosis, Hillary has had to start being very picky about the guide jobs she could take on. She discussed how that had made her a bit unsure of herself, but relayed a recent experience that helped build her confidence:

And when I met the women they were like, oh, we hear it's a really big deal to get to have you as our guide. And I was like, really? And they said, yeah, when we rang up, they said you were available and that you're almost never available and that we were really lucky to have you. And I was like, seriously? Wow. Just when you think you're sort of exiting stage left, and these sort of little glowing moments...gosh, someone values me more than myself. So I think I'll go on for a little longer.

In addition, Hillary remarked several times on how important the support she received from her husband had been in pursuing and succeeding in her dream of becoming an IFMGA guide. She noted, "It's that he led by example, he inspired by example. He was doing his thing and he was really focused on it, so it made sense for me to focus on my thing." She more fully described how his quiet support allowed her to pursue her goals.

...as soon as I met Cory and saw his kind of commitment...I was like I can commit like that to guiding and we can do this together kind of thing. Like we can both be on the same program at the same time doing our things and being independent by being together. It was like the perfect find, finding him.

#### *Confidence building.*

Hillary also took matters into her own hands in helping herself work through her lack of confidence. When she would have times of uncertainty, "I'd just tell myself to keep believing in myself." She also commented on the importance of appreciating the amount of experience she has. She focuses on "the mileage I've had and then *recognizing*

the mileage I've had" instead of feeling less accomplished or experienced than others she climbs with. Putting herself in specific situations has also helped her to gain confidence. She described a pivotal season in her early career during which she worked search and rescue at a local mountain ski resort. When she worked at the mountain, she was paired with a skilled mountain climber with whom she summited several peaks and gained valuable skills. She noted, "I got a lot of confidence out of that summer. You know, I was living at [the mountain] village and I was in the groove."

Hillary also described realizing how focused and capable she really was and how helpful that was in building her confidence. She remarked,

I was always quite gung-ho like that and quite resolved...I was always trying to keep up. Like, I was fierce in my efforts. I hurt myself in numerous occasions you know and picked up off the road in ambulances and things like that. Stupid, but you know I was kind of, I wouldn't buy into that girl boy thing. I reckon that was one of my strengths.

Following the death of her brother in an avalanche, she realized what she needed to do to feel confident moving forward. She explained this in a 2004 interview:

My full commitment to guiding came from recognizing that I could be relatively safe in the mountains rather than doing hard routes hanging it all out on something gnarly. If I pursued guiding, I'd be the chief decision maker, have to exercise judgment to maximize everyone's experience, while keeping them safe.

Today, even when a lack of confidence creeps in, she takes a step back and reminds herself to believe in her capabilities.

You have to, you just, you can't just go, oh I'm not good enough I won't try. I mean everything has been a leap, hey? Everything's been a leap of self-belief and you hope that... So right now even though I'm such a worrier, I'm like shit I hope I don't let the site down. I probably won't because I'm brave enough to do it. If I'm brave enough to take the leap then I'm brave enough to follow the leap through, right? And I've always been brave, yeah.

*Paying it forward.*

Hillary discussed how she recognizes a lot of the difficulties she faced coming up as a guide and how she wants to do all that she can to help other women and up-and-coming guides not to have to deal with those same issues. Rather, she wants to step up and fill in the holes, the areas she wished had been in place during her formative years, so that the guides she helps to train today do not have to deal with those same issues. One specific area she felt she lacked in was someone to teach her professionalism as a guide. She described how, today, as a guides' trainer she tries to implement lots of feedback about professionalism into her trainings.

I see it now on the exams and stuff and I tell people that I've seen it because I reckon I could have done with hearing that. I often reflect now that I'm an examiner, I often look back and on what I felt was lacking in the feedback in my early days and make sure to give that feedback.

Hillary also discussed the importance of building relationships and connecting with up-and-coming guides, "I guess it's just relationship. Like, it's just that I did what I felt was lacking for myself I want to give to other people." She continued, "This is about connecting with people isn't it really? Like just you connect with some people more than others and so on." For her, that connection is especially important in developing female guides and works to her advantage as well, "And so I mentor other women so that there will be other women. So I don't have to be working with guys all the time." Detailed in a 2004 interview, Hillary has also run women's ice climbing clinics through an organization, Chicks With Picks. This interview also highlighted her efforts to "pay it forward" as including work with philanthropic organizations supporting global fair trade

and Himalayan families, and a climber-run foundation aimed at raising awareness and money for ovarian cancer.

**RQ 3: Contextual/structural factors.**

***Life before guiding.***

Hillary was brought up snow skiing and sailing from as early as the age of four. Growing up, her parents were more focused on city life than exploring the mountains. Hillary identified a family friend as her socialization agent because her mother is no longer living and her father unable to effectively communicate due to Parkinson's. Hillary chose this family friend, James, because he is the person who first introduced her to the mountains beyond skiing and sparked her love for the outdoors. James described this early and pivotal moment in Hillary's life.

And we went up, I took the kids across, over the pass and we went to a place...[where] you climb a steep escarpment, through the bush on a steep rugged track for about 1000 meters vertical and then you come out on to this little hut. We went for a day walk there and some of the track was pretty rugged and of course I tended to feed them on trail mix and chocolates. And the interesting part, then, that my two girls did it but felt they had the right to gristle a little bit. But, Hilary, it was just amazing. She went from the front, she scrambled up the steep rock section. It wasn't dangerous, but the track was pretty primitive. She scrambled up the top sections. She got a wet bum on her jeans. We all had jackets on by then and we got to the hut and Hillary absolutely loved it. Now this quite surprised me because her parents were very urban. Where as I had this mountain background.

Hillary was also a competitive snow skier and James described how Hillary and her teammates progressed in the sport and the experiences they had mixing with male coaches:

[They were] members of the national women's ski team which was at that time, very strong... These girls went to Europe together...when they were 14, 15, 16...They were very solid. They tended to have male coaches....who tended to be

automatically pretty chauvinistic and used to push them around and...indulge in slightly inappropriate behavior, nothing serious. They got quite good at standing up to them especially because they had a bit of group solidarity.

James points to these early years skiing that prepared Hillary for what would be her career as a guide:

She got where she got in skiing through determination and grit, and fitness rather than a natural physical adeptness. So skiing toughened her for snow and cold, toughened her for bad weather. It happens in the mountains. And then, as you might say, the rest is history.

Hillary made the transition to adventure racing following these years as a competitive skier and found great success there winning a number of races and, in turn, a lot of money and fame. She described what was happening during timeframe when she decided it she wanted to transition away from adventure racing and into mountaineering.

I was having to deal with a certain amount of notoriety through the adventure racing which I didn't necessarily like and, because it would be on TV all the time. It was quite, it was a very notable sport in that era, I guess. And I was quite young and so I attracted a certain amount of attention.

It was during an adventure race at this time that she decided to make the transition.

I was running up this river valley and I couldn't really see anything like because I was just in a river valley. And I turned, I just didn't want to do it. I was like, oh this is really boring, I'm just running this run again. I don't want to go through that, I want to explore more. And, the guy I was running with I told him I'm over this, this is boring. And then I knew that what I was gaining from adventure racing would take me further for climbing and things like that. I guess, and this was kind of the moment where I'd walked away from adventure racing and was transitioning into the climbing, taking those skills...they weren't necessarily technical skills, but movement skills into the climbing, you know from adventure racing realm into the climbing realm.

### ***Family.***

Beyond the early experiences that set her up for a career in the mountains, Hillary's family through the years has consistently been a contextual factor that has

impacted her career. After she had begun guiding professionally, splitting her time between her home country and Canada, Hillary was taken a bit off course when her brother died in an avalanche. She described how his death impacted her in an interview with a rock climbing website from 2004: “Losing someone you love, to a place [the mountains], which is so much a part of your own, is confusing.” Following her brother’s death, the path back to guiding was not completely clear.

And so then I went back to the states and sort of didn’t know what I was doing. Like, it was really weird. It was really surreal. Like for about a year after [his death], I kind of felt like I lived in a fog, but I kind of kept on going through the motions. I kept on climbing and going up mountains, getting jobs in outdoors, outdoor education job, ski patrol job and I gradually settled back in.

Several years after her brother’s death, Hillary added a new family context to her life when she and her husband welcomed their son, Nash. The birth of their son added new challenges for Hillary as her husband is also in a career that forces him to travel away from home for extended periods of time. Just as Hillary and her husband were figuring out how to balance their new role as parents on top of being adventurers, the context of Hillary’s family life changed yet again. Two years after becoming a mom, Hillary returned home to spend time with her mother who had been diagnosed with and would eventually die from cancer. Rattled again and still working to balance her family with her career, Hillary did not have long before facing yet another family setback. She described, “as soon as my mother died, it became apparent there was something wrong with my father.” Shortly after her mother’s death, Hillary’s father was diagnosed with Parkinson’s. She described this time:

I was still relatively new mom and my mom had just died. So...sort of getting through some very intense grief there. My dad, you know, his Parkinson's had only just been discovered. So I had quite a lot on my plate.

The death of her mother and her father's diagnosis has led Hillary and her husband and son to physically spend more time in her home country while still balancing competing careers and raising their son. Since that point, she and her husband and son have spent four to six months a year in her home country and the rest of the year in the US. Because of her career as a guide, they have adapted a schedule that allows Hillary to guide in both hemispheres. Each year, they skip summer in both hemispheres transitioning from winter to spring to winter to spring. Being a wife, a mother and caring for her parents has, by Hillary's description, directly impacted her career as a guide.

I have said no to lots and lots and lots of stuff in order to be with my family...And, I've said no a lot to accommodate my husband's career. I've put myself second because I don't make as much money. I've constantly done that. Because somebody had to make a living and I wasn't making as good a living. On bad days I've resented that...I did a lot of work to kind of come through that resentment of having to play second fiddle. And then I've come to find that what I've got I'm actually really happy with and that it's actually, I've created that myself and it's really positive. That I can say no and, because really, I try to choose the jobs that are meaningful to me, but also quite close to home and don't keep me away for long periods of time...I've put my family before my work, but I feel pretty happy with it.

### ***Death.***

Hillary's career has been marked by the loss of her brother and a number of friends killed in the mountains. Her first friend was killed shortly after she had attained her assistant alpine and assistant ski guide certifications. She describes the experience of loss:

The first peer I lost was just after I'd met Cory, that was kind of epic. And then it seemed to be like this just, every year one or two people and then three of them

got killed one year. It was crazy. It was black. I felt like [my home] mountain guides association really cratered through that time. Like really sort of lost momentum. I reckon they got phased. It was like a collective association wide loss of confidence that we're just working out from now... Takes the stuffing out of you repeatedly going to your colleague's funerals, eh?

Only a few years after this first death, her brother was killed in an avalanche and several years later, a single fatal accident involving multiple colleagues directly impacted her career trajectory:

The accident on Tasman. Oh that was super full on. One of the guides... was a good friend of mine and in a relationship with a good friend of mine. And the other guide, I'd worked a lot with him in Canada and he was a good mate as well. And another guy I didn't know, the three of them died and one client died. All six of them fell off of the mountain and I couldn't get home for the funeral... It was really horrible. It was really horrible being apart from the community and have[ing] these deaths... That was real kind of, that was really low. I felt really bad.

This major accident dealt a blow to Hillary's comfort on the mountain. While she had only recently completed her IFMGA certification, she drastically reduced the amount of guiding she took on.

After they died, I felt really phased about mountain guiding and went to adventure racing and then went to babies. So I felt like I... stepped out for a few years. I stepped out of that, the level I was guiding at. The climbing I was doing.

**Lindsay: RQ 1: The experience.**

Lindsay, a white 23-year-old, has been a professional whitewater kayaker for eleven years. Lindsay, sponsored by a prominent American kayaking company, has placed in the top three in every freestyle kayaking event she has entered since 2006.

Lindsay is also a member of the US Slalom team and formerly ranked #1 in Women's US Slalom. Lindsay, the oldest of three children, has two brothers ages five and twenty, is married, and has an 8-month old son.

Lindsay was born into a kayaking family, so was exposed to the sport from the very beginning. Her father is a professional kayaker and exposed Lindsay to the sport from early on. When she was six years old, she received her first kayak. In these early years, her dad ran a kayaking school and she and her family were settled in one location.

Lindsay talked about her earliest exposure to kayaking:

My dad was still training slalom, so he would put us in the front of his boat and take us out between gates and stuff like that on the [river] and now and then we'd get in our own boats, but only on flat water and it was a rare occasion. But we did have the perfect boat for it and we did lots of flat water stuff, some small ripply stuff and then [my brother], my dad took down one river once, and then realized [my brother] didn't know his left and right, so that was the end of that for a little while.

For Lindsay, in these earliest years, she describes that what drew her to kayaking was not necessarily the sport itself:

I've always loved water a ton... When I was younger, any way for me to get in the water was fun for me. Dad was always in a kayak, so it ended up that I would be in a kayak the more I wanted to get in the water.

Because her father was a well-known professional kayaker, Lindsay's earliest years were filled with kayaking and expectation. Even so, she wasn't always sure where she fit in.

You grow up and my dad was such an idol. It's like oh, you're [his] daughter, do you kayak? It was always the first thing people asked about me the first thing people wanted to know about me. And at the time when I was really little, I mean, compared to everyone around me, I would say, no I don't kayak. Even though I was getting out way more than most people would ever in their lifetime, but in comparison to people that we hung out with. You know I wasn't going out 3 times a day so I would say, uh, sort of. I kayak a little bit.

While Lindsay was exposed to kayaking at this point, it went against her natural tendencies and was not necessarily a natural fit from the beginning:

I was always a little bit nervous. So for me, I was the timid one when it came to boating at that point in my life.... My dad.... didn't understand why I wouldn't

trust him fully that everything was always going to be ok. He tells you nothing bad could possibly happen here and in your head you're just like all right, Dad, I believe you, but I'm still scared anyways.

Even though she was intimidated, Lindsay also discussed how motivated that made her in learning and progressing in her kayaking. She described an early formative experience kayaking with her dad:

But, because I was so scared all the time, at that age,...the response to it afterwards was like super fired up. I thought, I did it. I'm so badass! Like any 8 year old would think. Like the coolest thing ever, I can't believe I just did that, I'm crazy. So that was kind of cool in the sense that, he would take us down...to...a 6 foot drop from a canal to a canal. So it's like, there's nothing dangerous, my dad probably put 300 students over it. It's just one of those things. I just remember being 8 years old and he [took us] off the canal drop...And we go there and it's terrifying, but it's a huge waterfall which literally wasn't taller than the height of my dad. That was one of my more early on experiences, just him sending us off that basically.

Lindsay moved from simply kayaking with her family to competing in amateur events at the age of 12. She described how entering the competitive realm impacted her passion for the sport:

I'd just done my first little amateur kind of event, rodeo [I was excited]...and [got to the point where] my mom would bring me ice cream because I didn't want to get out of my kayak. While I was in my kayak, my dad would pull me up on the rocks and start feeding me ice cream while I was still in my boat...I was so excited that I couldn't even get out of it to eat. You know I just wanted to be in the water nonstop.

Shortly after she had begun amateur competitions and really found a focus in the sport,

Lindsay began competing professionally at the age of 13. Her mom described that

transition:

She had done a few of the junior competitions and she'd done pretty well and then we're in Reno and we're there for [her dad] because he's competing there. It's a big, big competition with a lot of prize money. And Lindsay thinks oh, well I should enter. There's no reason for me not to enter. There's no junior class. So

I'm going to enter the senior women and then win. You know that's Lindsay's story, that's essentially the way it went. She won the next quite a few competitions and won a lot of money.

Lindsay also described her sudden and unexpected transition into the professional ranks, "It was pretty quick, so it was unexpected for everybody including myself. So there was just a lot of positive energy from most people and it was like, ok, here we go."

From her early introduction to and success in professional competition, Lindsay has never really looked back. The norm for Lindsay in her career has become winning prestigious competitions around the world and setting a high bar for all female competitors through her efforts.

## **RQ 2: Constraints & Negotiation Strategies.**

### ***Constraints.***

#### *Fear.*

Lindsay spoke extensively about the ways that fear has constrained her experience with kayaking. Specifically, she spoke about two distinct types of fear: the fear of the unknown and the fear of failing to please her dad.

Lindsay discussed again and again the ways that her fear of unknown had impacted her career. She articulated the aspect of kayaking that was the root of her fear:

Kayaking's very much a fear of the unknown, so unless you do it a whole bunch of times, it's hard to overcome that. So for me, at that age, at that time, I was definitely very timid and it was just because I didn't know how everything was going to feel, you know, being upside down in this kind of wavetrain or that kind of whole or this kind of drop or, it was all so different that it definitely intimidated me a ton.

Even kayaking side by side with her father was not enough to dissuade this fear in

Lindsay when she was first beginning to learn how to kayak: "He tells you nothing bad

could possibly happen here and in your head you're just like, all right dad, I believe you, but I'm still scared anyway.”

While her first description of the fear she felt sounds as if it may have been isolated to her earliest years in the boat, she later came back to this notion of fear as a frustration to her even after she turned pro:

Being afraid still frustrates me and frustrated me a lot back then because I was afraid a lot more. You know you go out and you see all these people having an amazing time and you see these people that aren't as good of a boater as you and they're doing something that you just can't quite get yourself to do. You're just like, oh I really want to do that, but I can't get myself to do it. It's like, I really, really, really want to surf that hole, but I really, really, really don't want to surf that hole. And that frustrates me still...It's just like you want it so bad, but you can't physically get yourself to do it. Just because you're afraid or intimidated for no good reason. And that's super frustrating. That all boils back down to the fear of the unknown. You're afraid and you don't know why and just because you don't know.

Lindsay also described in a 2009 interview with Suite 101 how her father's prowess enhanced this fear: “I grew up with the best kayakers in the world and I admired what they did so much that I feared it. I was terrified of being under water in my boat for the longest period.”

In addition to her fear of the unknown, Lindsay also experienced fear rooted in her desire for acceptance from her father.

Lindsay consistently described her dad as her main mentor and teacher. When asked if her dad had always been her main teacher she responded:

My dad was always the main teacher. We had other people in the water too and as I turned professional, I'd have some other coaches at some point, but it was like, why would you ask anyone else? He was the world champion...why would you go out of your circle there?

While she clearly respects her dad and his role as her teacher, she also acknowledged a downside to that relationship:

A big fault that I have in my life in general is that I always need my dad's approval. I don't always get it and now in my life, it's not like it changes what I feel important to do or anything, but when I was younger, nothing, without his approval. You know, like it all had to be run through him and a big part of it was always wanting to make him proud...When I was younger, going out and boating with my dad, a lot of it was to make him happy. He wanted it so bad you could just see it in his face. He wanted us to enjoy kayaking as much as he does. Which is probably why I was so timid with it in the beginning. It was a lot of outside pressure and me wanting to please him. So that definitely influenced my boating at a younger age for sure.

In reflecting more on this desire to please her father, Lindsay labeled her concern about it as fear. In describing what made kayaking difficult for her early on, she responded: "And I put that all on myself. He didn't really do any of that."

One particular story that Lindsay shared illustrated well the way these fears came together. When Lindsay was young, before she was able to roll her boat right side if she flipped upside down, her dad would paddle over and flip her boat up for her. One day, things did not go as smoothly as planned, both of her fears collided:

We were running a rapid called lower no name and it's got a couple holes in it, but there's a sneak on the far left that's a little shallow and I'd done it before and was going down I caught up on a rock and flipped...and somehow I flipped so high up that he wasn't expecting it. So he wasn't like necessarily ready to roll me up because I shouldn't have flipped there anyways, but he went to flip me up and he slipped off my boat and so I swallowed a whole bunch of water and then he now had no paddle because he had just tried to flip up my boat and I was floating downstream a lot faster than him and he got caught in a hole and it was really, like several minutes later with me with my boat upside down. And...I got so scared mainly because my dad always said if you count to a certain number and I'm not there, just pull your skirt...But this one was particularly hard just due to the fact that he got to me in 10 seconds, but then his hand slipped off and I swallowed a ton of water and went back upside down. And, after that, I was genuinely pretty scared because it was super rare, almost never happened to the point where I ever needed to pull my skirt. My dad always rolled us up, so that was problem number

one. Problem number 2 was that he half rolled me up and I swallowed water. Problem number three was just that he wasn't coming for the longest time. And I tried pulling my skirt off the whole time, so I was like literally getting faint. It was one of the most terrifying, it's like the whole concept. And for me that was a low point because I had a task to do and I failed at doing it. So that was...probably [my] lowest point, because that was one of the most intimidating times in my childhood paddling where I actually, you know I was like, in my head, oh I'm too young to die. I can't die, I'm not going to die kayaking.

*Lack of confidence.*

The fear that Lindsay described may be, in addition to being related to the unknown and her relationship with her father, also rooted in or impacted by her confidence. Even with all of the positive experiences Lindsay had from early on in the sport (e.g., winning her first competition at age 13), she still discussed how throughout her career, she has dealt with issues related to her confidence with kayaking. In describing how she approaches rapids in contrast to her brother, she articulated how she often second-guesses herself.

I look at all the angles of things. Still when I'm getting to run a drop, I think of every possible situation and when you do that you're like, oh my God there's so many potential bad situations. I'm not sure I even want to run it. [My brother's] just so focused on ok, I see the line, I know I can do the line. Which, I see that too, I just don't respond the same way. I'm like, I know I can do it, but what if I don't. Whereas, I think, part of that is a girl guy thing too, for me that amount of confidence in every stroke and every drop and how you're going to do stuff, I don't have that.

She later described how aware she is of this lack of confidence in describing the difficulties she faced after she transitioned into the professional ranks.

My least favorite part was probably just being intimidated over things. I really didn't like that, sitting and watching other people do things that weren't as good as me and be totally comfortable with it. I'd be like, why are they ok with it? They shouldn't be doing that. And that was always really hard.

In addition to the intrapersonal constraining impacts of fear and a lack of confidence on her career, Lindsay also discussed how the interactions among women on the professional tour could also be constraining.

*Competitive women/gender assumptions.*

Lindsay discussed extensively how the attitudes of other female kayakers were often limiting. First, she described relief that her dad was her coach growing up because, in addition to his high skill level, “at that time, too, a lot of the women were pushing that girls can’t do this the same.” She expanded on this notion later on:

At that timeframe, there was a lot of women saying oh, we should do things differently. It was hard for me to, not necessarily agree or disagree, it was just, you know you question that. You’re like well maybe if I [was a guy or] whatever, it would be way better off, I’d learn a lot faster, whatever.

In addition to causing Lindsay to sometimes question her abilities, these women were also a bit closed off to her development as a kayaker:

A hard part of getting me into boating was the atmosphere. For me, it was a little bit difficult because there wasn’t very many people my age or even young girls period for me to hang out with. When there was, it was like a big deal and a lot of them were protective over their spots on the US team or whatever. You didn’t get the feeling that they wanted me to get good or anything like that. So that made it even more difficult. It was like hey I just want to hang out, whatever, and they’re just kind of like, uh, don’t have the same feelings back. You could just tell. That made it very difficult for me in the beginning. I found it very hard to find where I fit in, how I fit in.

As her skills developed, Lindsay also described receiving feedback about her skills as they related to her sex. If she got frustrated in trying to learn a new move, other boaters would make remarks such as, “Oh, don’t get frustrated with yourself, you’re not as strong as the boys out there.” In addition, Lindsay recalls that when she first turned pro “a lot of women didn’t really want me to be allowed to compete in the pro women’s class.”

Lindsay discussed how the last two seasons have been especially difficult with women undermining each other and expounded on why she felt this may be true.

It seems like it's this weird attitude where if someone else does well they're taking something away from you, so like if someone else does well, they're taking away my chance to get into the next round. They're taking away my chance at winning. They're taking away, instead of getting more fired up because people are doing well. It's definitely another attitude, if I have a good ride, I'm taking that away, I'm taking everything the other person did away. They could have thought they had a good ride and then I could have beaten it and they'll no longer think that they had a good ride. I took that away from them and that's where I think all the negative energy is coming from. It doesn't have to be that way, but definitely seems to be the issues that were, we are competing against each other, but a lot of women are just insecure with being just proud of the rides in general. Unless they're on the top spot then they're not fired up. It's unfortunate, it's not all the women, but the past couple of years it's been the majority of them.

More generally, Lindsay also acknowledged that, "there is definitely a lot less expected from [female boaters]. For instance, when you win the junior women world championship, no one's really going to remember because you're probably not that good."

### *Negotiation strategies.*

#### *Passion.*

A clear theme that emerged from Lindsay's data was a true excitement and passion for the sport of kayaking. Her passion for kayaking began with a love of water. Even before she was old enough to kayak, she learned to integrate her two loves:

I loved water...I had to be in it all the time. That's probably the biggest draw getting me into boating at that time was just the excuse to be in the water. A lot of times I would simply fill my boat up with water and then just fool around that way just because it was so much fun...a kid version of boating.

She described the drive she has for kayaking and how that drive has kept it central in her life regardless of the obstacles she faced:

The other big part of kayaking that I loved was just being excited about something. I just loved waking up and having something to be excited about...Kayaking was my drive and anything that got in the way of that wasn't as important and so that was one reason I really loved...waking up fired up and going to sleep feeling...better about myself than I did when I woke up.

It was this drive, this love for the water that helped her to excel in the sport through the constraining fears, lack of confidence, and lack of support she received from some other professional female kayakers. Her passion for the sport snowballed her excitement for learning and growing in the sport even more.

[I] just loved being in the water, but the difference is that once you're in the water, still having fun, still goofing around...you give yourself an end goal for the session. Today I really want to work on this, so it's like an added drive to get into the water. Not that you need any more, but at that point for me it was like, oh I'm good at something, like I was good at other things too, but never was I as proud as I would get when I would learn a new move and then get to use it in a competition. So, at that point the drive was just, I was improving fast and I wanted to see how fast I could improve and that was super exciting.

Lindsay's passion for competition played a role in helping her navigate the murky waters of interacting with the other pro female boaters. She described that while they were busy focusing on beating each other, she realized she could always beat them if she focused her energy on herself rather than on her competition.

And it was pretty quick that I saw what they could do and was like, oh I can do this, I can do that too, I can do all the moves these girls are doing. I want to do them as well. And then not only did I learn the moves, but then I started doing things even better and I didn't even, instead of just thinking oh, what moves are they doing, I started thinking of all the moves that I wanted to be able to do. And that got me really excited because it was like oh this will be fun to do in competition. And pretty soon after having only done maybe like five pro women events, I was already winning them, so it was kind of, it was just a little bit of a sense of pride and accomplishment. Just that I put my mind to something and I can do this. And not only that, but the reward was placing well at these events and that was super cool too.

Epitomizing this passion for competition, Lindsay described in a 2011 interview with hypervocal.com how driven she was after seeing a competitor successfully complete a difficult trick during competition: “So I stayed up past dark paddling in the cold working on another hard move to counteract her mcnasty, the next morning I pulled out my back pan am and ended up winning!” While Lindsay’s passion for the sport helped her to deal with the constraints she faced in finding success in kayaking, the social supports in her life also helped her tackle them head on.

*Social support.*

In talking with Lindsay and her mom, and reviewing the artifacts and documentation, it became very clear that Lindsay’s family is number one in her life, the only thing in her life that ranks higher on her list than kayaking. As such, the support from her family and her success in kayaking are closely aligned. Lindsay described how her parents’ willingness to prioritize kayaking in her life made her successful journey to the professional level possible.

One thing that made it really easy for me getting into kayaking was the fact that my parents’ lives revolved around kayaking...I was able to make it a priority to the point where school didn’t matter, this didn’t matter. If my parents didn’t ever want me to miss out an opportunity that they thought wouldn’t present itself again, they thought it would be a good learning experience or whatever, they would always make sure that I went with it. Even if it meant missing school or doing whatever.

This support was provided in a more focused way as well. Lindsay described how after the incident where her dad had difficulty rolling her up and she thought she was going to die, it was her mom that helped her get back in a kayak on the water.

My mom’s really good at setting us up for success always. So the goal is to get in the boat. Sit it in the flat water. She would make that a goal so you obviously

achieve it so you'd feel better about yourself and then keep working at bigger goals type thing.

Later on in her career when she was afraid of learning new moves, her mom stepped in again to help her work through her fears.

At first I was really scared of it, so my mom would tell me ok, you have to go back and forth across this feature four times. And I didn't really want to, but I would because that was easy, ok 4 times and I'm done? Four times and you're done. Ok. So I'd go back and forth across it 4 times and then she'd say, ok, go for an ender, go for, put your bow in your water and see if you can flip over. Ok I can do that... And I did that and I kept doing things more and more, kept building up to the point where by the time I had left there I had learned how to loop.

In addition to helping her deal with the intrapersonal constraints of fear and a lack of confidence, Lindsay also expressed the important role her parents played in helping her deal with the assumptions people made about her skill because of her sex.

You know my parents were pretty quick, like you can do anything you can set your mind to. There's no physical limitations. It might take you a little bit harder to learn, but you just got to practice harder. It's like, ok. So that was a little hard too just figuring out which path to follow as far as what a lot of people were preaching. But luckily, my parents are always good at leading by example, so that helped me out a lot, obviously.

#### *Self-awareness.*

One attribute about Lindsay that was very striking was how self-aware she is and how well she was able to articulate not only how she felt and the struggles she had along the way, but also how adept she is at identifying very pragmatic strategies for dealing with issues as they came along. For instance, when she was surrounded by other women boaters who felt women could not compete at the same level as men, she realized that she did not have to subscribe to their beliefs. "I definitely learned that any limitations that there are, are limitations that you impose on yourself. That was a big one also. It doesn't

matter what shape size, whatever that you are, you create your own limitations.” In the same vein, Lindsay discussed how important it was for her to rise above the focus the other female boaters had on simply beating each other. For Lindsay, she wanted to be the best kayaker she could be rather than focusing on simply beating the other women.

I learned that being competitive isn't a bad thing as long as you're just being competitive with yourself. I learned that early on. You can compare yourself to all the other junior girls, but then you'll only ever be the best junior girl. Whereas, if you compete against yourself, then you're always working to be the best that you can be, period. Not the best man, not the best female it doesn't matter. Just compete against yourself to be the best always. That's something I learned pretty young and that's one of the reasons I got good fast...If I didn't do that I never would have been winning women's competitions at a young age just because I would have only been trying to be as good as the other junior girls type thing.

In addition, Lindsay saw her own successes that were coming out of the time she was putting in on the water. By recognizing this she realized “that work does pay off.”

Bad session, good session doesn't matter. As long as you keep training yourself, keep trying. It always, in the end, even if you've been trying it for 2 years, eventually it'll click. And it's really important to keep working to that. Every bad session is...still just learning. Every time you mess up, it's one more thing not to do type thing.

She revisited this point in a later conversation:

There's no stopping what you can do if you set your mind to it. Kayaking taught me that I set in my mind that I wanted to get really good at something and then I got really good at it. I was like oh, this worked. It took time and it took a lot of work and effort, but a big part of it was just believing that you can do it.

Lindsay described in a 2009 interview with Suite 101 how she worked to overcome her fear of letting her dad down: “I chose to persevere because I had everything available and figured I should take advantage of it.” Lindsay's self-awareness and ability to learn from her experiences has helped her throughout her career, especially in dealing with the

constraints she faced related to her own fears and confidence issues, as well as the limitations that other female boaters attempted to place on her.

*Paying it forward.*

Lindsay discussed that she believes one of the reasons more girls do not participate in kayaking may have to do with exposure and confidence issues. She described that while kayaking is typically portrayed as a high risk, high adrenaline sport, it does not have to be extreme to be fun.

I think kayaking because it's an extreme sport, we never really show the bunny slope... You can go run the Nantahala which is class two and have a great time. Or just get on a lake in the beginning... What gets on NBC news is the fact that a guy just ran a 190 footer and that's whitewater kayaking. Whitewater kayaking is this crazy person doing this and a crazy person doing that.

Because of this portrayal, she thinks females are less likely than males to be drawn to it. She elaborated on this point.

[Kayaking is] a feeling of being slightly out of control. I think women are a lot more control freaks. They don't like being out of control quite as much. It intimidates them, it scares them. But I do think that a big part of it too, is just that I think men are a little more willing to experiment outside of their comfort zone. Women, they don't have a best friend that says oh I just tried this, you should really try it.

To work to overcome this, Lindsay often acts as that "best friend" to younger girls who are intimidated by the river, just as she used to be. She described how she works towards this end.

Most of the time it's their dad's kayak, they're nervous. They really want to run this river, but they're not quite confident doing it. A lot of times that's where I come and say oh I'll take you down this little part right here. The trick is to be the distraction as far as when they're on the river. Instead of them being intimidated by the next rapid, the next rapid you just kind of, you don't let them know where they're at in the river. You just make sure they're having fun the whole time

before you know they're at the takeout. And they're like what about that rapid, oh, we already did it. So I definitely do a lot more coaching as far as that skill level and mindset. I'm the confidence booster for the parents that paddle, but can't get their daughter in, for sure.

According to the International Canoe Federation, Lindsay has also focused her teaching efforts on inner-city youth from New York City, and volunteering at a VA rehabilitation hospital teaching Iraqi veterans how to kayak.

In addition to working with amateur paddlers, Lindsay also discussed her role as an informal coach to other professional kayakers. While working with other kayakers and giving them advice may seem counterproductive for a competitive athlete, Lindsay simply recognizes her efforts as raising the bar for all professional kayakers. That is, if they all work together to learn new moves and perfect the moves they know, it is beneficial to all female kayakers because the level of competition will continue increasing. Her efforts were highlighted in an interview with the International Canoe Federation:

Lindsay's goal is '...to make the men's finals points-wise'. Truly dedicated to the sport, she wants to close the gap between men's and women's scores and help increase interest in women's kayaking. Her aim is to change the women's class, to make it more exciting and closer to the men's sport skill-wise.

### **RQ 3: Context.**

#### ***Professional father.***

One aspect of Lindsay's life that is unique is that her father is a world-class whitewater kayaker. This directly impacted her experience not only learning to kayak, but working her way to an elite level of participation in the sport. In a 2013 interview with *Outside Magazine*, her father broke it down: "If you're an Apache and you hunt buffalo,

your kids are not going to be lawyers. They're going to hunt buffalo." Lindsay explained this connection further:

Kayaking was very much so because of my dad's influence. You grow up and my dad was such an idol. It's like oh, you're [his] daughter, do you kayak? It was always the first thing people asked about me the first thing people wanted to know about me.

Because kayaking was his profession, Lindsay was exposed to kayaking from early on. She described how her father's life wholly revolved around kayaking and she and her brother were naturally exposed to it.

We were both really little at that point and my dad was still training slalom, so he would put us in the front of his boat and take us out between gates and stuff like that on the [river] and now and then we'd get in our own boats, but only on flat water and it was a rare occasion.

So, even before she was old enough to be in control of her own boat, Lindsay was on a boat on the river getting a sense of the sport. Even so, Lindsay discussed how her drive was not necessarily for kayaking in the beginning, but for time on the water.

When I was younger, any way to get in the water was fun for me. Dad was always in a kayak, so it ended up that I would be in a kayak the more I wanted to get in the water.

Her dad's passion made kayaking the easiest outlet to get involved with to be on the water, but one that was not her central focus from the start. Even so, she ended up learning to kayak. She described how and why her dad was always her main instructor.

My dad was always the main teacher. We had other people in the water too and as I turned professional, I'd have some other coaches at some point, but it was like, why would you ask anyone else. He was the world champion four times. It was like, why would you go out of your circle there? I mean, you might get some different opinions, good advice. But at that time too a lot of the women were pushing the girls can't do this the same, girls can't... So I'm glad that my dad kept, wasn't like oh we should set up a clinic with so and so, he was always the one coaching, always the one teaching.

While seemingly idyllic, her mom was quick to point out that this father/daughter, coach/pupil relationship was not always idyllic.

[It wasn't] rose buds. [Her dad] is so driven and so focused... this is the way it's going to work and this is what you're going to do [so] there was a lot of conflict. She'd cried for I think, 10 years she cried every single time they paddled together. Him wanting her to do something that she didn't want to do. Her wanting to be pushed, but not pushed that hard... She used to tell him, I want you to push me just right. You know and [he] would go, I don't know what just right is. I think I'm being good and, you know, it wasn't for lack of trying. But they just could never get on the same page about what that meant.

Her father was also staunchly protective of his children and may have helped break down some walls that Lindsay would have faced otherwise in attempting to start out so young as a girl in the sport.

Oh, don't get frustrated with yourself; you're not as strong as the boys out there. You definitely get that... but, I think that a lot of people were afraid to tell me that because they knew how against that my dad was. [If someone told me] that, all I'd have to do is tell my dad that so and so said this, my dad would rip them to pieces. People were terrified of my dad. So, that was a good part of it. You get all the time you really shouldn't be on this river, but most of the time that was all driven directly to my dad because he was the one taking us. They'd be like, oh your kids shouldn't be doing this or that or whatever and he would give them what he thought of the situation.

Once Lindsay turned professional, she realized the broader advantages of having a father who was also a professional kayaker. She described how a highlight of her career was winning a prestigious competition made even more exciting because her dad won the men's classification as well the first three years she won the event. In addition, she discussed how learning from her dad still has helped her reach new heights with her in her professional career.

It is good to paddle with my dad because everything is so much harder that I want to learn [his moves] too. That's when I got really, really good, when I switched

from beating the girls and just trying to do the moves that everyone else was doing. So, paddling with my dad...he always had the best advice for sure. Because he's just so good.

She also acknowledges, as her mom did about her early exposure to the sport, that having a dad, and now a husband, who are professional kayakers is not always the easiest relationship to navigate.

My husband and my dad are really good mentors. They're always there. I always know I can get their spots and their coaching and stuff like that. I guess sometimes when I go to them asking them to mentor me part of me just wants them to be like, Lindsay, you're doing great. I want to hear that from my dad and my husband. So we struggle with that, balancing that a little bit. When I actually want coaching and when I actually just want you guys to compliment me. You know just make me feel good about my boating. So that's a hard balance for me with them.

Lindsay's mom also talked about the perception that she had to deal with from other kayakers coming up because of her dad.

Although there are a lot of good parts to being [his] daughter, there are also a lot of negatives. We've always taught her that people are only ever going to see the positives and never ever mention the negative and that's just something you're going to live with. So I think that's probably been her biggest struggle.

Even with the ups and downs of having a professional kayaker for a father, the one aspect of Lindsay's career that has made her pursuit of excellence easier is that her whole life has revolved around professional kayaking.

### ***Lifestyle.***

Lindsay described how having a professional kayaker for a dad impacted her ability to pursue her career beyond his role as her teacher. Growing up, her father always taught her how important identifying priorities in life can be.

My dad has his priority list that my whole family knows by heart because he's had the same priority list and sometimes priority lists change, but you're supposed to always create your priority list and then how you work and spend time in your

day should always reflect back tot hat priority list. They shouldn't be switching because that's just going to cause you to be unhappy because you feel like you're not focusing on what's really important.

For her dad, kayaking has always been a main priority in his life second only to family.

She described the focus her parents have placed on kayaking throughout her life and the impact it had on her ability to excel in kayaking.

One thing that made it really easy for me getting into kayaking was the fact that my parents' lives revolved around kayaking...[so] I was able to make it a priority to the point where school didn't matter, this didn't matter. If my parents didn't ever want me to miss out on an opportunity that they thought wouldn't present itself again. They thought it would be a good learning experience or whatever, they would always make sure that I went with it. Even if it meant missing school or doing whatever. They were very good about that. SO that made getting into kayaking very easy for me because it was one of my dad's top priorities, so it made it easy to become one of mine.

Because of her father's focus on kayaking, Lindsay and her family have lived in an RV for at least 8 months of the year for almost her entire life. Homeschooled from 3rd grade on, she, too, was able to make kayaking a priority. She described how this lifestyle allowed her access to kayaking.

We were always on the go and we were always on the go because of whitewater, so everywhere we went, whitewater was always easy access....When I was younger, the RV just went from paddling destination to paddling destination. And some places were not good for learning and my dad did not take us out when we were younger. But, he did make a point when we were at some place that was really good like Wausau, WI or NOC or anywhere that's solid Class 2/3 river run where he felt comfortable, then he would always make sure that we were out and go out a couple times. We based it around his boating, but...he always made sure that there was a place and something [for us to] have fun with, even if it was just a lake.

Just like her father, Lindsay's priorities were family first, kayaking second and just like her father, she jumped at the chance to combine kayaking with family.

I liked the family time, going out with my dad. Going out with him, spending time with him is probably one of the best parts of kayaking. I definitely was super fired up on being able to spend so much time with my family.

Today, Lindsay still lives out of an RV nine months of the year. With the recent addition of her son, she and her husband plan on raising him in the same way, in an RV travelling from paddling competition to paddling competition.

**Ashley: RQ 1: The experience.**

Ashely, a white 40-year-old, has been professionally involved in the outdoors for 17 years. Ashley is an AMGA Certified Ski Mountaineering Guide and has been guiding professionally since 2000. In addition to her professional guiding successes, Ashley has climbed Ama Dablam in Nepal, Mt. Hunter in Alaska, and the Grand Jorasses. Ashley has an older sister and a younger brother, is married, and has a 7-month-old son.

Ashley's path towards a career in the outdoors began in college. While she had skied "a few times" her real exposure began when she went to Utah on a college exchange program. She chose Utah because she thought it would be fun to be able to ski more, but quickly realized once she got there that she could not afford to even purchase a lift ticket. Her roommate who was in the same exchange program had come from a skiing background and had been a member of the ski team at her home University. Ashley explained how this chance pairing started her down a guiding path.

[My roommate] was taking this ski instructors course and she was like, oh I'm going to get to ski for free 3 days a week...you should sign up for the course. And I was like, man they are going to kick me out of this class. SO the first quarter you're like in the classroom and you're learning how much sunscreen to put on and edging and balance and rotary and different skills like that and then the second quarter you're out on the mountain and you're learning drills to do with people and that's when I thought for sure once we got on the snow that they'd kick me out. And they never asked me if I knew how to ski very well. So, they

didn't kick me out and I was able to keep up enough, I was definitely the least skilled in the class, but I was able to do the drills and keep up enough that it was ok. And then the third quarter you teach University of Utah students, so they just put me teaching the never-evers and you know, I was a level four, I'm teaching the level ones. But, was able to quickly pick up on it and, so it worked out great and I learned how to ski and I would go skiing with these people who were great skiers and just fall down the entire mountain. I was a walking car wreck. I had whiplash I had shin bang, I had no reason, I shouldn't have been following them around, but I did and I was really brave, so I would go down anything.

After joining her roommate in this initial ski instructor's course, Ashley went on to teach skiing for three years. Doing so afforded her the opportunity to hone her skills and her passion. It was this experience that launched her interest in a more technical focus.

Working at the ski resort for three years I had a lot of time on the snow so I got good at skiing then. And then that's when, from there kind of wanted to get into the backcountry, kind of piqued my interest. That was my first mountaineering interest was getting into the backcountry skiing from learning to ski at the resort.

Following college and her stint at the ski resort, Ashley, wanting to stay working in the outdoors, began working in wilderness therapy. This experience continued to hone her skills and prepare her for her life as a guide.

[Working in wilderness therapy] was really good for getting outdoor experience and survival stuff, you know, we did bow drill fires and we had to make backpacks out of tarps, did, living underneath a tarp, living off the land, kind of. So that was a great outdoor experience and learned lots of communication skills.

After working in wilderness therapy "for a long time, I was like, ok, well it sure would be nice to work with people that wanted to be there and wanted to learn what you have to share." She then challenged herself to identify the career that she thought would be the most fun she could think of. For her, she realized it was mountain guiding. She and her boyfriend, her partner in the outdoors, took advantage of their flexible schedules to spend as much time in the mountains as possible.

So when I was working [wilderness therapy, my schedule was] 8 days on, 6 days off, we would get off work on like a Tuesday evening and we would shower and then we would jump in our truck that we lived out of, we lived in the back of our truck for a long time. And we would drive all night long. And usually, Ames would drive until he got tired sometime in the middle of the night and I would sleep in the back of the truck and then we'd switch and I would drive until the sun came up and then we'd switch again and he would drive the rest of the way. And so we'd do these 12, 15 hour drives to get to California or to Washington where there was some mountains with glaciers on them and then we would arrive there in the morning and we'd usually like spend the day getting ready, packing, going through our gear and then like start hiking in the next day, build a camp, summit the next day, come all the way down and then get in our car and drive all the way back and get to work just in time. That was kind of fun. It was pretty exhausting, but it was exhilarating.

During this time, Ashley and Ames were married and spent their honeymoon in Alaska learning glacier travel and honing their backcountry travel skills.

We spent 4 months in Alaska and we had a friend who was into climbing and mountaineering and so he taught us some stuff and he gave us suggestions on cool trips to do that were not like super technical where it was a little bit of cramponing and stuff, but one of them was we did this 11 day traverse of the Alaska range and you had to cross three glaciers, but they were pretty small glaciers but there was a lot of other challenges like river crossings, route finding, different things

Learning in this informal way was not without its downsides, though. Ashley summed it up when she noted, "in a week's mountaineering course we could have probably saved ourselves a lot of grief. But, that wasn't really how we rolled. As long as you survive it, it's the best way to learn." Following these earliest formative experiences, Ashley and her husband decided to fully commit to becoming professional guides and relocated to an area that was a hub of guiding activity. Ashley discussed how difficult this transition was:

So we moved there, but it was really hard to find work, so I wasn't able to get a guiding job straight away...I had, probably six jobs, just doing all kinds of random stuff. Helping a lady at her house, waiting tables, we were apartment managers. All these, it was really hard to piece it together; it was just like we were

kind of barely getting by. And the goal the whole time was to get into the guiding and figure out how to make that happen.

Following roughly a year in her new location piecing together work and gaining more experience, Ashley began working for a major guiding company. After roughly ten years with the company, she and her husband and a friend started their own guiding company so they could have more flexibility. She explained this transition to her current work as a guide.

Three years ago, my husband and I and another friend started our own guide company which gave us the freedom to design our own trips. Because the company we had been working for didn't want us to do anything...I wanted to do some of my own trips, I want to do this Yoga stuff. And they were like, you can't tell anybody that you climb with that you're doing some other trip or that you're ski guiding in Utah or whatever. So it became ok, well I guess it's time to branch out and do my own thing. Which was good, now I can work for, you know in the US to guide anywhere.

## **RQ 2: Constraints & negotiation strategies.**

### ***Constraints.***

#### *Fear/anxiety.*

One of the most salient constraints that Ashley faced and continues to face in her career is fear. She picked up the sport later in life, beginning around the end of college and described that it was “kind of scary in the beginning, just not knowing how to do things...” For Ashley, especially at the beginning it was the specific skills required for skiing and mountaineering that proved to be the most difficult to deal with. She reflected that what was most scary was,

Probably being on steep terrain, hiking with crampons on steep terrain, fear of falling. I think probably the biggest fear was just getting comfortable moving and walking in that type of terrain. Or with skis, even with skis on sometimes it's such bad conditions.

She continued discussing this fear and provided more detail on specifically scared her about her new sport early on.

Dealing with the anxiety of like, what is safe, are we going to make it, am I going to be able ski down this or climb down this or whatever. Kind of, it goes hand-in-hand I guess with doing something that's challenging, but the anxiety that goes along with that. Probably I remember the most anxiety with rock climbing more than when skiing. But it can be paralyzing you know, I'm up there on the rock and I'm like oh God, I'm going to fall, I'm going to fall, you know. You know and muscles get tense and my breathing is shallow...

Shortly before making the full commitment to becoming a professional guide, Ashley and her husband were involved in a near death climbing accident where they fell into a crevasse. She detailed the accident in a 2010 article in the Utah Adventure Journal:

Wedged deep in a crevasse, death seemed imminent. My husband had fallen into the crevasse, first, while skiing down. Attempting the rescue I fell in as well. Miraculously, someone down the valley had seen our accident and four hours later help came our way. I have taken much from this experience including safer decision-making, and a deeper appreciation for every moment I'm given.

The accident almost ended her guiding career before it began. Ashley explained:

That big crevasse incident where we were lucky to be alive and after that, I was kind of like, you know what maybe I'm not going to get into guiding I'll just do something else, family, totally switch my whole everything and just do something different.

While she and her husband did work through the incident, the fear of the realities of the risks involved in mountaineering stuck with Ashley once she began guiding professionally. She dealt with the fear and anxiety of knowing that not only could something go wrong on the mountain, but also that it was now her responsibility to take care of the group.

I'm responsible for everyone. And so if anything happens to anyone, it's my responsibility. I think that was probably one of the hardest parts...knowing that I

was responsible and I had to walk that fine line of ok, this is too dangerous, we're going to stop and turn around. Or, you're not moving fast enough and we don't have enough time or whatever it may be.

She continued, "sometimes people really want to make the summit and it's like...blowing at least 30 knots, but maybe we could go. Or maybe we shouldn't, but if you push it, you could end up killing somebody."

Ashley also talked about being worried about how her body would perform in new conditions once guiding professionally. She recalled feeling this worry on her first trip to Denali.

Being new I did have quite a bit of anxiety...oh my gosh this is my first trip here, I don't know how I'm going to do at altitude so really being worried about that. Because some people do well and some people don't and I was like maybe I'm one of those people that does well, maybe I'm not and then at the same time being responsible for other people on the mountain. After the first trip it was a little more relaxing.

Becoming a mother also added in a new fear for Ashley:

I'm more nervous because I'm like if something happens, there's even a higher consequence. You know, having a kid, so it's kind of like, oh my gosh. The consequences, like you never want to die or anything like that, but it's multiplied by so much. And the consequences of getting injured, being out of work, everything is amplified now that I have the responsibility of another being to keep alive. And, so that's probably what makes me the most nervous [today].

#### *Physical.*

Another highly significant constraint Ashley has faced and continues to face is physical difficulty in pursuing her dream. Early on, the physical constraints related to her lack of knowledge about the most appropriate gear or how to keep herself comfortable outdoors. She described "suffering through for a long time" because of an issue that was "pretty painful and pretty miserable" on her very first ski mountaineering trip.

I had these really tight fitting tele boots and, which is not smart for mountaineering and so we're out there camping on the glacier and my feet are freezing and I've got frost nip on my toes. I didn't put two and two together and realize that tight boots, cold feet. I was just thinking oh man, my feet get cold easily and I've got to be careful with my toes, but it never occurred to me that it was because my boots were too small until years later when I was a guide and I'm like learning, and I'm like teaching people, yeah if you wear your boots too tight, you're going to get frostbite. I'm like I wish I would have known that when I first started mountaineering. And so I did get frost nip on my toes on our first ski mountaineering adventure.

The physical discomforts and issues continued for Ashley even after this first trip. She recalled a trip in Alaska during which it rained nine of the eleven days they were travelling.

We were soaked to the bone and we had one set of dry clothes that we would keep in the stuff sack with a trash bag in it and so we would have to every morning when we got to tent camp and we got everything set up we could get in our tent and get out of our wet clothes and put the dry ones on and then in the morning we'd have to put those away and keep those safe and we'd have to put on these soaking wet clothes... That was pretty hard to do.

On a rock climbing trip, Ashley and her climbing partner were unexpectedly stuck overnight on a ledge without the appropriate gear. She described that experience.

We just had to survive the night on this ledge... That was a long night, we stayed up all night shivering and then we were out of water and so then the next day when the sun came up, we finished the next two pitches and we start the descent and we go down the wrong way and so we missed the proper descent and we're going down this like steep stuff and we have no water and we [were] ... super dehydrated.

Even after learning these early lessons, the physical discomforts are still a part of the job that Ashley finds difficult. She described how, as a guide, the physical difficulties are compounded.

Those moments when it's really cold and it's physically uncomfortable [are difficult]. The cold hands or the cold feet. And then at those moments it's also when I have to be really attentive to the clients. My hands are freezing, but I have

to go around and check everybody's face and make sure nobody has frostbite. If they have a problem, I'm going to have to get my hands out and fix it, or whatever. Those are probably the most challenging moments is when the environment poses a lot of challenges and then I have to at the same time taking care of myself take care of everybody else.

Beyond the difficulty dealing with the discomforts of outdoor travel, Ashley has dealt with injuries that have nearly ended her guiding career. She first discussed how because of knee injuries and arthritis she changed her professional goals away from seeking IFMGA certification.

The knee's been the big issue and if I hadn't have had this knee problem I was going to finish the AMGA program and just commit to doing the guiding full time, but when I got this knee problem and I was like well I shouldn't be running up and down the mountains anyway.

She vividly recalled the moment she confronted realities of her knee issues.

My knee has been probably the hardest part to deal with. It's pretty bad. I went to the doctor and he said to me. ...you need to get a job sitting down and pick up biking. This was actually like years ago and I was in tears for days. I was like oh my God what am I going to do. And I kept trying to think of other jobs. I couldn't think of anything I wanted to do.

Not wanting to give up her career, Ashley sought a second opinion and realized that while she would not have to give up her career, she would have to make some changes:

So [the second doctor] made me feel better and I ended up not quitting my job, but it's kind of been in the back of my head, I've got to shift this a little bit, I've got to change it.

She has realized, however, that even though she knows she needs to change for the sake of her body, other constraints in her life interact with this physical constraint making the adjustment difficult.

But it's hard to change and the last few years I haven't really changed because I've been able to maintain it enough. I was able to strengthen my muscles enough. Part of the reason I didn't change is because I wanted to be on a similar schedule

as Ames...like he was going to Alaska; it was like I could stay here and try to do something else, but then we're apart. Or, I can go to Alaska and I can guide some trips up there. So it was easier to stay in it than it was to change, so even though I kind of was like I think I need to change and start thinking about doing the local stuff more. I didn't because: one, it was easier to stay into it, two, it was better for mine and Ames' schedule, and 3, I was able to maintain my knees so it was only a matter of time thought before I probably have to have a knee replacement, so that's kind of the hardest part to deal with right now.

Ashley has also faced physical issues because she was trying to prove her worth in the mountains. She remarked:

I went through several blown knee injuries and went through lots of injuries before I figured out what is going on here. Ok, this is me trying to prove something. Trying to prove something and that didn't work out very well.

She later reflected on how difficult these physical challenges have been in her career. She noted,

It was probably like almost every trip on I thought about quitting...there were so many times that it was so hard or so painful...There was probably multiple, multiple times where I was like what am I doing? Why am I doing this?

*Gender assumptions.*

Ashley has also faced negative attitudes and assumptions about her abilities as a female guide throughout her career. She described how getting into the profession, "it was hard as a woman because there's not that many female guides." She then described her general impression of the climate for female guides noting that the limitations exist because of "the restrictions that other people may see or that we put on ourselves."

Ashley related a number of stories about times she was treated differently by clients because of her gender. The first was a story of a client who she co-guided with her husband on Denali. The group successfully summited, helping the client succeed in reaching his seventh summit. Ashley described what happened next.

He was pretty overtly chauvinistic as well and...at the end of the trip he was giving a toast and giving a tip and he gave Ames \$700 because it was his seventh summit and he wanted to make this big thing and he made a big presentation...thanking Ames and all of this and gave him the tip and didn't say anything to me and didn't leave me any tip or anything...I was so mad and he said Ashley, in my country women don't matter. And in some ways, I think he was trying to say it almost as an apology that he had treated me so bad. Like, in my country, women don't have these roles almost trying to justify it a little bit, but I was so mad. That was one time I wasn't very good at letting it brush over me and afterwards Ames and I were walking back from dinner and I was just venting and fuming and I was like I can't believe he's such a jerk. I think often I was better at not letting it bother me, but for some reason I got really bothered on that one.

The next experience happened within a year of our interview. Ashley was helping to lead an expedition in Antarctica. Made up of multiple teams, she described how the main client who had organized the expedition made it clear that he did not believe women should be in Antarctica, let alone guiding. After refusing to follow her directions throughout the expedition and unwilling to take safety advice from her, Ashley detailed what happened at the celebration dinner after successfully reaching their goal.

One woman got up and gave this [toast] and said, yeah, when I first tried to come to Antarctica through a British company, they wouldn't allow women to winter over and 10 years later, I got the opportunity and I was the first woman to winter over and here's to breaking boundaries and whatever, whatever. And he's like, that's bullshit. He starts telling me that women should be having babies and we shouldn't be in Antarctica guiding, he said women are smarter than men and they're more capable than men, but this is their power to have babies and they need to be reproducing and the population's declining because women aren't having enough babies and just starts telling me his whole philosophy...I think he was really trying to push my buttons and I was like I'm not going to react to this guy and like get all upset. Just kind of whatever he said I kind of let it blow over my shoulder. Little did he know at the time that I was pregnant.

Beyond these two instances, Ashley has experienced such treatment in smaller ways as well. From times when she felt clients, "really didn't want to deal much with a female guide" to a group of six clients who admitted to her "after the trip...when we saw that

you were our guide we were like, ‘no way, we’re not listening to anything she says.

There’s no way she could know anything’”, Ashley acknowledged that gaining respect from male clients was sometimes a challenge. In addition to these gender assumptions, Ashley has also had to balance her career path with her personal relationships.

*Relationships/ethic of care.*

Ashley entered into the professional ranks of guiding alongside her husband. As a result, they have shared a similarly difficult work schedule for the entirety of their marriage. She acknowledged that “it’s definitely been hard, Ames and I have sometimes spent months apart.” These difficult schedules have forced Ashley to balance two constraints at once, her physical health and her relationship health. After being advised by a doctor to lessen her guiding load, Ashley chose to risk further injury to her knee to spend as much time with her husband as possible.

I wanted to be on a similar schedule as Ames...[and] he was going to Alaska; it was like I could stay here and try to do something else, but then we’re apart. Or, I can go to Alaska and I can guide some trips up there. So it was easier to stay in it than it was to change [because of my knee].

She further described the difficulty in having such a hectic schedule and trying to maintain a relationship.

And we have to really coordinate schedules and we’ve had to both make sacrifices to keep ourselves in the same country at the same time, or to not be gone away from each other for too long. We’ve had to coordinate and make sacrifices to make that work. I think for a lot of people it’s really hard to find a relationship. And then, having a family, that’s a really challenging one too.

The recent birth of their son has further complicated Ashley and Ames’ scheduling challenges. She discussed how this has impacted her guiding career and made this scheduling even more difficult.

For the first year I won't go on any expeditions, I'll just try to do stuff locally around here. But, then...after that I probably will and then Ames and I can switch. If I want to go do a three-week trip in Nepal, then Ames could take off that time. Or my mom would be psyched to babysit, so hopefully my mom will stay healthy and be around and we'll have options like that to be able to go do stuff.

In addition to simply considering a more complex schedule, Ashley also discussed how being a mom had also changed her view on the risks involved in being a professional guide.

If something happens, there's even a higher consequence. You know having a kid, so it's kind of like, oh my gosh. The consequences, like you never want to die or anything like that, but it's multiplied by so much. And the consequences of getting injured, being out of work, everything is amplified now that I have the responsibility of another being to keep alive. And, so that's probably what makes me the most nervous [about guiding right now].

A final constraint that Ashley acknowledged has plagued her throughout her career is a lack of confidence and frustration in participating in the sport.

*Lack of confidence/frustration.*

Ashley, in discussing what made it difficult for her in her initial entry into professional guiding, responded, "probably having the confidence to take it on." She continued:

Just being willing to take on the leading of a group fully myself. Even though Ames and I had pretty much the same amount of skills, he might be more likely to jump in and take on a group by himself. I'm like, well I think I'll go as an assistant for a couple more trips first. Just having the confidence in myself that I could take on the group myself and do it. That was probably the most challenging for me...

Ashley also discussed the frustration and lack of confidence she felt in her skills early on. Learning with her husband was central to her journey, but did not always make it easier. She noted, "Ames was always a better skier than me, so when I was comparing myself to

him and I'd get frustrated and I'd be crying sometimes. I remember crying sometimes."

Even when focusing only on her own skills and not comparing herself to others, Ashley still did not feel like she measured up.

I always wanted to be better than I was, like sooner. Not being content with my progress and...always wanted to be better. Like, oh it's not quite good enough, not quite good enough. [I remember] always feeling like I wish I was better than I was.

### ***Negotiation Strategies.***

#### *Social Support.*

For Ashley, the most salient negotiation strategy that helped her maneuver through a number of the constraints she faced was her reliance on social supports throughout her career. In beginning to learn the basic skills for safe and effective mountain travel, Ashley and her husband were partners from the beginning. She talked about how important having a partner was in learning the basics.

Ames and I were doing it together and so I always had a partner. So we were at the same level learning it all together and just figuring it out. So that part made it real comfortable. And it also made it where he it wasn't like he was more experienced and he was just doing everything....It was pretty fun...[and] comfortable in that way...It's just good to have a partner in crime if you're going to be doing something you've never done before...I never had to worry about finding a partner. And it was fun for us to spend that time together growing like that and learning like that.

In addition to having a permanent climbing partner, Ashley talked quite a bit about how heavily she relied on mentors. When she and her husband spent the time in Alaska first learning glacier skills, they relied heavily on a mentor they met working in wilderness therapy. He was a key in helping her learn the first skills because of his nature.

He is such a meticulous person. I mean he could sit there and...explain to me how to do crevasse rescue or something like that. And he would go through detail by

detail how to do things. He has an amazing memory and very detailed explanations of things and so... he was great about explaining how to do things and he would have the food stuff down to a T, how many calories you should eat a day and how much food you should pack and things like that. He was really great resource to turn to.

When she decided to focus on pursuing professional work, Ashley was introduced to a European mountain guide who provided support and an opportunity to learn guiding through helping lead a trip in France. She discussed how a lucky circumstance turned into a valuable learning experience.

He had invited over like 20 different people to do the Haute Route that were all just friends. He had just invited whoever and it turned out to be a huge group of people. So when he found out that we were interested in guiding he offered to do some training with us and let us help him with that trip. So he was a great mentor.

This European mentor, in addition to helping her develop her skills, introduced Ashley to a long time, highly respected and experienced female mountain guide. This relationship would prove highly important in Ashley's journey to professional guiding when she and her husband had their near fatal crevasse accident.

She became a mentor to me as well even though we didn't really spend that much time together. I got introduced to her there and just kind of saw her in the mountains a lot here and there and always followed what she was doing and she became an inspiration for me...And when Ames and I had our crevasse accident and almost died...she was the first person that I saw afterwards and first person that I told the whole story to. And she was there to, her and her husband, were there to sort of comfort us and talk to us about it and help us process through it a little bit.

Ashley continued to find valuable the support she received from her guiding company when she started working there. She described:

What they were really good about was they wanted me to go at my own pace and...continue to be an assistant as long as I felt like I needed to before I took on the job as the lead guide. So they were really great about helping me get to the

point where I felt comfortable and encouraging me to do whatever I felt was the best thing to do, so that was really good.

In addition to this general company support, Ashley reflected on her positive relationship with the company expedition leader.

He always believed in me and in any females and...he was really supportive and really wanted to get some females in there. So he did the guide training and after every trip he would sit down with me and talk to me like how did it go, what happened, and just review over different things that happened and how you handle it and encouraging, really encouraging me to take on the leadership role.

In addition to the supports that Ashley felt were critical in helping her achieve her goals related to guiding, she has recently begun to reach out to a new type of mentor: guides who are moms. She described that, though sometimes difficult to find, she has not been shy about reaching out to other female guides who have children.

I've got my eye on these ladies and I'm like e-mailing them and talking to them asking how do you manage it, how do you keep guiding and balance having a kid? Just keeping track of them because not very many people, you know, couples or females, have continued to do that and be a mother at the same time. So there's only really these few examples that I have to look at and we're all just figuring it out on our own since this is such a new profession especially for women. We're all just kind of figuring this out and making it happen. The other day we [took] Wesley for [a] hike and I'll take my hand pump and I'll be like pumping on the way down the trail and I'm like, I could totally do this while I'm guiding.

*Passion for the outdoors, for teaching.*

Another key that has helped Ashley work through varying constraints she faced was her passion for the outdoors and her career. Early on when first learning the basic skills required for maneuvering in the backcountry, it was this passion that made everyday a good day in the outdoors.

The excitement of it all. Just being out and, I loved being outside, loved being out in the beauty of it and the mountains of it. Just the adventure. You felt like explorers, adventurers, you know. I was just going somewhere I've never been

before and just trying to figure it all out. Doing the route finding and we definitely got lost a lot. I definitely remember getting lost quite a bit.

Ashley described how her passion also helped her overcome her lack of confidence. After reaching the summit of a climb, Ashley recalls feeling like,

[I] didn't know if I could make it, you know and we figured it out and I'd always be super excited...I think it was the exhilaration of it and the beauty of it, you know, just made me feel so alive.

This passion also helped her deal with the physical setbacks that she described as being such difficult moments for her.

And then once I got down and I made it and I survived and I as like, that was cool, I pushed myself really hard and I survived. So I think...being outside, being in the mountains, pushing myself physically, the sense of accomplishment, like all of that put together kept me coming back.

Ashley also identified that in addition to her love for adventure and the outdoors, it is her love of teaching that helped to make mountain guiding, and the constraints associated with it, worth working through.

I love teaching, so I figured I would do something that was involved with teaching and just thought what would be the most fun thing to do? Well, I like playing in the mountains so let's see if we can do that. So, I was just really going for the dream.

Ashley also discussed how at times when she may have thought about moving away from a guiding career, the crazy schedule, while a difficult thing to manage, was part of what convinced her to stay.

It's almost like having a taste of the freedom we have with this kind of work, we have freedom with our schedule, we can take trips or not take them, we can take months off at a time, I can travel. It's got so many benefits that it's really hard to find anything else that would even seem like remotely interesting.

Further, in dealing with difficulties that she was faced with at various points in her career, Ashley pointed directly at her love for and connection with the outdoors as providing a sense of calm to her. She commented,

I really feel that being outside and being in the wilderness was a big just, grounding force for me, I think probably the emotional experience and the psychological experience were a big part of [my success] as well. Offering myself a challenge and working through it.

*Resiliency strategies.*

Ashley pointed to a number of different strategies that she relied upon for dealing with specific constraints. First, in dealing with the various types of fear she has faced, Ashley acknowledged that for a long time,

I don't think I really overcame it, like learned how to deal with it well until years later. So I guess I just kept trying. Kept trying to do it. And I guess I did deal with it because I got through it all. I feel like I definitely got better at it later, like my perspective about it changed.

This point when the perspective change occurred happened when she realized,

...Ok, either I'm going to have to quit this sport or I'm going to learn how to deal with fear really well. You know, fear of heights, fear of falling. I think that the rock climbing challenges those fears more than anything and so I did decide to stick with it and accept the challenge of it and learn how to do it.

She says that she finally found the right strategy for dealing with her fear of rock climbing by "Learning how to...breathe deep and envision something positive instead of seeing the falling. Like seeing the next move happening and breathing well, you know learning those kinds of things took time and a lot of mental effort." Ashley reflected on the process that she would work through whenever she had doubts in her abilities to identify what was holding her back.

That was the first time where I was like, well, identifying these beliefs that I'm not good enough... Where does that come from, and how do I deal with that in my life? How do I move past that? I think at that time I did learn some skills of like, ok, how do I identify that? And when I can identify it, then I can deal with it. Then I could be like, ok, yes, I do have the skills to do this. I am trained enough to do this. I know that I can take this on and so then step into that place and just take the risk to do it.

Her understanding of the benefits of self-awareness is apparent in the way she approaches her guiding. In a 2009 blog post, Ashley described integrating it into an upcoming trip: "We use the principles of alignment and self-awareness taught in yoga and integrate them into our skiing. We will strive to increase our self-awareness and our connection to our surroundings thus maximizing our fun and enjoyment." When Ashley and her climbing partner were nearly killed in a crevasse accident, it did much to shake her focus on mountain climbing. She admits that after the accident, she thought, "You know what, maybe I'm not going to get into guiding I'll just do something else." She discussed how a climbing trip planned prior to that accident helped her work through the fear.

We had planned a trip with some friends and we were supposed to go do the volcanoes... like Rainier, Baker, [and] Mt. Adams. And [after the accident] I was thinking well maybe I shouldn't go and tell them we're going to cancel and then we decided to do it and go. And we're like, well, we're just going to do it as safe as we possibly can, we're going to be roped up the whole time, we're not going to take any extra risk, you know. We're just going to try to have a really safe trip and play it really super conservative. And we did that and we had great weather and we had such a fun time... So that was kind of a turning point. That was like, ok, maybe I can get back into this. And I think if I hadn't have done that, then I might not have ever gotten on a glacier again.

Ashley also reflected on the ways she dealt with the physical challenges she has dealt with throughout her career. She talked about how, "I used to [carry a lot of weight] all summer long, guiding in the cascades. [After] carrying heavy backpacks up and down, my low back wouldn't move. That's when I started doing yoga." By implementing yoga

into her physical routine she found that it “pretty much saved my body.” In a 2009 blog posting, Ashley emphasized the importance of yoga in her outdoor pursuits: “Yoga has helped me to heal and avoid injuries in my life. Not only does it feel great to be stronger, more flexible, and more balanced, it has also been a powerful learning tool in increasing my performance, concentration, and enjoyment in all of the activities in which I participate.” Ashley has also started guiding less weight intensive trips to help both her lower back and her true physical nemesis, her knees. While these changes have helped, she recognized the next negotiation strategy she may have to implement in dealing with her bad knees: “I’m probably going to have to have a knee replacement in the next five years.”

Finally, Ashley has found a strategy for dealing with clients who made assumptions about her abilities because of her gender. She discussed how she handled such instances when clients would not listen to her safety advice.

Finally what I did was I enrolled his son. I was like I want you to go up and check on your dad’s nose, I want you to go check and make sure your dad has his glasses on...He really didn’t want to deal much with a female guide and once I enrolled his son to help him out that was better because you know his son could take on that responsibility.

Ashley also found that keeping her cool and remaining professional helped her work through situations with this type of client.

I’m not that reactive of a person. Like, I’m not going to get all upset about stuff because I’m pretty good at staying centered and being like, whatever his belief is. Which has probably helped a lot in guiding, because if you were really reactive and you were worried about everybody that made a comment or didn’t listen to what you had to say, you would have a pretty hard time about it.

This strategy is closely related to the next theme that arose within Ashley's negotiation strategies, self-awareness.

*Being true to herself.*

One lesson that Ashley found valuable to learn was that whenever she shied away from being her true self, she ran into difficulty. When she worried about proving herself, she usually ended up in a bad situation.

If I was making choices based on trying to prove something I usually got injured. And I did go through that a lot. Like I went through several blown knee injuries and went through lots of injuries before I figured out what is going on here. Ok, this is me trying to prove something.

Ashley relayed a particularly poignant story that helped her learn the importance of recognizing her own strengths and weaknesses and being herself in the outdoors.

You know when I was, how old was I, I was probably 21 when my first years skiing in Utah. I kind of had this mentality of I'm indestructible. So even though I wasn't a very good skier, there was the mogul competition going on. They were like, you should enter the contest, there's only one other girl in it, which was my roommate. So if you make it to the bottom, you'll get second place. I was like, oh ok. So I spent the rest of the morning on the next slope over trying to learn how to ski moguls... We go down and we go off of the first jump and both of us crash, like go, pick up our gear, like are you ok, yeah, are you ok, like ok. And then somehow on the second jump I'm like I'm not going land it, I'm going to crash, so I might as well just go big. So I didn't check my speed at all, I just pointed it and I went really big, I probably went bigger than anybody in the competition. Like huge and then came down with like straight legs and fractured my leg, shattered my ACL, you know and end up having to get sledged off of the mountain and having knee surgery. I think if I could have learned that lesson a little earlier, I could have saved myself some grief. Like, finally, years later I was like why do I keep getting injured? Oh, because I'm trying to prove something and not focusing on what I'm doing [and] worrying about what other people think of me.

Ashley also found value in being herself when it came do dealing with clients who made assumptions about her abilities because of her gender.

If I ever sensed something like that, I kind of just ignored it and then made it easier for them to just like eventually ignore it too. Like I'm not going to get upset or wound up because I'm not going to let myself get emotionally off kilter because somebody else is doing that, I'm just going to try to continue to give the feedback, try to be a good listener...if I just kept trying to explain, give good feedback and teach the best that I could that they would listen better.

*Paying it forward.*

One final theme that came out of Ashley's data was that of wanting to help others achieve their goals in the outdoors. For Ashley this was focused in part on her local community.

I hope that I can create some fun stuff in my own community...I've been gone so much travelling all over that I've never really focused on...what can I do to serve my own community here and so now that I've going to be here more, I'm really excited to develop programs here where I can work with people year over year and create something. One thing about my profession so far is that I've accessed people that generally have a lot of money because the trips have been quite expensive. So I'm like, if I create some community programs, I can do stuff for much cheaper and get the average person into climbing or into backcountry skiing.

She also discussed how she wanted to help expose more people to yoga, the aspect of her guiding that helped her deal with both physical and emotional difficulties.

By adding in the yoga stuff, it adds in this great spiritual mental part to it, where you're combining the breath and positive thinking and positive imagery and staying calm and relaxed and so I'm really excited to combine those and try to access people in my community and even try to create some charity type programs where I can access people of different economic brackets.

In discussing a program in which she worked with young girls, Ashley reflected on how fulfilling her experience had been and why she wanted to keep working with this demographic in her community.

[One of the participants] tried to go up by herself just a little bit the first time and she got scared and nervous and she's like, I want to come down, I want to come down...She came back down and then I was like, ok I'll go up with you and so I

tied in right behind her and then I went up with her, showed her where to put her feet and gave her a few pointers and she made it all the way up and then she came down and then after that, she ran up it, like three more times, just by herself and there was like a few hard moves in there and it was so cool to see her confidence build and her work through that.

### **RQ 3: Context**

#### ***Life before the mountains.***

Ashley grew up in the southeastern United States and was drawn to physical activities from the beginning. Her mom described that when Ashley was three years old, she realized for the first time how special she might be in physical pursuits.

I put her in soccer at three years old. Just thought that would be her first sport and she could run around. By the end of the soccer season when the coaches do their little spiel about the children and their strength, they couldn't stop talking about how important Ashley had been, that she could play any position, that she could listen to directions and that she was just a good all around player. That's at three I was shocked because she was just a quiet little girl who does all kinds of things. But I just hadn't had that tremendous expectation from her. And she went forward from there.

Aside from soccer, Ashley shocked her mom again when at five years old, "she could swim 11 strokes." By the time she was twelve, she decided that she wanted to follow in her mom's footsteps and run in road races. When Ashley approached her mom about running in a race, "I said well, this is what you have to do to get ready. You have to run so many times around the block after school when you get home. She said ok. So she did." This drive also brought her success in softball, track, cross country, basketball, and tennis. While traditional sports were at the core of Ashley's early pursuits, her mom also made sure to expose her to a wider range of activities. Her mom, a physical education teacher, taught Ashley camping, snow skiing, hunter safety, and karate. She eventually went on to earn a basketball scholarship to college. Ashley's mom described her as "the

type of person that would give you 110% no matter what she was doing” and relayed a story that started at a softball game that hit this point home.

She slid into home and hit her head on the catcher’s shin guard and she told the coach that her neck hurt. And the coach kept playing her. She called [me that night] and said my neck really hurts. I said go to the hospital, I’m on my way and she had a broken neck. [Shortly after the accident,] she ran [a major road race] after she broke her neck in the neck brace.

Ashley’s mom also described how driven she was at improving her skills in the sports she played. “That was one thing about her, she would, if she had a ballgame that they didn’t win, she would go out back turn the lights on and practice shooting. She worked, she has always been an overachiever.” While traditional sports had been Ashley’s main focus growing up, her mom thinks they may have also been part of what drove her to the outdoors. Beyond the athletics, another major event in Ashley’s early years was the death of her father when she was in ninth grade. Her mom described how her total focus on sports and the death of her father impacted her push into mountaineering.

I think she was just so tired of basketball, softball, running, track and field. She’d done that. She’d been doing it since she was tiny. And she got out there and there were new things to do and things that she hadn’t necessarily grown up with. There was real skiing, and real biking and real camping. [Utah] was just a new world for her, she needed a new world. She needed a new world after her dad passed away and this just opened up a new world for her.

***Learning with Ames and living in trucks.***

Ashley’s foray into mountaineering was influenced by two main contextual factors: her boyfriend and her lifestyle. Partners from the very beginning, Ashley and Ames did not follow the traditional route of formal education in the mountains. Rather, after spending years skiing and working in wilderness therapy, they decided together to venture into the mountains. Ashley described these early years:

We really got into all of that together and were kind of exploring and learning it all together. And probably made all of the mistakes. Yeah, in a week's mountaineering course we could have probably saved ourselves a lot of grief. But, that wasn't really how we rolled. As long as you survive it, it's the best way to learn.

Ashley recalled an instance when she and Ames were learning crevasse rescue, on their own, that epitomized their experiences while reiterating the pitfalls of learning informally.

One time I was on Ranier and we were on this glacier and we were trying to practice crevasse rescue and I'm doing a six to one haul system to get Ames out, like he's down in the glacier. And I've set up this 6 to 1 system and I'm trying to haul him out and it wasn't working. Like something was not right, so I've got the book there and I'm reading in the book trying to figure it out, ok, what's wrong with the system. His legs are falling asleep in the crevasse and then I set the book down and it slid down the hill, took off down the mountain. I'm like, oh crap. I finally figured it out and got him out of there. We would have done well to take a course, but we didn't have the money to take a course so we were really figuring out a lot on our own and definitely did some trial and error, learned from our mistakes a lot. You know which is sometimes a good way to learn as well as long as you're not getting into too much trouble.

In addition to their commitment to learning on their own, Ashley and Ames fully committed all of their resources to pursuing mountaineering. While still working in wilderness therapy, they would take full advantage of their off days to climb mountains. Ashley recalled, "we'd do these 12, 15 hour drives to get to California or to Washington where there was some mountains with glaciers on them." Because they wanted to spend all of their free time climbing, they felt it unnecessary to actually have a home. Instead, they simply lived out of a truck. Ashley described their living situation.

We lived in this small Toyota pick-up truck with just a tin shell on the back and we would sleep in that and our noses would be six inches from the ceiling and it was metal roof so it would get condensation on us and you'd wake up with water dripping on your face. Ames had built some box drawers underneath and so we had this storage underneath we could keep all of our gear in there and we'd have

to get into the base of the mountain and do a big old sprawl and pull out all of our gear.

Even after joining a guiding company and working professionally as guides, Ashley and Ames continued to pour all of their resources into mountaineering outside of the trips they were leading, so they continued living out of the back of a truck. Ashley explained their lifestyle.

When we first started guiding, we upgraded from our small Toyota to a bigger Ford F150 and it had carpet in the back. An interesting thing is living in Seattle and living out of our truck and...we would go out on trips and at the time [our guiding company] didn't have a shower or any kind of shower available. So, we would have to find places to try to shower. So we would sneak into the university locker room or one hotel that we would sometimes go to and shower...and we tried not to stay in the city much, but usually after a trip, we'd have to sit in the city somewhere and we'd just find a place to park and sleep in the back of our truck. And then we'd go out and go somewhere and go climbing. So that was what it was like for, I mean, we probably did that for at least 4 years, maybe longer.

As they have moved through their career and towards having a child, Ashley and Ames eventually purchased a home, but still lived there in a non-traditional way.

So, now we have a house which is nice...and so now we kind of base out of here. But the last, however many years, we've only been home for two or three months out of the year, so we'll be travelling the rest of the time, but it's nice to have a home base, so ...we've had roommates and we've rented out a couple of rooms and they can like take care of the house and kind of be here and we liked having people be here and cover some of the mortgage and we would come and go. And just have our bedroom set up and we would be gone all except for a little bit of time in the spring and a couple months in the fall. But now that we have a kid, we're working at being home a little more.

**Erica: RQ 1: The experience.**

Erica, a white 54-year-old, has been professionally involved in the outdoors for 32 years. Erica is an IFMGA certified mountain guide and has been a heli-ski guide for a Canadian guiding company for more than 20 years. In addition, she has led international

expeditions around the world for more than a decade. Erica has summited a number of notable peaks including Choy Oyu, Ama Dablam, Mustagatah, Mt. Logan and Mt.

Fairweather. Erica has a younger brother.

Erica first ventured into the mountains when she was in college. She had always been drawn to more active, outdoors activities in her life. She described a trip to Hawaii with a group of her girlfriends.

There were three or four girls and we would say, ok let's go to the beach and I said hey guys, let's go rent a bike and we'll hike and cycle up the volcano like Diamondhead. And no one wanted to rent a bike. I was like why don't you guys want to rent a bike? It will be so much fun, it's cool, let's go cycle around and no one did. So I did on my own. I went and got the bike and cycled towards Diamondhead and that was my fun day, that was a cool adventure day and I was on the bike by myself.

This lack of interest in the outdoors by her close girl friends was the impetus that drove her to a crucial moment in her professional guiding career: joining an outdoors club at her university. She described her motivations behind taking a leap into the outdoors.

I joined the outdoor club and...I was kind of alone when I did that. None of my other friends were interested so I just went to the meeting on my own...I just thought it would be really exciting and I thought it was a great adventure and I thought oh, I better just go to one of these meetings and check out the slide show and you know I had no idea how many people would be there. And then I just signed up for the trip because I wanted people to do things with...[so I] started going out on some trips that were basically way over my head and I loved it.

By joining the club, Erica connected with a group of friends who began doing personal trips beyond the scope of the club. This group “climbed a lot of peaks [and] we did a lot of first ascents and new routes...[and] a series of coast range traverses.” It was these trips that helped Erica realize “after time [mountaineering] was a really cool adventure and really important to me.”

Following college, Erica began leading trips, working in heli-ski guiding, taking seasonal guiding jobs, working in outdoor education and working for a university running a trips program. It was then that Erica realized this could be her career. “I was kind of doing the seasonal work all year round. And that’s when I kind of started realizing, you know, this is going to be my work.” She also started taking on more “real mountaineering work” at this time and was excited by the possibilities. “I was teaching, I was active, I was in the mountains, and it was a thrill because I was still learning and making money.” Even with this excitement, Erica still was not completely focused on where she was headed. She described how she decided to fully commit to mountain guiding.

Every year was good, I’d go and do it the next year then I’d go and do it the next year. I never sat down and said, yes, I want to be a mountain guide. At that point I was just going, ok, it works this year, it works the next year, it works the next year. And at that point I was just kind of thinking that I wanted to do a variety of trips so I could get better at what I did and that’s when I started deciding that I should take all the guides courses because I wanted to be better and I wanted to learn from the best.

It was more than just her passion for the outdoors that lead her to fully commit to the long process of becoming IFMGA certified. She described this realization.

Later on through the guides courses, I was thinking I’m doing this work anyway. I’m taking groups in the mountains, I want to be paid for it. So I wanted to finish my courses so I had the freedom to work in any park by myself and, you know, make the decisions and get paid the best money too. If I was going to work my buns off, I wanted to be an independent anyway, supervised from a distance, I thought well I should be supervising myself. That was my motivation and it took me say maybe nine years of that phase, more or less, to work through the guides courses and keep adventuring.

While her professional motivations sparked her interest in attaining her certification, Erica acknowledged that her love for the sport itself made the journey even more enjoyable.

I felt it was a privilege to be able to say, go do some new trip somewhere as a guide because I could explore for myself. Like, I always had this selfish motivation too, to climb peaks or go new places and then actually do it as a guide. And I liked the idea of moving around. I was never really interested in say working or owning a lodge or a hut.

Following the completion of her certifications, Erica continued heli-ski guiding and leading domestic trips and also began leading international expeditions. She explained how the transition to the international realm occurred.

I got involved in international guiding just by default in 1996 when the [guiding company] decided they wanted to run international trips that had to be guided. A friend of mine was working on admin there and she asked me to go choose a trip of my liking. She said, we have to run trips now...internationally supervised by a guide and I'd like you to be a guide, where do you want to go? And I didn't know any place really because I'd never travelled much, so I just popped out something that came to me and I said Aconcagua. So before you knew it I was working on Aconcagua that year and figuring it out all on my own and leading trips. And then from there, one trip led to another and now I do a lot of international guiding just by default.

Currently, Erica recognizes that "I'm probably at the peak of my career and probably starting to decline." Because of her long career and the respect she has earned, Erica gets to be selective in the trips she leads today. In addition to continuing in her 25+ year career as a heli-ski guide, Erica reflected, "I want to pick the plums, I don't want to just do any hack work. I want to do work I get something out of. So I'm at the place where I can do that." She is also at the point in her career where she recognizes her own desire to stop guiding at the right point.

I feel like I should just make a clean exit when I get too weak or too slow or not valuable. I feel like I'm still adding something...to the places I work. And I feel like they're helping me or they're taking care of me, you know, helping me with the door. The whole extension of taking care of the old lady. When they start taking care of me, I want to leave, I don't want to be in that position. As a senior guide, I think it's an awkward role and I don't want to do that.

## **RQ 2: Constraints/negotiation strategies.**

### ***Constraints.***

#### *Assumptions of others.*

Erica experienced constraints related to her gender. When she first got involved in mountaineering, it was with a group of all guys. While she generally felt they were accepting of her, she does vividly recall a time when she was blatantly excluded from a major trip because of her gender. She recalled that “I really, I got quite choked. I thought, why not? I’m just as strong.” She also described how when she would go on trips with this all-male group, “it was kind of like I was the extra wheel sometimes. So, I was there because my boyfriend was there, but I wanted to go beyond that.” She continued, “I wanted to be an equal and I wasn’t always treated as an equal in terms of strength or taking the lead.” Though she desired learning from the front and taking the lead, “it was always a race for who would be in front. So I rarely got to be in front and break trail.” The assumptions and attitudes she faced with the group she climbed with on her own would also be reflected when she became a professional guide.

Erica described the negative attitudes she encountered from both clients and other guides because of her gender. She recalls generally

...pressure...to prove myself. I think some of the expectations and assumptions are, is that you’re weaker and you’re not as good and so there is that always showing everyone, showing that you’re good at what you do and that it’s your job, you’re as good as anyone else.

With male clients, she reflected on experiencing instances of overt sexist behavior. She noted, “I’ve had like, you know the bum grabbers sometimes or the guys that don’t take you seriously.” In a personal journal, Hillary described: “it seemed that I was held to

higher scrutiny” by clients. One specific instance of a client that did not take her seriously was a client on a ski mountaineering trip. She described that he was less than enthusiastic about having her as his guide.

One guy who found out I was going to be his guide the next day...decide[d] he didn't want to climb with me the next day. And we found out why, it's because I was a woman and so my boss told me to go out and teach him a lesson the next day and I did. And he was, he had a happy day, but his first reaction, his assumption was that I couldn't do it. So dealing with those assumptions, I think I took it more personally earlier on for sure during that period and I felt like I had to prove myself.

Erica also dealt with mistrust from clients because of her gender. She described this near mutiny.

I was the guide of the group and...it took me a long time to build their trust. In fact they wanted to mutiny on me...we were trying to get to a hut in the whiteout and they didn't believe I was going the right way. And they were asking people in the group. Are you an airline pilot? Ok, you know how to navigate don't you Ed, you're a pilot. Or my support person, Ray, who was a man, Ray you better take over because you know where you're going. And they almost left and as soon as they were about to leave, the clouds cleared and I was pointing right at the hut, so then I won their trust. But why did I have to spend eight hours to win their trust?

She also faced these types of assumption about her abilities based on her gender from fellow guides. Throughout her interviews, she kept describing the guiding profession as a “man's world.” She described her interaction with certain guides, “you know some of the attitudes of the guides I was working with, the Euros, made it tough. They didn't think I should be there.” Erica also described an incident with a guide in Nepal. She described what happened when she approached the guide: “I started talking to him trying to get information from him and he started yelling at me. He dissed me, but he was also angry...he didn't want to tell me anything because he thought I was some idiot.”

It was attitudes like that that started to impact the route Erica took on her professional journey.

Some of the attitudes from some of my peers, right. That's kind of when I decided, you know, I just didn't want to bother with being the boss of anyone, it's easier just to be one of the gang, especially in that male world.

She decide it was better for her to “kind of be in the, not in the background, but I'm going to lay low in the group and just not make any waves.” She articulated what she felt was at the core of these types of attitudes.

I think (the gender stuff) has always been there. It's part of the game. You think of them as your brothers and you have some run-ins with people. And I think the biggest run-ins I've had with people are from the assumptions they've had of me. Like earlier on that would bug me a lot more. And then I have, I feel like I have to prove myself. And then the thing is some men won't come on my trips. That's fine, but a lot of men do...I think it's just people finding different ways to deal with women who aren't in a typical role. And some people have an easier time than others and then how they react to me is the thing. And maybe I've just kind of...well it's been there for sure. I've had definite struggles with it, but it's never really turned me back.

*Fear.*

Erica described facing different types of fear throughout her career as well. She described a serious accident on a trip that laid the groundwork for some of her fears.

[I had] one accident where I fell into the crevasse and dislocated my shoulder and I was hanging just by my arms and my pack. My pack undid itself and it was a small crevasse, so I was able to get my arms out, I don't know how that happened....The waist belt undid itself and it was hanging to the side. And it kind of stopped me from falling into the crevasse. I was all by myself at the back of the line....I ended up just screaming my head off and then rolling to one side and I was out of it and guys came back to find me with my shoulder. And we put it back into place and then slung it and I skied out for two days.

Following up on this story, she elaborated, “You know that kind of incident will stay with you for years. Because you just get this cold sweat when you think about going on to the

ice...you relive it, like physically almost and mentally.” In addition to this accident, Erica described “tripping and...nearly falling off the cliff”, a major rock climbing accident in which her close friend broke her back, and the death of mountain guiding friends as being difficult issues to deal with on the mountain. Erica’s sense of fear was perceptible in a narrative she wrote about a 2011 climbing trip:

I tried to get a few hours of sleep but my mind was racing. Were we being overly ambitious and unrealistic? If something went seriously wrong there was no backup—at our distance from base the radio was virtually useless.

In addition to her fear of death or injury, Erica spoke about another fear she faced in her profession.

Erica discussed that for much of her career as a guide, “I was afraid to be myself” as a guide. She described how a guide she worked with and admired was “a big entertainer, he was lively, he was a good motivator and...those were things I didn’t have.” She described “I’m not a big joke teller, I’m not a huge storyteller either...I’m a typical introverted guide.” Especially early on in her career, she felt that she needed to fit into the role of entertainer and was afraid that she would not be respected if she was just herself while guiding.

*Physical.*

Another constraint Erica described were physical difficulties in guiding when she was first learning with her group of college male friends. She described, “for a while there with the guys I was always at the back of the line.” She described the implications this had on those early trips.

The guys just liked to go out and pound. They just liked to go out and go as fast as they could and it was always a race for who would be in front. So I rarely got to

be in front and break trail...if I wanted to break trail or get in front I had to like gobble down my lunch and take off and go until they all passed me. So it was not like, oh let's all take turns, it was like, let's just go.

In addition to dealing with differing speed or strength in mountaineering, Erica also faced other physical limitations that created challenges for her. She described learning that “I wasn't a very natural rock climber” and that skiing also did not come completely naturally to her. She described coming to this realization.

I just felt like I wasn't part of the elite, you know, the hardcore climbers, so I had to kind of deal with the fact that I'm just an ordinary climber, I'm not going to be a superstar...I wasn't a hot skier and I wasn't a hot climber, I was kind of ordinary, so how do I find my way there?

In addition to the physical skills related to mountaineering, Erica also learned on a mountaineering trip to Cho Oyu, an 8,000-meter peak and the sixth highest in the world, that her body did not react well to high altitude.

[After that trip] I decided I could guide in the Himalayas and I have, but not at such high altitudes, right. Because it's really hard to guide, take care of people at altitude and that's when it was confirmed I could hardly take care of myself. [So] I wasn't going to take care of anyone at that altitude. So it wasn't in the cards for me to do too much high altitude guiding.

Erica also found that as she has gotten older, her physicality has begun to impact the way her clients view her.

I feel like some people don't want to have an older person around. Like maybe, you know, that could make it difficult. They're not looking for someone like me, they're looking for someone in their twenties who can hangout and do, have different energy for sure.

*Lack of confidence.*

A final constraint that emerged from Erica's experience was a lack of confidence.

In reflecting on her career, one thing that she wished she had done differently was “be

more confident and [hadn't] take[n] things so personally." Sometimes her lack of confidence stemmed from outside sources. While working for a heli-ski guiding company, Erica received feedback from her supervisors. They relayed to her, "well you're not the strongest guide here, but you're good with the people, so you can stay. And that was a bit of a blow." She also described how "moments of doubt by the groups" she was working with were difficult and made her question her abilities. She elaborated on this in a personal journal describing how the pressure she felt affected her confidence: "There is always performance pressure and it took me a while to gain confidence. Clients will always have assumptions about a guide so you have to get to know them and do a good job to win their trust." Erica internalized these types of negative feedback and acknowledged that her lack of confidence held her back in her career. "I was probably stronger than I thought I was...I should have taken the leadership role a little bit more, but I wasn't all that keen on competing with those guys."

*Negotiation strategies.*

*Resiliency strategies.*

Erica discussed an array of negotiation strategies that she relied upon in working through the various constraints she has faced in the outdoors. In her earliest experiences with the group of male college friends, Erica recognized,

I was there because my boyfriend was there, but I wanted to go beyond that. I didn't want to feel that the only reason I was there was because my boyfriend was there. I wanted to feel like I merited being there."

To achieve this, she would “gobble down my lunch and take off and go” so that she could take the lead and break trail on their trips. After being excluded from a trip because of her gender, Erica decided she “had to work hard and get stronger, or learn so they would ask me to come next time...that was part of my motivation for sure.” She later described that even when she was unable to lead the group, she still took full advantage of learning in those situations.

If I was at the back of the line and they'd all make their own separate tracks up the hill. So I always thought I had the best track up the hill because I could use part of Matt's track and part of Liam's track and make the most efficient line.

Another important strategy that Erica learned early on was the best way to relate to her male climbing partners to minimize the issue of gender.

I tried not to have a crush on any one guy. It's like, ok, I'm here with a bunch of guys, I'm going to see them all as my brothers because that's how I can survive. I didn't really do any sexual weird stuff or try to come on to the guys. I just treated them like brothers. And like, distant brothers, older brothers maybe. Not the kind you rough and tumble with. Because they would get the wrong idea. So I just kind of went and did my thing and tried not to make waves.

Erica also noted that in dealing with clients with varying assumptions about her abilities because of her gender, she has chosen to focus on the male clients who respect her and come back to her as a guide year in and year out. She reflected on the positive side of dealing with these assumptions.

I think it's made me stronger in some ways and it made me more confident and it's made me choose to go with what I'm good at and that's like running my own trips where people can sign up if they want to be with me. The men who come with me on the trips know who I am and what kind of, what they're getting into. And the others, they don't have to come, that's fine.

Erica tended to justify why she would not be injured or killed when talking about issues related to death or injury on the mountain. Rather than focusing on what could go

wrong, she focused on why she would not meet the same fate. For instance, when her friend was killed while teaching a rock climbing course she was able to justify her own safety to herself.

But I always just think, well, I can tone it back. Or, I was thinking...she was a bit of a wildcard anyway. You think about the things that they do differently than you. Yeah, you think about oh, ok, well she wasn't, she kind of pushed herself differently than me, it wasn't a freak accident. She probably shouldn't have been soloing.

In addition, when she experienced her own accidents, she noted, "with your own close calls it's almost like negative reinforcement. You're like oh, the rock fell over there, it didn't hit me. I'm good." Erica also minimized her major accidents as "a few little incidents that I think smartened me up." Rather than dramatizing her experiences, she focused on them as learning moments instead.

#### *Social Support.*

Erica pointed to a number of social supports that have helped her in her pursuit of her career as a mountain guide. When first getting into the mountains, she pointed to joining the outdoor club at her university as a vital part of her success in getting into the outdoors. She talked about how learning with this group of male climbers, "gave me the confidence to go lead longer trips in the middle of nowhere and I think that's why I was able to start doing this expedition work because I knew I could go for three weeks." Within that group, the relationship she had with her boyfriend was also important in her development. She noted, "we'd kind of work together and I felt like I had support from him." After moving into her professional guiding career, Erica pointed to the how her connection to others helped her excel.

First, she discussed the mentors who helped her learn and grow within the profession. She described an early mentor:

I worked with [her] early on and she really gave me some work opportunities and [was] really super supportive and had good faith in me, so I felt like I wanted to help, I wanted to perform and help her out.

Erica also talked about how important it was throughout her career to always be “connecting and learning and meeting other women.” She described the importance of one of these relationships in a narrative she wrote about a climb: “Carie and I had been climbing partners for many years and knew how to move together safely by balancing our strengths.” In addition to the women she connected with, Erica pointed to the importance male mentors played in her career. One in particular “was someone who was just a very good teacher and really skilled and a natural and he was always supportive of me and he got me into the guides training courses.” Beyond mentors, Erica also cited the connection she had with her guiding company and clients as important in building her confidence.

Erica described just needing a break, a company that believed in her abilities as a guide. She found that match with the main company she guides for in that they wanted to help her grow and expand in her offerings. She recalled, “that’s how I got more involved with the [company] because they liked my ideas and they were willing to try.” When the guiding company offered a new climb because of Erica’s idea, she was excited when it filled. She described the importance of that successful trip.

When I advertised [that trip] with the [company] I thought well who’s going to come on this. Like I really wanted to climb that mountain and I advertised the trip and I had eight people sign up. And I thought, you know, these people know the mountain and they want to go and they’re supporting this idea and we went and climbed it and it was...a really good, a really good trip.

Later in her career, this type of acceptance from clients remained important for Erica. She told the story of a man who had attempted to summit Mt. Mustagata in China with a major guiding company and had a terrible experience and an unsuccessful summit bid. After deciding to try again, he contacted Erica to lead him and his group on the climb. She described her reaction:

He chose me, he chose me to be his guide and I thought well if men put the faith in me as a woman to go on these trips...they feel that I can organize something and then make the decisions to take care of them and safety...[and] also they kind of like [my] style, maybe I'm a little softer or more friendly...they can relate to me.

*Passion.*

Erica also continually refocused on her passion for the sport when asked what specifically had helped to make her successful. She knew from very early on that she was happy in the outdoors. She explained, "I loved the adventure and I loved just the idea of being out in the wild. It just clicked with me, something really clicked with me being out there walking around." When she was first learning the skills necessary to be a mountain guide, she broke down her motivation to improve quite simply:

I like to get to the top of things, so I decided if I want to get to the top of peaks, all kinds of peaks, I better get to be a better climber. So that motivated me to climb better so I could get up to better and harder peaks.

Erica later expressed how her "pure sense of adventure, just feeling part of the environment, that sense of well-being that you get when you go out there" kept drawing her back even in low moments. She later described how "I just liked the connection, the social connection and the connection to the mountains." Even in describing her guiding style, her passion for the outdoors came through:

I'm not a super big entertainer, so that's why I'm comfortable walking with people and doing things with people and I, I'm a true believer in that the outdoors will speak for itself, right? That I don't need to tell someone what they're getting out of their day. They will get it regardless. And I'm just there for the ride in a lot of ways.

Erica's mom also noticed her daughter's visible passion for the outdoors and the ways this helped her achieve her goals:

I think she just loved it so much and the avalanche course she took it twice. She said it's hard because she didn't pass the first time. And she just want[ed] it so badly that she did anything you know, even if it took her a long time to, you know.

*Focus on self.*

Another tool that proved valuable for Erica in her outdoor career was her ability to be self-aware and focus on her abilities in the outdoors. Erica described the outdoors as a "man's world" and quickly identified that being able to contribute was "important to me, learning the skills like how to read a map and that kind of thing." She described in a personal journal how focusing on finding her own style helped to build her confidence in working with those who make assumptions about her abilities: "It took me a while to do things my own way and develop my own style. I feel I can manage a group and keep them safe, regardless of how they feel about me." She recognized early on what her strengths and weaknesses in the outdoors were like after a trip to the Himalayas when she realized "it wasn't in the cards for me to do too much high altitude guiding." Or, early on, when she found that in rock climbing "I wasn't part of the elite, you know, the hardcore climbers, so I had to kind of deal with the fact that I'm just an ordinary climber, I'm not going to be a superstar." Recognizing her weaknesses allowed her to find her niche within the outdoors.

I thought I'm just going to do things that I'm good at. Like, that's what we do, right? You just say, oh, I'm going to do lower level hikes and walks because I really like it. And I'm going to choose friends that aren't too pushy or too good, because I found people that liked to do the easier hikes and walks. And, so I felt I...felt I've got to do it at a lower level and do what I can.

In addition to the hard skills necessary for her career, Erica came to recognize that she had to be herself as a guide as well. She noted that early in her career, "I was developing my own style" and wanting "to keep sharp and play the role" while doing so. Erica described how early on, she felt pressure to conform to the ways the men she worked with approached guiding, but that she knew that was not right for her

I was kind of like trying to find my own way of doing things. Like, there's pressure to be a certain way, right? A certain, like I was trying to figure out, should I be more directive, or should I be, tell more jokes. There's a pressure to act a certain way and it took me time to kind of figure out to be, a way to be myself and, um, do it my way without feeling the pressure to have to conform.

Recognizing this allowed her to eventually become "more relaxed and I've found my style and my way and I don't care [what] people [think]." Part of this journey was also determining what types of work she most enjoyed. After working as a heli-ski guide for a company she came to appreciate that "when I was in the summer work mode, I was running the trips and I was much happier."

*Pay it forward.*

Erica discussed how important it has become to her to be a mentor to guides who are just entering the game. She discussed how she takes guides, largely women, on as practicum guides on her trips with her to help them gain the experience necessary to successfully complete the guide's trainings. She described how she has helped a particular protégé: "I'm her mentor...I've taken her on trips with me to Peru and to Nepal

and I was teaching her...[she] come[s] on my trip and follow[s] my lead and learn[s] from me.” She described that for her, the process of becoming a mentor to others is organic. “You get connected to people and...you hang out with them and you talk about certain life issues and certain things. And...a few of them say, can I come on your trip?...and then I’ll try to make room for them.” Erica also described that for her, helping develop new guides is important and that she wants to do whatever she can to make them skilled, experienced guides. In discussing how important her work as a guides’ trainer is, she described her goals for those she works with.

The people I’m coaching these days are the ones on the guides’ courses and they’re getting better, but I want to help them develop that eye of making good decisions and seeing the right things and a lot of things all at once.

Erica described that in her early years learning the skills necessary to safely navigate in the mountains, a male guide she asked for help was not terribly helpful. “[He] would go, oh, just follow me and do what I do. How can you learn from that?” Because of experiences like this, Erica has made it a point to pass on her knowledge to new guides and to strive to do so in a way that is most beneficial to their learning.

**RQ3: Context.**

***Early socialization.***

Growing up, Erica was raised with her brother by a single mother. Erica was drawn to the outdoors and physical activity from the start. Her mom explained, “Well, she was kind of, can’t sit at home is one thing. Always has to be on the streets...She’s always been very active.” Her mom remembered that Erica and her friends played by “chasing each other or hiding and looking for each other.” Erica’s father died when she

was just three years old and her mother focused her free time on going dancing and playing darts at a local club. While Erica's career would be marked with perseverance and a drive that would help her overcome constraints, her mother remembered her younger years in a different way. In describing the activities Erica was involved with in school she described a less committed Erica.

She signed up, she wanted to learn bowling, but I think she realized that everybody else was a little better than her, she quit halfway through. And then she signed up to, she wanted to learn painting, like drawing things like a painter. She quit that too.

Her mom also felt that her main influences came from outside of the home. Erica's mom noted, "I always thought that children rather listen to their friends than the parents" and that her main influences were "her friends, I guess. They went outdoor, skiing and she kind of get with that and she liked that." In line with this, Erica's mom noted that whoever introduced her to the outdoors, it certainly was not her: "It wasn't me for sure. And none of my friends, really was like skiers or climbers or who knows what."

Erica described knowing early on that she loved the outdoors and that was a large part of what drew her into guiding, explaining her "pure sense of adventure, just feeling part of the environment, that sense of well-being that you get when you go out there" was a main drive. Her mom also recalled this focus, "when she graduated from grade 12, she always kind of voiced that she's not going to get cooped up in an office. She liked the outdoors." Erica was also allowed to follow whatever passions she had. Her mom explained,

I left it up to her. I didn't really push her to take, I didn't even [push her to go to college]. It was hard to believe that she wanted to go to a university. Some kids are, you know, get pushed to go and she wanted to learn always.

Her mom described the pivotal moment in Erica's life when she put herself on the path to following her dream:

She took the first two years of [college] here...and then she says they have a better outdoor program in [that university]. So she wanted to go there. She like, I think she already knew she wanted to do some kind of outdoor work.

While her mom admittedly did not introduce Erica to the mountains, her actions arguably worked against Erica's venture into that career path. For instance, Erica described her mom's reaction to her participation in the mountaineering trips with her guy friends.

[My mom] didn't understand the fact that I wanted to, like even dating or something, that I wanted to pay for my share of the meal or pay for my share of the gas or pay for my share of the group stuff because she felt those guys should be treating me, taking me out because I'm the girl. Like it's a date or something. It was always like that kind of thing, social events. She didn't understand my feeling that I wanted to be an equal there in that group. And she'd always buy me fancy clothes, why don't you ever get dressed up?

Erica's mom also recognized that she sometimes wished her daughter had chosen a different career. When asked what advice she would give moms of girls who want to be mountain guides, she answered, "I would tell them to try to find a little safer job. Every time she goes off some cliff you know they're talking about crevasses and some friend got lost and some friend didn't come back, you know." Even so, Erica was never directly discouraged from pursuing her dreams. Her mom explained, "I was the type who never would have tried to change her ways, you know. Never really tried to, oh I don't want you to do that or something. I always thought they know better."

***Man's world.***

Erica found her path into the mountains when she joined the outdoor club at her university, leading her to being surrounded by and participating almost solely with men. Driven to join the club precisely because none of her girl friends wanted to participate in the same outdoor pursuits as her, Erica recalls learning, participating, and maneuvering through this “man’s world.” Erica described existing within this gendered world.

I got out from that Mt. Baker climb, or never even invited. Although I begged them to go. I didn’t understand that. I just didn’t understand it. And they just said they wanted a boys’ trip. So and I said, fine...It was kind of like I was the extra wheel sometimes. So, I was there because my boyfriend was there, but I wanted to go beyond that. It wasn’t like I didn’t want to feel that the only reason I was there was because my boyfriend was there. I wanted to feel like I merited being, but often I was in the back. But, I didn’t have to cook or do any extra chores that they didn’t do. We all did that. I wanted to be an equal and I wasn’t always treated as an equal in terms of strength or taking the lead.

Erica also discussed dealing with “humps where you feel like you don’t belong there”, in the “man’s world.” She continued on how this impacted her path.

I guess there is a certain determination there and a certain kind of stubbornness, too, that I feel that I belong there as much as anyone else and even though, I think for me it took me a while to figure out my own way of being. Like, when you’re working at a ski lodge with a bunch of guys, at the beginning, at the earliest stages, I was kind of like trying to find my own way of doing things. Like, there’s pressure to be a certain way, right? A certain, like I was trying to figure out, should I be more directive, or should I be, tell more jokes. There’s a pressure to act a certain way and it took me time to kind of figure out...a way to be myself and do it my way without feeling the pressure to have to conform, I guess to kind of a different way.

In addition to feeling like she had to conform to this “man’s world” as a guide, she also felt the pressure on her physical performance. She recalled times,

I didn’t perform up to par. But then you go, ok, this is me, this is what I can do. These are my strengths that take a while to figure that out. Because I could never be as good as some of the other guys or, they’re different than me. That’s all.

Aware that her outdoors experience has been set within this gendered norm, Erica was able to reflect on the impact it has had on her career.

Well I think (the gender stuff) has always been there. It's part of the game.... I've had definite struggles with it, but it's never really turned me back...I think it's made me stronger in some ways and it made me more confident and it's made me choose to go with what I'm good at...

### **Cross Case Analysis**

#### **RQ1: The experience.**

The first research question focused on the unique experience each athlete had in reaching her professional level of involvement in outdoor adventure recreation. As a result, this research question remained a focus only at the individual level and was not included in the cross-case analysis.

#### **RQ 2: Constraints and negotiation strategies.**

Although experiencing the journey towards professionalism in four very unique ways, clear themes emerged encompassing the types of constraints and negotiation strategies faced and utilized by the athletes. Three clear themes arose in all four individual cases: a sense of fear, a lack of confidence, and gender relations/assumptions of others.

#### ***Constraints.***

##### ***Sense of fear.***

Every athlete spoke of being affected by death in her career. For Hillary, death impacted her directly and persistently “over a black, multi-year period” in her career. Losing her brother as well as multiple mountain guide friends and colleagues, some at the same time, caused her to be “really phased about mountain guiding” going as far as

largely stepping away from the sport for a few years. Lindsay related her own personal experience of a near-death accident at a young age. “That was...probably [my] lowest point because that was one of the most intimidating times...where I actually...was like...oh I’m too young to die. I can’t die, I’m not going to die kayaking.” Following this incident, Lindsay was reticent to return to whitewater for some time. Ashley, too, reported how the fear of death impacted her career. After nearly being killed in a crevasse accident with her husband while climbing in Europe, Ashley remembered thinking “we were lucky to be alive after that” and she thought “maybe I’m not going to get into guiding, I’ll just do something else...totally switch my whole everything and just do something different.” Similarly, Erica described a serious crevasse accident where she was badly injured. She described the impact of the incident, “You know that kind of incident will stay with you for years...you just get this cold sweat when you think about going on the ice...you relive it, like physically almost and mentally.”

For some of the athletes, fear arose in relation to their particular sport. Lindsay, for instance, discussed the fear of the unknown in kayaking as a large stumbling block for her. She recognized early in her career being “very timid” and that this fear:

Still frustrates me...you go out and you see all these people having an amazing time and you see these people that aren’t as good of boaters as you and they’re doing something that you just can’t quite get yourself to do...it’s just like you want it so bad, but you can’t physically get yourself to do it.

Ashley also reported similar fears noting that early on, learning the sport was “kind of scary in the beginning, just not knowing how to do things...” These fears ranged from concern over the terrain (“Are we going to make it, am I going to be able to ski down this or climb down this?”) to a fear of rock climbing. In discussing her fears of rock climbing,

Ashley described, “It can be paralyzing...I’m up on the rock and I’m like oh God, I’m going to fall, I’m going to fall...” Erica described the sense of fear she felt in a narrative she wrote following a 2011 climb:

I tried to get a few hours of sleep but my mind was racing. Were we being overly ambitious and unrealistic? If something went seriously wrong there was no backup—at our distance from base the radio was virtually useless.

For some athletes, such as Hillary, this fear was rooted in failing clients. This fear manifested as being concerned about making a bad decision that might hurt or kill someone relying upon her. Likewise, Ashley felt the weight of her responsibilities as a guide, “I’m responsible for everyone. And so if anything happens to anyone, it’s my responsibility...I ha[ve] to walk that fine line of ok, is this too dangerous...?” Ashley knew that by making a bad call, “you could end up killing somebody.” Lindsay reported this fear in terms of failing to please her father. This directly impacted her early years in kayaking and continues today.

When I was younger...boating with my dad, a lot of it was to make him happy. He wanted it so bad you could just see it in his face...Which is probably why I was so timid with it in the beginning. It was a lot of outside pressure and me wanting to please him.

Erica described a slightly different fear, but still one that she felt may impact her success in her career. While surrounded by jovial, extraverted male guides, she realized, “I’m not a big joke teller, I’m not a huge storyteller...I’m a[n]...introverted guide.” Because of this, she reflected, “I was afraid to be myself” as a guide.

*Lack of confidence.*

All four athletes discussed how a lack of confidence had impacted their involvement in the outdoors through all stages of their participation. First, they discussed

how confidence issues impacted their earliest stages of participation. For Hillary, unsure of exactly how to pursue mountaineering, “I had confidence issues, [I] didn’t really know where to go and what to do.” Likewise, when Ashley described her earliest years in the sport she discussed always wanting “to be better than I was, like sooner. Not being content with my progress and...always wanted to be better...its not quite good enough...” In reflecting on her early years, Erica wished she had been “more confident and [hadn’t] take[n] things so personally.”

Once Hillary had gained experience, but before she turned professional, she focused on how her confidence issues limited her development. When climbing with others with less experience, she noted, “I didn’t do anything more involved because I didn’t feel experienced enough...I was more experienced than [people I was climbing with], but I didn’t want to lead them because I wasn’t experienced enough.” For Ashley, this lack of confidence reared its head when she was first entering the professional ranks. She talked about not having the confidence “to take on the leading of a group fully myself...having the confidence in myself that I could take on the group myself and do it...was probably the most challenging for me.” Erica also talked about how early in her professional career, “my least favorite part was probably just being intimidated over things. I really didn’t like that, sitting and watching other people do things that weren’t as good as me and be totally comfortable with it.”

Even at her current level of involvement, Hillary still finds that she lacks confidence in certain situations. In discussing how she’s viewed in the United States she remarked, “When I’m in the US, I’m frickin’ no one, I’m no one. I’m not from there, I

talk funny, I don't have a great climbing resume." Erica mirrored this lack of confidence. She noted turning down leadership positions because of her lack of confidence: "I was probably stronger than I thought I was...I should have taken the leadership role a little bit more, but I wasn't all that keen on competing with those guys." For Lindsay, this lack of confidence today comes out when river running. She described that while her brother can "see the line" and know he can hit the line, her confidence is not so high. She explained, "I just don't respond the same way. I'm like, I know I can do it, but what if I don't."

*Gender relations/assumptions of others.*

Another set of constraints that emerged after completing the cross case analysis were those relating to gender relations and the assumptions of others the athletes faced in their journeys. The type and severity of these assumptions/relations varied from athlete to athlete, but all faced them in one way or another. Hillary commented that in her experience, "I think it's harder to be a female guide than a male guide. The numbers demonstrate it. It's harder for women...You have to be a little bit better to be half as good..." Lindsay reflected on a similar experience learning to kayak. When she would be frustrated learning new moves in her kayak, people would tell her "Don't get frustrated with yourself, you're not as strong as the boys out there."

While Hillary and Lindsay reflected more on the climate of gender assumptions, Ashley and Erica had very specific examples of situations in which they faced assumptions of others because of their gender. Ashley dealt with male clients who explicitly told her that "in my country, women don't matter" while another explained to her that it is "bullshit" for women to be guiding. Instead, their "power [is] to have babies

and they need to be reproducing [because] the population's declining because women aren't having enough babies." Erica reported similar experiences with clients describing a trip on which a client refused to ski with her because she was a woman and another group who nearly mutinied because they simply did not trust that she could navigate in whiteout conditions. Additionally, Erica described a similar attitude from fellow guides, including a run-in with a European guide in Nepal. She described the result when she approached the guide for information: "I started talking to him trying to get information from him and he started yelling at me. He dissed me, but he was also angry...he didn't want to tell me anything because he thought I was some idiot."

Lindsay's experience was a bit different in that, for her, the biggest constraints she faced were the assumptions of other women about her abilities. She explained that when she was first entering the sport, "women were pushing the 'girls can't do this the same'" agenda. She described how she perceived very little support from her fellow female athletes at this time as well: "A lot of [women] were protective over their spots on the US team...You didn't get the feeling that they wanted me to get good or anything like that." Even today at professional competitions, she described how other female boaters would have lots of "negative energy" and "if I have a good ride, I'm taking away [their chance to get the next round], I'm taking everything the other person did away...Unless they're on the top spot then they're not fired up. It's unfortunate." Hillary faced similar issues with other female guides who were competitive with her in a detrimental way. She described an early experience guiding in India with another woman guide. She recalled,

Because she wasn't super secure herself with her own skills, she would often counteract decisions I was making, or do something different. And so, sort of make me look bad and I found that very, very difficult to cope with.

She continued, "it wasn't that she wanted to put me down, it's that she wanted to bring herself up...and if that meant stepping on my shoulders then so be it."

Hillary also spoke about her boss at a guiding company and the assumptions he had about some of his older guides. She described, "our boss seems to have a real respect for hiring these young fit guys to guide people who really want to go for it." Even with a highly experienced guiding staff with a decade or more of experience each, she has found that he shies away from assigning them to trips.

He seems to give an undue amount of respect to these people because they're young and fit. And I'm kind of like, well, he doesn't necessarily respect professionalism or, you know, that doesn't really say they're really professional or have expertise, does it? It's just, they're young and fit. And so it's putting sort of undue kind of shout outs to them, bums me out.

Just as sure as the women were when initially described stigma they faced, so too did each of them justify the difference in treatment they received. Hillary in reflecting on a former boss who she had identified as treating her differently because she was a woman, backed off of her initial description. She commented, "I don't know that it was discrimination...I thought at the time I was being discriminated against, but I don't think I was. Arrogant, I think I was being a bit arrogant." In line with this, when reflecting again on the boss who she felt was choosing youth over experience when assigning guides to trips, she noted, "I think it's more like, maybe they're just encouraging those young guys to come up through the ranks." Lindsay also justified the different treatment she received as a woman. She described what she thought was going on,

I think the guys had lower expectations so that, it wasn't discrimination...you know everyone expects lower when you're in the women's class. And that's because it is lower...It's not discrimination, but just a mindset towards the women's class I guess.

She went on to explain that she thought these lower expectations may just be a motivation tactic: "I think it's just guys way of trying to drive the women. If you say a girl can't do something, then they're way more driven." Erica described some of her negative interactions with males as "kind of a gag thing...Guys are guys. I was never really hard on the guys for that really because I knew I would get something like that." Ashley also touched on this in noting that, after telling the story of the client who told her "women don't matter" she noted, "In some ways he was trying to justify it by saying I'm sorry I'm treating you this way, but this is how we do it in my country, kind of thing."

#### *Negotiation strategies.*

Cross case analysis also revealed similar negotiation strategies utilized by the athletes in throughout their careers. These strategies included relying on social support, the development and utilization of resiliency strategies, and unwavering passion.

#### *Reliance on social support.*

When describing the ways they were able to negotiate various constraints in the outdoors, all of the athletes discussed how important various types of social supports had been in their success. First, the athletes described the importance of the mentors. Hillary, who knew she wanted to get into the mountains and work toward becoming a guide, had difficulties figuring out how to learn the requisite skills and break into the professional ranks. Throughout her career, she found that a few well-placed mentors helped her break

through. A female mountain guide she met in Canada played a pivotal role in Hillary's career:

[She] gave me heaps of really good support. She got me to lead as a guide training exercise and she said you're super solid, you're really good... And I had never had anybody literally let me train with them like that...

Likewise, when she was having a difficult time planting roots professionally, a guiding company operator who recognized her talent reached out to her. "[He] said, look, we would like for you to come and work for us and just be solid....that sort of settled me down...a bit." Ashley also described the importance of mentors in her journey. After a nearly fatal accident on the mountain, Ashley discussed the importance of a mentor in helping her get back onto the glacier: "She was the first person that I saw afterwards and the first person that I told the whole story to...she was there to...comfort us and...help us process through it..." A new mom, Ashley also discussed how important other guides who are moms have been in her decision to have kids and her transition back into guiding. "I've got my eye on these ladies and I'm like emailing them and talking to them asking how do you manage it, how do you keep guiding and balance having a kid?" Erica also relied on mentors in navigating her way through the professional ranks. For her, an early mentor helped motivate her and build her confidence:

I worked with [her] early on and she really gave me some work opportunities and [was] really super supportive and had good faith in me, so I felt like I wanted to help, I wanted to perform and help her out.

Another mentor later in her career, "was someone who was just a very good teacher and really skilled...and he was always supportive of me and he got me into the guides training courses."

Another main social support the athletes discussed was their friends and family. For Lindsay, the support she has received from her family has been the single most important factor in her success. Her parents have supported her to the point that kayaking can truly be the number one priority. She described why this support has been so important. “[Because] my parents’ lives revolved around kayaking...I was able to make it a priority to the point where [even] school didn’t matter.” In addition, Lindsay described how important her parent’s support had been in dealing with the assumptions others had about her skills. When others would question her ability because of her gender, Lindsay’s parents stepped in: “...My parents were pretty quick like, you can do anything you can set your mind to. There’s no physical limitations...” Hillary recalled a specific instance when, after her brother’s death, her dad helped her get back into the mountains and continue following her guiding career. She recalled, “My father sat me down and was like, you can’t live half a life, you’ve got to follow your dreams.” More concretely, Hillary, who split her time between two countries, relied on her friends to help her overcome logistical constraints: “I relied on others to...leave my cars at their place or pick me up from the airport.” For Ashley, the social support she received from her husband was central in her success as they moved from amateurs to professionals together in the mountains. She recalled the importance of this partnership: “Ames and I were always doing it together so I always had a partner... We were at the same level learning it all together...so that part made it real comfortable.” Similarly, Erica relied on friends in getting into the mountains and learning the skills to become a guide. She described that taking trips with this group of friends “gave me the confidence to go lead

longer trips in the middle of nowhere...I think that's why I was able to start doing this expedition work."

A final type of social support the athletes discussed is that of clients. For Hillary, who stepped away from guiding for a few years has dealt with confidence issues. One thing that has helped her work through those issues is the feedback she has received from clients. She relayed the story of clients she had worked with recently,

I met the women [and] they were like, oh, we hear it's a really big deal to get to have you as our guide...When we rang up, they said you were available and that you're almost never available and that we were really lucky to have you...I was like, seriously? Wow. Just when you think you're sort of exiting stage left...these sort of glowing moments...gosh, someone values me...so I think I'll go on for a little longer.

Erica also described the value in positive feedback from clients. After being hired by a man who had attempted a summit with a large guiding company and had not only failed, but also had a terrible experience, Erica recollected her reaction.

He chose me, he chose me to be his guide and I thought well if men put the faith in me as a woman to go on these trips...they feel that I can organize something and...make the decisions to take care of them and safety...

*Resiliency strategies.*

The next theme that emerged among the experiences of the participants was that of their development and implementation of an assortment of resiliency strategies that helped them overcome the constraints they faced. The range of these strategies was broad and helped the athletes deal with every type of constraint they faced.

First, for Hillary, mom to a young child and primary caretaker of her father who has Parkinson's, finding ways to balance her schedule with her husband's became critical in her continued participation in guiding. She talked about how this balance has been

“...difficult to achieve and I’ve had to get help... I just have to tell myself, one thing at a time.” She also detailed how she has had to focus her schedule to take advantage of the times her son, Nash, is in school. In detailing her preparation for an upcoming rock guides course, she described, “once I put my mind to things and Nash is at school 30 hours per week, there’s 30 hours a week I can [prepare for the course].”

The athletes described the importance of identifying strategies for building their confidence in the outdoors rather than allowing a lack of confidence to derail their goals. For Hillary, this meant focusing on her accomplishments and experience in a mind over matter approach. “I’d just tell myself to keep believing in myself” and focus on “the mileage I’ve had and then *recognize* the mileage I’ve had.” For instance, Hillary reflected on an early work experience with a colleague with whom she climbed numerous peaks noting “I got a lot of confidence out of that summer... living at [the mountain] village.” For Ashley, working through confidence issues meant repositioning her thinking. When she described dealing with fears she faced in rock climbing, she overcame them by “learning how to... breathe deep and envision something positive instead of seeing the falling. Like seeing the next move happening and breathing well... learning those kinds of things took time and a lot of mental effort.”

The athletes also discussed refusing to give in to the gender stereotypes. Hillary described how this effort was focused on pushing herself harder than she sometimes should have to prove she was equal to her male counterparts.

“I was always quite gung-ho like that and quite resolved... I was always trying to keep up. Like, I was fierce in my efforts. I hurt myself in numerous occasions you know and picked up off the road in ambulances and things like that. Stupid, but

you know I was kind of, I wouldn't buy into that girl boy thing. I reckon that was one of my strengths.”

Similarly, Ashley described how she dealt with the attitudes of her clients and their beliefs about her based on her gender. In negotiating this interpersonal constraint, Ashley “just kind of ignored it and then it made it easier for them to...eventually ignore it too...If I just keep trying to explain, give good feedback and teach the best that I could...they would listen better.” For Erica, dealing with these gender assumptions meant simply working hard. Additionally, Erica described minimizing any issues between her and her male partners. To do this, she was very considerate with how she interacted with them, “I’m going to see them all as my brothers because that’s how I can survive...And like distant brothers...not the kind you rough and tumble with because they would get the wrong idea.”

A salient feature of some of the athletes was how self-aware and tuned in they were and how this allowed them to work through constraints. For instance, Lindsay, surrounded as a young adolescent by women who were self-limiting, quickly identified the fallacy of their beliefs. Rather than buying into the notion that female boaters were less capable than male boaters, “I definitely learned that any limitations that there are, are limitations that you impose on yourself.” Another striking example from Lindsay’s experience was her realization that any time in her boat on the water was beneficial to her career regardless of how frustrated she may get or how low her confidence for a specific move might be.

Bad session, good session, doesn't matter. As long as you keep training yourself, keep trying. It always, in the end, even if you've been trying it for 2 years,

eventually it'll click....Every bad session is...still just learning. Every time you mess up, it's one more thing not to do type thing.

Ashley discussed how important building her self-awareness was when she was working to overcome constraints she faced in her rock climbing. She described “identifying these beliefs that I’m not good enough...Where does that come from and how do I deal with that in my life? How do I move past that? ...When I can identify it, then I can deal with it.” Erica detailed how being self-aware benefitted her in her early climbing days. Self-conscious because she knew when she went on trips with a group of males, including her boyfriend, the perception was that “I was there because my boyfriend was there, but I wanted to go beyond that...I wanted to feel like I merited being there.” So to achieve that, Erica described how she would “gobble down my lunch and take off and go” to be in the lead and “work hard and get stronger...[and learn]” so that she could be an equal contributor and earn the respect of her climbing partners. Erica also detailed how her self-awareness of her strengths and weakness as a climber helped her find her way in the mountains. This was important not only in the technical aspect of her climbing (“it wasn’t in the cards for me to do too much high altitude guiding”), but also in helping her find her style as a guide. Once she recognized the type of guide that she was comfortable being and “developing [her] own style”, she was able to build her confidence as a guide. She described feeling “more relaxed [now that] I’ve found my style and my way and I don’t care [what] people [think].”

One final type of resiliency strategy described by both Erica and Lindsay was learning to deal with the fear of accidents or death. Erica described justifying her safety to herself whenever she would hear of an accident. In recounting her reaction to a friend’s

death she described, “You think about the things that they do differently than you. You think about oh, ok, well...she kind of pushed herself differently than me, it wasn’t a freak accident. She probably shouldn’t have been soloing.” Likewise, Lindsay described how she dealt with death, viewing it both negatively and positively.

You judge it a little negatively. You know, they shouldn’t have been there, this shouldn’t have happened. Why didn’t they bring this, but, I...remind myself that there are so many other ways of people to go in this world and just be fired up for those people that they got to continue to do what they loved...

For Hillary, she described overcoming her fear of an accident following her brother’s death. She noted in a 2004 interview:

My full commitment to guiding came from recognizing that I could be relatively safe in the mountains rather than doing hard routes hanging it all out on something gnarly. If I pursued guiding, I’d be the chief decision maker, have to exercise judgment to maximize everyone’s experience, while keeping them safe.

*Unwavering passion.*

The final theme related to negotiation strategies that emerged from the cross case analysis was how each athlete’s passion for the outdoors was consistently a cornerstone in dealing with the constraints they faced. Hillary described how her passion kept her on a guiding path no matter what stumbling blocks she encountered.

I just had a really strong sense of adventure. And really into experiencing different things. I was really kind of chameleon like that. I would just, just willing to kind of try new things. And see where life would take me kind of thing. I knew it would take me, I’d stay outdoors, but I was kind of random. It wasn’t like I was always in the mountains, but I was always trying to be in the mountains.

When describing in a later interview what kept her coming back to guiding through the difficult times, she stated, “Seriously, it’s like a calling. I honestly, I’ve tried to fight it so bad...little bit by little bit, I pull myself back to the guiding life.”

Similarly, Lindsay described how her passion for kayaking literally gets her out of bed each day.

[I love] being excited about something. I just loved waking up and having something to be excited about...Kayaking was my drive and anything that got in the way of that wasn't as important and so that was one reason I really loved...waking up fired up and going to sleep feeling...better about myself than I did when I woke up.

Additionally, Lindsay spoke about her passion for the sport snowballed and helped drive her forward in competition.

[I] just loved being in the water, but the difference is that once you're in the water, still having fun, still goofing around...you give yourself an end goal for the session. Today I really want to work on this, so it's like an added drive to get into the water....The drive was just, I was improving fast and I wanted to see how fast I could improve and that was super exciting.

Lindsay's passion was also evidenced when she recalled, "stay[ing] up past dark paddling" to learn a new move mid-competition. Ashley also spoke about how her passion for the outdoors helped her along her journey.

I loved being outside, loved being out in the beauty of it and the mountains...Just the adventure. You felt like explorers, adventurers, you know. I was just going somewhere I've never been before and just trying to figure it all out.

When dealing with lagging confidence, she described how, once again, her passion kept her going:

[I] didn't know if I could make it, you know and we figured it out and I'd always be super excited....I think it was the exhilaration of it and the beauty of it, you know, just made me feel so alive.

Later, when again discussing generally what drove her, kept her going through difficult times, Ashley described her love of the outdoors.

I really feel that being outside and being in the wilderness was a big just, grounding force for me, I think probably the emotional experience and the

psychological experience were a big part of [my success] as well. Offering myself a challenge and working through it.

Erica also relied on her passion for the mountains in helping her deal with the various constraints she faced along her journey. Her passion came through clearly when she reflected on a recent climb in a journal:

Exhausted, yet elated, we admired the breath-taking panorama around us. From the top of the twelfth-highest peak in Canada we had stunning views in every direction. We gazed spellbound at horizons of ice, snow, mountains, and utter remoteness on all sides.

Erica also fell back on this passion when describing how she dealt with the tough times in her career. She recounted, “I just liked the connection, the social connection and the connection to the mountains.” She also described how her “pure sense of adventure, just feeling part of the environment, that sense of well-being that you get when you go out there” helped her in negotiation constraints with which she was faced. Hillary, perhaps, captured this passion most poignantly in an article she wrote for a climbing magazine:

My top days at work are the days where someone tells me they just had the best day of their life or that the trip exceeded their expectations or, in tears, they tell me that the top of this climb has been a great dream...my life is richer for these shared alpine experiences. It is a calling and perhaps for those who listen to the calling, there isn't any other way.

*Paying it forward.*

One additional finding that came out of the single and cross case analysis was the notion of paying it forward. While this theme may not directly fit into the category of the negotiation strategies the athletes themselves used in their pursuit of careers in the outdoors, they do speak to the help the athletes are providing to up-and-coming guides in negotiating potential constraints to success. The athletes recognized the difficulties they

faced as they attempted to enter into and increase professionalization in their sport and have taken steps to help up-and-coming athletes succeed. For Hillary and Erica, their focus has turned largely to helping formally train new guides. Hillary described that in her early years she felt like she lacked the formal mentorship and feedback that she saw so many other guides receiving. In response to this, she works to provide effective feedback in the trainings she leads today. She explained:

I see it now on the exams and stuff and I tell people that I've seen it because I reckon I could have done with hearing that. I often reflect now that I'm an examiner, I often look back and on what I felt was lacking in the feedback in my early days and make sure to give that feedback.

Beyond the formal trainings, Hillary described how important it was to her personally to help other women become professional guides. She noted, "I mentor other women so that there will be other women. So I don't have to be working with guys all the time."

Erica also described how at her current point in her career, she is able to help young guides learn. One way that she does this is by taking practicum guides along on her trips. She described how these connections arise organically, but that she is excited to take advantage of them.

You get connected to people and...you hang out with them and you talk about certain life issues and certain things. And...a few of them say, can I come on your trip? ...And then I'll try to make room for them.

Erica also recounted how some of her early learning experiences had been frustrating because fellow climbers would tell her, "oh, just follow me and do what I do" when what she needed was more formal instruction. As such, she today strives to be a strong teacher and working to "help them develop that eye of making good decisions and seeing the right things and a lot of things all at once."

Ashley has also been focused on passing her knowledge and skills on, but in a different way. Describing that the clients she works with are largely adults with financial means, Ashley is seeking to expand the outdoors to a wider audience.

I hope that I can create some fun stuff in my own community...I've been gone so much travelling all over that I've never really focused on...what can I do to serve my own community here and so now that I've going to be here more, I'm really excited to develop programs here where I can work with people year over year and create something. One thing about my profession so far is that I've accessed people that generally have a lot of money because the trips have been quite expensive. So I'm like, if I create some community programs, I can do stuff for much cheaper and get the average person into climbing or into backcountry skiing.

In addition, Ashley relied heavily on yoga in dealing with the physical difficulties she has faced in her career. Because of this, she wants to spread the reach of yoga and what she sees as its positive connection to outdoor sports to as many people as possible. She described being “really excited to combine [yoga and outdoor sports] and try to access people in my community and even create some charity type programs where I can access people of different economic brackets.”

Lindsay also touched on this theme of paying it forward describing how her main focus has been on helping raise the bar for all female boaters by pushing them to learn new moves and reach new levels of abilities. She discussed acting informally as a coach to many of the other professional boaters even though they are her direct competition at events. In addition to helping other professional kayakers, Lindsay also described how she often helps younger girls get comfortable paddling.

Most of the time it's their dad's kayak, they're nervous. They really want to run this river, but they're not quite confident doing it. A lot of times that's where I come and say oh I'll take you down this little part right here. The trick is to be the distraction as far as when they're on the river. Instead of them being intimidated

by the next rapid, the next rapid you just kind of, you don't let them know where they're at in the river. You just make sure they're having fun the whole time before you know they're at the takeout. And they're like what about that rapid, oh, we already did it. So I definitely do a lot more coaching as far as that skill level and mindset. I'm the confidence booster for the parents that paddle, but can't get their daughter in, for sure.

By helping to get more girls comfortable paddling, Lindsay feels that she can open up the world of professional kayaking to a wider audience. In building these relationships, she also works to inform young female boaters about local competitions and encourages them to get involved in the sport competitively. Doing so, she hopes, will help to continue to grow the sport among girls because, while not a constraint she faced, Lindsay recognizes that exposure is one of the biggest issues for getting more young girls in the sport.

### **RQ 3: Context.**

The contextual and structural factors that influenced the journey of each of the athletes were unique enough that the findings of the cross-case analysis were limited. This is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5. While Lindsay has a father who is a professional athlete, Erica's father died when she was very young, Ashley's died while she was in middle school, and Hillary's, while supportive, was not an outdoorsman. Lindsay began participating in kayaking nearly from the time she could walk, while Ashley, Hillary, and Erica did not find the mountains until college, though under very different circumstances. Lindsay and Ashley had constant and consistent companions in the outdoors while Hillary struggled to find her way in the outdoors, often lacking partners, and Erica had to fight hard to maintain her place within her peer group, sometimes being left out of trips. While the contexts within which each athlete found her way to the elite level of her sport vary widely, there is one inescapable thread that

connects each one. They all had to rely upon men, throughout their careers, in order to be successful. In Erica's words, the outdoors is a "man's world", one in which to participate, all needed men at some point in their career to help them get into or increase their professionalism in the sport. For Erica, without the group of men she met through the outdoors club in college, she would not have had the early pivotal experiences and gained the experience and confidence she needed to pursue a guiding career. In Ashley's experience, her main amateur climbing partner was her boyfriend and it was this relationship that she identified as critical in learning the skills she needed in the mountains. Lindsay's father was not only a main motivation for getting into a kayak, but was also her main teacher and mentor. Hillary, who felt she lacked guidance and mentorship pointed to critical relationships with male guides as keys to her success. Her earliest experience on her ski mountaineering trip in India as well as the pivotal season she worked in search and rescue and gained confidence in the mountains were possible because of two male climbers with whom she worked. Each athlete described the reality of the outdoors as a "man's world."

Each athlete described that she does not see the outdoors as a place where women should shy away from participating with men. Erica described her view on gender in the outdoors.

I don't see it as gender specific, mountaineering. And I think the learning maybe for some people is better, is easier for a woman to be without some guys around. But generally, I've seen lots of coed trips that are super successful. And I've never pushed the women to go on their own because I like the element of bringing a guy and the guys seem to like the element of bringing a woman.

Erica goes as far as to not only encourage coed trips, but to actively avoid women's only trips:

I don't run the women's programs because I believe that the outdoors, I've always learned to do it together with guys... Through the early career it was all guys and me and I would just be one of the gang.

Ashley mirrored this point in noting,

I've only done a few things that were just all women and it was really fun. But I've been like, I've always been the type of person to have a lot of guy friends and...I'm just going to keep it coed.

Lindsay's experience with kayaking has always been coed, learning from her father and kayaking with her brother. As a competitive kayaker, she has also made it a clear goal to simply be the best kayaker not the best *female* kayaker:

You can compare yourself to all the other junior girls, but then you'll only ever be the best junior girl. Whereas, if you compete against yourself, then you're always working to be the best that you can be, period. Not the best man, not the best female it doesn't matter.

Hillary also noted that while a guiding company she works for tend to give her more female clients, she prefers "to keep it quite balanced" recognizing the benefit of mixed sex groups in the outdoors.

Athletes also discussed that the gender context that pervades the outdoors is present more broadly in society and that may be keeping some women from ever venturing into the outdoors. Erica went on to discuss the outside social gender forces that may keep women from getting outside.

Like expectations for all of us...if we go into the mountains alone, who's going to take care of your dog? or your boyfriend? Who's going to take care of your children? Well you're the one supposed to be taking care. So I think we haven't wrapped our minds around the idea that we can leave our families or loved ones with the other half. And I think that's changing, you know. It just kind of bothers

me that adventure is seen as male exclusive. I don't understand...to me it doesn't seem like, it's not either or.

Erica also noted that one component of breaking into this man's world is helping to reshape the expectations of women in a broader sense: "I think you have to go beyond that block of the woman as having a certain role in society." Ashley reinforced this notion of broader gender roles impacting the success of women in the outdoors and how women may be limiting themselves.

Society's perceptions of men vs. women has something to do with [why women participate at lower rates]. And, women's perception of themselves....So it's definitely...out there, but I think we change that by trying to overcome our own limitations.

While each of the athletes felt that the outdoors should not be a guy only or a girl only pursuit, they also acknowledged the benefits of recognizing this gendered context within which these sports exist. Erica noted that because of the heavily male nature of the outdoors, female leadership and female companionship may be beneficial to women.

I think they feel that [female guides] can relate to them better, and you probably can, right? You can understand when someone is a little more timid or not feeling good about learning something. Or awkward learning something that they don't feel as embarrassed and you can understand. That, yeah, they're not coordinated or whatever, or they're not comfortable doing something and they feel like they can just be more themselves when you're around and like, is that the empathy that a woman has to a woman right...I think for a woman, a woman role model is really important. They can emulate you and go, ok, yeah, it works for you. I'm going to try being like you or working with some of your strong skills.

Similarly, Ashley described how not only should women be supporting each other, but need to take a closer look at themselves and what they can do, personally, to succeed.

I really think that...if women can support each other, that is huge. And also realizing what is our own mindset. How do I hold myself back? And that can be really helpful because sometimes it is society and it's like...you can take a guy

and a girl and change the name and people will have a different perception on the story.

Lindsay's mom also touched on this point in reflecting on her daughter's career describing that if girls want to kayak, they need to do so with everyone, not just other females: "Don't think that you're going to find a group of girls to make it easier. Go with what you have even if it's a bunch of adults, but the experiences will be good ones."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how professional female outdoor adventure recreation athletes have navigated their way to a professional level of participation and performance in their sport and in what specific contexts their experiences were set. The results indicate that these athletes faced similar constraints to those identified for amateur women. In addition, the athletes relied upon a wide variety of negotiation strategies. This section will provide a more in depth discussion of these constraints and negotiation strategies, the context of the athletes' journeys, and implications for practice.

#### **Summary of Findings**

The findings suggest that the women in this study generally shared in common three types of constraints: fear, a lack of confidence, and gender assumptions. The athletes also employed similar negotiation strategies in working through these constraints, which include relying on social support, developing and applying resiliency strategies, and pursuing an unwavering passion. Despite the varied contexts of success experienced by these women they seem to share one core trait: their acceptance of the outdoors as a domain in which women must work alongside men proved to be central in their experience and success.

#### **Discussion**

The cross case analysis resulted in six main assertions regarding the experiences of these four professional athletes. First, the individual journeys of each athlete varied greatly. Beginning with their earliest socialization, the women experienced diverse

supports, were exposed to different opportunities in unique ways, had varying types of mentors upon which they relied, and dissimilar means of exposure to the outdoors. While Lindsay grew up with a father who is a professional athlete, both Ashley and Erica lost their fathers when they were young. While Ashley, Erica, and Hillary became involved in mountaineering during college, Ashley learned informally with her boyfriend, Erica built her skills and experience by joining an outdoor club with a group of men, and Hillary found the sport after completing one career as a professional outdoor athlete. Despite these differences, they all still found their way to the professional level of their sport. This finding is encouraging in that it indicates that women can be exposed to the outdoors in a number of different ways and within varying contexts, but still have the opportunity to find success in pursuing serious participation in outdoor sports. Thus, regardless of the specific path individual females follow, given the appropriate supports and drive, they can find success in the outdoors.

Next, the constraints faced by these professional athletes align with those identified in current research on female experiences in the outdoors (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993; Culp, 1998; McDermott, 2004). The cross-case analysis revealed that the most salient constraints faced by the athletes are fear, a lack of confidence, and issues relating to gender norms, the same that amateur women face in their participation. Each athlete described in one form or another (e.g., Erica describing the “man’s world”, Lindsay’s observation that men’s kayaking is the standard/norm to which women are compared, Ashley and Hillary’s indication of the noticeable lack of female guides) that in her experience, outdoor adventure recreation is highly gendered in nature (Culp, 1998;

McDermott, 2004). More specifically, the athletes described how the gendered nature of the outdoors had impacted their experiences. Hillary described being glad she was “not a knockout” because it made it easier for her to gain respect as a guide among male clients. Lindsay described men having lower expectations of her skills and Erica focused on avoiding “sexual weird stuff or try[ing] to come on to the guys” while treating the men she encountered like brothers. These experiences are in line with research that has concluded that female athletes are typically sexualized and/or viewed as weaker or lesser athletes than men in outdoor adventure sports (Vodden-McKay & Schell, 2010). The ways in which the athletes were aware and actively working against their socialized role in the outdoors highlights their awareness of the consequences of being women in the largely male realm of the outdoors.

Additionally, the same self-doubt that Warren and Loeffler (2006) indicated can plague amateurs in their pursuit of outdoor activities was present in the experiences of these professional athletes. After reaching the professional level of mountaineering and kayaking, the participants still indicated experiencing a lack of confidence in their abilities and self-limiting behavior. Even with advanced training and years of practice, the experiences of these athletes mirror those of women first getting started in outdoor recreation. These findings seem to suggest that the literature that has proposed that self-doubt or fear of rejection in the outdoors might stem from a lack of opportunities for skill building may not be capturing the whole picture (Culp, 1998; Little, 2002). In this case, certified mountain guides and a highly successful competitive kayaker have, throughout their careers, and to this day, dealt with issues relating to a lack of confidence and fear.

This suggests that there may be something more inherent in the way women approach competitive, skilled environments that could explain why they deal with confidence issues. First, because the outdoors is a male dominant domain, research would suggest that gender bias and lowered expectations for women are more salient (Ridgeway, 2009). Because of this, women tend to view their performance in the form of “self-other competence expectations” directly comparing their performance in a situation to others in the same situation (Ridgeway, 2004, p. 518). This can lead individuals to not only perform at a lower level, but also to be evaluated more critically. In the outdoors, viewed as traditionally masculine, male competence is assumed and because women are greatly outnumbered, they may feel their performance will fall short of their male counterparts and, in turn, the women may have less confidence in their abilities. This difference in the belief one has in her ability to perform is also negatively impacted if she is reminded that she is expected to perform at a lower level, just as the athletes in this study recalled experiencing.

The next significant constraint for each participant, fear, has also been identified in the literature (Coble, Selin, & Erickson, 2003; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). While the fears ranged from fear of death to fear of failure, they still, in some way, impacted the athletes’ experiences in the outdoors. This may support the notion that these fears are part of the very early socialization of women in society (Powch, 1994; Wesley & Gaarder, 2004). This early socialization along with the gender frame put forward by Ridgeway (2009) may predispose women to expecting negative situations and poor performance in

the outdoors. This expectation may, in turn, lead to the same types of fears expressed by the study participants.

In addition, it is within the constraints portion of these findings that the tenets of poststructural feminist theory may also be playing a role. The gendered nature of the outdoors, as identified by the participants, may be playing a larger role in bringing about the women's lack of confidence and fear into these women's experiences. In line with Foucault's notions of surveillance and self-surveillance and the "gaze of others" identified by Aitchison (2003), the athletes may be more likely to feel on display and judged in the outdoors. This awareness may help to explain these athletes' lack of confidence, sense of fear, and tug towards alignment with social norms. According to Young (2005), it is precisely this awareness that leads women to view and use their bodies less confidently in physical activity. Whether viewed through Ridgeway's (2009) gender frame, females' early socialization towards fear (Powch, 1994; Wesley & Gaarder, 2004), or poststructural feminist theory the solution may be the same. Being self-aware and able to recognize these fears and confidence issues becomes an important part of working through the constraints and came out in the findings related to the constraint negotiation strategies of the participants.

Wearing (1998) and Aitchison (2003) put forward the notion that leisure may be a tool for resistance. In line with this, the athletes each detailed ways they had managed to overcome the constraints related to their participation. The various resiliency strategies detailed by the participants are very highly individualistic and place the power of overcoming the various constraints squarely in the hands of the athletes themselves. The

resiliency strategies implemented by the athletes included confidence building techniques, a recognition of and refusal to align with gender stereotypes, self-awareness, and proactively working through fear. These findings support Wearing's (1998) notion that "one of the dangers with the socialist feminist position in the late 1980's was that such thorough documentation of women's oppression, theoretically linked to structural causes, implied that nothing that individual women could do would make any significant change in their lives" (p. 37). For the women in this study, the power was completely their own. The constraints they faced, as detailed previously, stemmed largely from the gendered realm in which they placed their careers. By recognizing this and the constraints that grew out of those gendered relations, the women were able to identify and implement strategies that helped them overcome their fears, lack of confidence, or the assumptions of others they faced. While self-awareness and self-empowerment were essential in these women's success in the outdoors, it was also supplemented by two additional elements: social support and passion.

In addition to the women's own work to identify specific strategies for negotiation constraints, the findings also suggest that a key to their success in the outdoors was social support. The social supports identified by the participants were varied, however, suggesting that the specific *types* of social support may not be as important as the *support itself*. This again aligns with the literature that puts forward that a lack of familial support may be a factor in why females do not take on outdoor activities (Culp, 1998). While the support of family was noted by the participants, equally significant was the importance of support by mentors, friends, clients, supervisors, and fellow guides. This supports the

preponderance of research that identifies social support as key in leisure participation maintenance and enhancement (Mannell & Loucks-Atkinson, 2005; Raymore, 2002). The findings also seem to imply that this support does not necessarily have to come in the form of direct support of the pursuit of outdoor recreation itself. Rather, general support in pursuing life goals was enough to help the women work through constraints. For example, Hillary noted her father urging her to follow her dreams and to not risk living “half a life” as critical at a point in her career when she felt she may want to step away from guiding. The social support the athletes relied upon also did not have to come from a certain source. While Hillary and Lindsay relied heavily on familial support, the supports that help Erica and Lindsay be successful were based more in social relationships and mentorship. For instance, Erica’s mom actually tried to push her towards following more appropriate feminine roles, while her college friends helped her gain comfort and skill in the outdoors.

The fifth assertion may be the most fundamental aspect of these women’s success in the outdoors. Each participant conveyed a true and unwavering passion for the outdoors and her chosen sport. When pressed to identify the most salient negotiation strategy, each participant, again and again, pointed to her passion for the outdoors as crucial to dealing with every type of constraint faced and as the drive taking her outside each day. This suggests that above all, for females to succeed at a high level in the outdoors, their pursuit must be based in a love for the wilderness and the sport that takes them there. It is this passion that may help provide the core drive for taking on the sport, learning the skills and gaining the experience necessary for performing at a high level,

and for successfully negotiating the constraints with which the athletes are faced in this pursuit.

The final assertion from the cross case analysis relates to the gendered nature of outdoor recreation. A central focus of both the discussion thus far, and of the experiences of the athletes, is the gendered nature of the outdoors is not something that is exceedingly malleable. Seemingly aware of this, each participant has wholly embraced the mixed-sex nature of the outdoors and view it as much as a positive as a negative component. While some identified an interest or experience working with women's-only programs, each also described how they have embraced the mixed sex environment. This acceptance has led the athletes to either actively avoid women's only trips or at least prefer a mixed group to single sex group experiences. Much of the literature on women's outdoor experiences focuses on the importance of all-female programs and how they help women to feel more confident and less pressure to conform to social norms in the outdoors (McDermott, 2004; Mitten, 1992). What can be taken from the experiences of these professional athletes, however, is that rather than seeking to avoid mixed sex environments in the outdoors, women may do well to embrace these settings. Doing so may actually facilitate greater skill development, opportunities for mentorship, and opportunities for participation. Also related to the gendered nature of the outdoors is the women's response to discrimination they faced.

The athletes, as noted in the results, tended to back off of their description of experiences they initially identified as discrimination. This may be due in part to their recognition of the outdoors as a male dominated domain. For instance, Ashley noted that

if she ignored the negative stereotypes male clients or colleagues had about her, they would be more likely to ignore it themselves. While this may have been related to not wanting to rock the boat or be viewed as too sensitive by these same males, it seems that it was, at least to some extent, a survival mechanism. The athletes were clearly aware of the male dominated nature of their professions. Because of this, they may have found that making their way in the outdoors required them to expect and accept a certain level of discrimination and negative stereotyping by males in that setting. This suggests some internalization of societal norms related to the appropriateness of their female presence outdoors. That is, they may have accepted that because they were pushing societal boundaries by participating in the outdoors, it was natural and appropriate for them to experience variable treatment. Thus, their experiences were not discrimination, just natural interactions between genders.

One additional commentary on the findings is pertinent. The analysis uncovered the fact that certain contexts may provide a path upon which athletes may face fewer constraints in achieving elite levels of performance in the outdoors. Strikingly, a finding that emerged via the cross-case analysis, that was not otherwise recognized, was the fact that Lindsay did not identify any structural constraints, only intra- and interpersonal constraints. Her father's role as a professional athlete likely played a large role in this in Lindsay's journey. That is, when asked to discuss structural constraints she faced (e.g., access issues, gear needs), Lindsay described her father's role and how that helped eliminate such issues. For instance, she discussed how as a child, growing up in an RV and being homeschooled allowed her constant access to whitewater rivers and the ability

to place an emphasis on kayaking that transcended even academic responsibilities. This finding stood out in that not only did Lindsay lack structural constraints faced by the other athletes, but that even with early exposure, constant access to resources and rivers, and a live-in professional athlete as a coach and mentor, she still faced similar intra- and interpersonal constraints. This indicates that even if structural constraints are removed, that is not enough to ensure success. These findings align with relevant gender socialization literature. As Messner (2000) hypothesized, in examining gender division, one must consider interpersonal interaction and culture along with structural components of an experience. While the structural components of society may be one component impacting women's successes in society in general, removing structural elements alone is not wholly effective in erasing the gendered relations. Rather, intra- and interpersonal components must also be addressed. To extend Lindsay's experience, even though she did not face the same structural constraints of other female athletes (lack of equipment, lack of mentorship, lack of access), she still faced the remaining effects of participating in a gendered pursuit such as a lack of confidence and issues related to fear.

### **Implications**

In the spirit of Parry's (2003) urging that feminist leisure research can not longer simply "*interpret* the world, it must be *changed* as well", specific suggestions will be made for implementing the lessons learned from these athletes' experiences in helping more females enter the outdoors (p. 49). By understanding the difficulties these athletes have had and how they have successfully navigated the gendered domain of the outdoors to reach an elite level of participation, recommendations can be made for specific

programmatic foci. To begin, these analytic generalizations can arguably be applied to programs/interventions to be empirically tested in the future because the constraints faced by these professional athletes align with those of amateur participants. As a result, the negotiation strategies they employed may prove beneficial for other women seeking entrance/increased participation in the outdoors.

The first recommendation is that interventions must place a focus on building resiliency skills in the females with whom they work, similar to previous research (e.g., Warren & Loeffler, 2006). These skills should first focus on confidence building and enhanced self-awareness. These skills will allow women to recognize their own self-limiting beliefs and utilize strategies for working through confidence issues they may face in the outdoors. Next, programs should facilitate an understanding of and strategies for dealing with the risks and subsequent fears associated with outdoor adventure activities. As evidenced by these professional athletes, fear is an inextricable component of high-risk activities and, as such, must be dealt with appropriately to ensure continued involvement in the outdoors. Next, interventions need to place a focus on handling interpersonal issues that will arise in the outdoors. These may include varied gendered expectations, subtle or overt stigma or discrimination, and may occur within or between sexes. In addressing this issue, it will be important for programmers to approach it from a positive frame of reference. That is, rather than highlighting the ways women may be negatively viewed or treated in the outdoors, the learning should focus on building relationships and strategies for dealing with interpersonal conflict in healthy and productive ways.

Next, the need for a wide range of social supports was a significant component of the participants' successes. Therefore, programs should focus on this issue from several angles. First, the participants reported that one necessary factor of her success in the outdoors was having people with whom to participate. Research has identified that for women this can be a more difficult task than it is for men (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993). Consequently, interventions and programs should place an emphasis on connecting women who are interested in pursuing similar outdoor pursuits. This could come in the form of the establishment of regional networks through which women can identify an interest in their sport and locate partners, workshops or on-site programs that bring like-minded females together, or even social events that help connect individuals interested in similar outdoor activities. In addition, when programmers design interventions, a central focus of the program itself should be on building relationships that will help participants establish connections that can extend beyond the bounds of the intervention. The shared experience and personal connection may facilitate long lasting partnerships that can help females continue their pursuit of outdoor recreation. Beyond encouraging relationship building that will help the women pursue their own goals, it may also be beneficial to teach women the importance of paying it forward. The athletes in this study all discussed the important role they are now playing advising and supporting other women in outdoor pursuits. Instilling this value in females from the beginning may encourage a burgeoning support group for all females seeking entrance in the outdoors.

In response to the athletes' focus on the importance of mentorship, programmatic efforts should be made to pair experienced, skilled participants with novice participants. Building these mentor relationships may help women build a broader network upon which they can draw for support and advice related to their pursuits in the outdoors. These types of relationships are important as they extend beyond the day-to-day participation and help to establish more expansive networks and connections to the outdoors, which may be important in working through specific types of constraints. As an example, the mentor that Ashley recalled seeing only intermittently in the mountains was the individual who helped her work through her near-death crevasse accident. Her day-to-day climbing partner was unable to function in this role as he, too, had been involved in the accident. By having a mentor from whom she could seek support, Ashley was able to more effectively process through the experience. In terms of building these networks of mentors, the desire of the athletes in this study to "pay it forward", to pass on their knowledge and expertise to a future generation of athletes suggests identifying mentors may be possible. While the number of women in the professional ranks or at a high level of amateur participation is small, the participants' enthusiasm for mentorship is encouraging.

The next recommendation is that programs should be designed to not only expose females to specific outdoor skills and sports, but also to simply expose them to the outdoors. Previous research indicates that women are less likely than men, in general, to be introduced to the outdoors (Culp, 1998; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). Based on the experience of the participants who fell back on their passion for the outdoors when they

faced times of difficulty, helping females uncover this passion can be beneficial. While passion is something that cannot necessarily be engendered in someone artificially, facilitating its discovery may be the role of leisure professionals. Program and intervention efforts focused on theoretical underpinnings and specific skill development may be beneficial in developing tangible outcomes, but may miss the mark on more abstract outcomes. Programs cannot teach passion, but can include the outdoors as a fundamental piece of the experience. For example, rather than teaching the skills needed for whitewater kayaking in pool, take the experience onto a river. Or, as opposed to rock climbing on an artificial wall, move the program outdoors to real rock where the environment and surroundings will become a part of the experience.

One final recommendation based on the results of this study is that programmers should consider when all-female environments are appropriate and when it may be beneficial to move to mixed-sex experiences. The literature is clear that creating environments free of stereotypes, removing the sexual undertones, and eliminating gender as a component of an experience can be beneficial in helping women feel comfortable in the outdoors (McDermott, 2004; Mitten, 1992). However, in reality, this is an artificial and untenable situation. The outdoors is, and is likely to remain, a male dominated domain. As such, while all-female interventions may be beneficial in providing the very first exposure to the outdoors, they cannot be the only venue through which females learn to participate in the outdoors. Females, in order to have a sustained participation level in outdoor recreation, must increase their confidence working with, learning with, taking charge of, and participating side-by-side with men. This mixed-sex

nature, for women, is an inextricable part of what their experience in the outdoors will be. As such, programmers must create safe environments in which males and females can learn and participate side-by-side in the outdoors. That is, not only will females have to learn to get comfortable participating with males, but so too will males have to learn to be comfortable participating with females. Thus, programmers must work to expose both males and females to the opposite sex in that environment. The results of this study provide a starting point for improving on or creating interventions aimed at increasing women's participation in outdoor adventure recreation.

### **Limitations**

It is also important to discuss the limitations of this study. While not a limitation per se, it must be noted that the findings of this study are limited to analytic rather than statistical generalization (Yin, 2009). The findings, discussion, and implications are meant to provide theoretical advancement in moving forward women's participation in outdoor adventure recreation. They should not be viewed as generalizable to the experiences of all professional female outdoor athletes. The research followed the guidelines of Yin (2009) and Stake (2006) to ensure the highest level of trustworthiness and dependability of the findings. Next, because the focus of this study was on professional athletes, they may have been predisposed to success in the outdoors because of inherent physical gifts. They may have begun their journey into the outdoors with a higher base level of skill as well as an ability to learn and adapt skills more quickly. If so, they may have also been accepted more readily into their sports, especially by men. This could, potentially, have caused them to face, while similar in nature, constraints that were

less difficult to negotiate. A final limitation to note was that interviews relied heavily on the athletes' reflection on their careers. While techniques including photo elicitation and triangulation via the collection of multiple forms of data and perspectives were utilized to combat this, participants may have remembered constraints as more or less severe.

Likewise, the athletes may have inaccurately identified strategies for negotiating the constraints.

### **Future Research**

Because of the theoretical nature of the findings of this study, future research should focus on programs that implement these suggestions and empirically examine the efficacy of their use as intervention strategies. As a part of this, female participants who are exposed to the interventions should be studied longitudinally to determine if they do participate at a higher rate or level in the outdoors. Additionally, males who are exposed to coed participation should be studied to identify differences that may exist in their attitudes and beliefs towards female athletes in the outdoors. In addition, more professional female athletes should be studied in other categories of outdoor sports to continue honing the analytic generalizations that can help to inform interventions.

Another route that could be investigated for future research would be to use the findings of this study to identify or create quantitative instrument(s) that may be appropriate for gauging constraints, negotiation strategies, and various contexts within which athletes find success on a wider scale. Future research should also include the governing bodies of outdoors sports to identify the actions or approaches that may be hindering or helping women's advancement in outdoor sports.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate that professional outdoor athletes face the same types of constraints to pursuing outdoor activities as amateur women. These constraints, including fear, a lack of confidence, and gender relations seem to be a part of the experience of women in the outdoors regardless of their level of participation. In reaching their professional level of involvement, the professional athletes in this study identified similar negotiation strategies including a reliance on social support, the development and use of resiliency strategies, and an unwavering passion for the outdoors. By understanding how the most elite female outdoor athletes negotiate the constraints with which they are faced, leisure professionals may be better equipped to open the door to the outdoors for more females. This study is a first step in what needs to be a continued effort at identifying and empirically testing strategies for increasing female participation in outdoor adventure recreation.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Questionnaire/Interview Questions

#### Baseline Questionnaire

1. What is your current age?
2. How many siblings do you have?
3. What are their ages? Genders?
4. What is your current professional title?
5. How long have you been professionally involved in the outdoors?
6. When you were a child, what did you dream of becoming?
7. At what age did you first begin participating in outdoor recreation?
8. When you first began participating in outdoor recreation, in which activities did you participate?
9. At what age did you begin participating in your specific sport (mountaineering, adventure racing, whitewater kayaking)?
10. At what age did you begin participating professionally in your specific sport (mountaineering, adventure racing, whitewater kayaking)?
11. Who was your biggest influence in becoming involved in mountaineering, adventure racing, whitewater kayaking?
12. How often do you participate in mountaineering, adventure racing, whitewater kayaking for fun or leisure?
13. With whom do you most often participate in mountaineering, adventure racing, or whitewater kayaking when participating for leisure?
14. What other activities to you most often participate in during your leisure time?
15. With whom to you most often participate in these activities?

#### First interview

1. Tell me about your experience as a professional guide/kayaker/racer.
2. How has the field changed since you first became involved professionally?
3. How do you prepare for an expedition with clients or a competition?
4. How do you train in preparation for an expedition with clients or a competition?
5. What has been your favorite experience as a guide/professional athlete?
6. What has been your worst experience as a guide/professional athlete?
7. What do you look forward to the most in your profession?
8. What things made it difficult for you initially to achieve your goals within mountaineering, adventure racing, whitewater kayaking?
9. What continues to make it difficult for you to achieve your goals within mountaineering, adventure racing, whitewater kayaking?
10. What has helped you to overcome those difficulties?
11. Do you prefer working professionally with a specific demographic? If so, which and why?
12. Do you ever work with young girls in any capacity in your sport (through lessons, camps, competitions, expeditions, etc.)

13. If so, how would you describe their experience?
14. What do you see as the perks of your profession?
15. What are the downsides to your profession?
16. What is most difficult physically for you in your profession?
17. What is most difficult emotionally for you in your profession?
18. What is most difficult socially for you in your profession?
19. Tell me about your family (married, committed relationship, single, children, etc.).
20. How has your career choice impacted choices you've made related to your personal relationships?
21. What is most difficult personally for you in your profession?
22. Do you feel you have had to make sacrifices to pursue your professional career? If so, what are these sacrifices?
23. Do you feel you are treated differently by male clients/competitors than female clients/competitors? If so, how? Can you provide any specific examples?
24. How do you handle situations like this when they arise?
25. What advice would you give a woman who told you that she was about to begin/specialize/become a professional in this discipline?
26. What advice would you give a man who told you that he was about to begin/specialize/become a professional in this discipline?
27. Why do you think more males than females currently participate, especially professionally, in your discipline?
28. What do you think needs to happen to increase the female participation rates in your discipline?
29. As a professional, would you say that participating in your sport is still fun, still leisure for you?

#### Second Interview (Photo Elicitation)

(The same set of questions were used for each of 3 sets of photos)

1. What age were you in these pictures?
2. What year was this?
3. Tell me about your life at the time these pictures were taken.
4. What drew you/continued to draw you to mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?
5. Why did you choose to begin/specialize/become a professional in mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?
6. Tell me about each individual picture and what you were experiencing when this was taken.
7. Tell me about anything that made it difficult for you to begin/specialize/become a professional in mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing.
8. How did you overcome these difficulties?
9. Tell me about anything that made it easy for you to begin/specialize/become a professional in mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing.

10. Who would you say was, at the time this picture was taken, a mentor to you in mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?
11. Tell me about that relationship.
12. What made you nervous about mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing at this time?
13. What made you excited about mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing at this time?
14. What frustrated you about mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing at this time?
15. If you could tell the old you in this picture anything (related to mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing) what would you tell her and why?
16. What lessons did you learn about participating in your sport during this time?
17. What did you enjoy the most about this time participating in mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?
18. What did you enjoy the least about this time participating in mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?
19. During this time, did you experience any subtle or overt discrimination/stigma from others?
20. What types of feedback in relation to your sport did you receive from instructors, peers, family, or others at this time?
21. What was your most difficult/lowest moment related to your sport at this time?
22. What was your best moment in your sport at this time?
23. During this time, did you ever consider ceasing participation in the sport? If so, why? What kept you from leaving the sport?

### Third Interview

This interview was used to follow-up on specific points that came out of the first two interviews, so the questions varied. However a small core group of questions were used for each participant.

1. When you were first starting the sport as an amateur, what was it that drew you to it? What did you love about it?
2. Was there an initial experience that spurred your interest in the sport?
3. What was it that made you think, I want to do this, I can do this?
4. What one thing (person, experience, etc.) do you think, if removed from your experience, may have kept you from participating in your sport/the outdoors?
5. What are specific things you have done to help females get into the sport or to help females get into/rise up through the professional ranks?
6. What should women involved in these sports be doing to help get girls involved for leisure?
7. You've experienced differing expectations from men about your abilities or place in the outdoors because you're a woman. How would you suggest preparing girls for dealing with those types of situations?

8. Did you ever run into people who were, if you wanted to learn from them, where they didn't want you to move forward? (women?)
9. Run me through a very quick timeline of your career.

#### Socialization Agent Interview

1. When she was born, what were your expectations for her, what kind of child (girl) did you think she would be?
2. How did you decorate her nursery? Do you recall specific types of toys, paint colors, decorations? Was there a specific theme to her nursery?
3. Tell me about your daughter as a young child (before school age).
4. What were her favorite toys?
5. How did she choose to dress?
6. Tell me about the main female influences in your daughter's life as a child. What were their leisure interests?
7. Tell me about the main male influences in your daughter's life as a child. What were their leisure interests?
8. Did she have any favorite cartoons or television shows? What were they?
9. What types of activities was she drawn to as a child?
10. Who do you think most influenced her preferences (siblings, family, friends)?
11. Did you see any changes in her interests when she began school?
12. What types of career aspirations did she have?
13. What types of kids did she most relate to growing up?
14. What types of opportunities did you provide for her growing up (what activities did you enroll her in)?
15. Who do you see as some of her main mentors, influences outside of the home growing up?
16. In what ways did you see these mentors/influences impact your daughter?
17. What were your thoughts when your daughter first became involved in outdoor recreation?
18. Who introduced her to the outdoors?
19. What were your thoughts when your daughter first became *professionally* involved in outdoor recreation?
20. Have you seen your daughter face any difficulties in her pursuit of mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?
21. What do you think made it most difficult for your daughter to reach the professional level of her sport?
22. Have you ever seen your daughter face subtle or overt discrimination or stigma from clients, peers, family, etc. in her amateur or professional participation in her sport?
23. What do you think most enabled your daughter's success in her sport?
24. What concerns you about your daughter's participation in mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?

25. How do you think her career path has impacted her personal life (positive or negative)?
26. What advice would you give to parents with young girls who are interested in pursuing outdoor activities like mountaineering, whitewater kayaking, adventure racing?
27. If you could go back in time and change any of your actions related to your daughter's pursuit of outdoor sports, what would you change? Why?
28. What do you think you did that most helped our daughter achieve her goals related to her sport participation?



Appendix B

Data Collection Interview Timeline

Table 1.1 *Data Collection Interview Timeline*

	Interview 1 Date	Length	Interview 2 Date	Length	Interview 3 Date	Length	SA Interview Date	Length
Lindsay	9/12/13	1 hr 17 min	10/4/13	2 hr 34 min	1/21/14	1 hr 10 min	11/7/13	46 min
Hillary	8/22/13	1 hr 10 min	9/10/13	2 hr 10 min	1/28/14	1 hr 8 min	10/9/13	42 min
Ashley	8/14/13	1 hr 30 min	10/7/13	2 hr 40 min	1/31/14	57 min	10/28/13	1 hr 15 min
Erica	10/29/13	1 hr 4 min	11/1/13	1 hr 48 min	1/21/14	45 min	11/4/13	29 min

Collection of additional data throughout



## Appendix C

### Example Written Documentation/Artifacts

#### **Erica Narrative**

Erica is an active member of the ACMG, who guides year round, working in Canada's Mountain Parks and internationally. Presently, she works as a guide for a few tourism operators and her own guiding business. The interview was conducted at a noisy café, which required listening carefully to the audio recording during the transcription process.

#### **Past**

Erica's introduction to the outdoors started at a young age as she participated in outdoor clubs and organizations, to attending an outdoor academic institution and participating in long expeditions every year: "She was always interested in the outdoors and found [herself] drawn to the people in the community" (personal). A pivotal moment for her was when she joined an outdoor club that was very active in mountaineering. She married an outdoor enthusiast and as they grew together her husband had some influence on her outdoor pursuits but mostly it was her own ambition that motivated her to become a guide. Her decision to become an ACMG guide came from her desire to learn more about the outdoors, to teach in the outdoors, and to be able to work anywhere. She entered into the ACMG process through the ski stream being confident in her fitness and general ski level. She received support from her husband and friends throughout the process. During her training she would team up with anyone who wanted to go out and was fortunate that some of her friends were mountain guides. For the most part her role models and training partners were men. When she registered for the ski exam she questioned whether she had enough mileage and mountain sense to pass, however due to her expeditions and instructing experiences she thought she would be ready. Throughout the examination process she was often the only woman on the exams, which made her feel self conscious, but overall she believes that she was treated fairly.

While Erica was training and moving through the certification process she was employed by a few operations and non-profit organizations. Tourism operators often hired women guides believing that women would bring maternal and supportive traits to their operations. This opportunity came with a challenge, regarding the client's perception of her guiding abilities. She encountered situations where certain clients appreciated her nurturing abilities but other clients questioned her guiding abilities because they were unfamiliar with seeing a woman in a guiding role. Erica states, "it seemed that I was held to higher scrutiny" (social). She experienced at times a lack of respect, which all guides can experience and should not be taken personally. Consequently, she indicates that often she felt that she had to prove herself:

"There is always performance pressure and it took me a while to gain confidence. Clients will always have assumptions about a guide so you have to get to know them and do a good job to win their trust" (past).

As she was facing these challenges, lacking the confidence and developing her guiding style, she tried to fit into her environment by being an equal to her male co-workers.

Through time and gaining confidence she realized that she had to do things her own way: “It didn’t work to compete with the guys...[she] had to develop [her] own style” (personal). She negotiated the masculine environment by blending in, which she was eventually successful after going through different phases and trying different things, such as saying dirty jokes. Reflecting back to some personality conflicts with her co-workers she felt that she could have handled them better, but now realizes that dealing with conflict was difficult for her.

As Erica’s guiding career developed she never intentionally decided against having kids ‘it just never happened’. She realizes that guiding full time and raising a family is impossible unless a woman has a partner who is willing to share the primary care responsibilities. The desire to have children just never coincided between her and her husband. She started her guiding career later in life, whereas these days she sees women starting younger and building a career, since it is becoming more accepted for women to work as a guide and raise a family.

### **Present**

Erica enjoys working as an ACMG guide because she sees the outdoors as her medium for teaching outdoors skills. She indicates “mountains are my passion and I like sharing the experience with other people” (personal). When she is out guiding she sees it as an exploration where she is continually being challenged and always learning something about herself. It keeps her sharp as she helps her clients to achieve their goals. Working as a guide she enjoys the smaller groups, where there is more co-operation and better communication, whereas working in bigger operations: “There can be more of a male mentality and there can be more competition” (present). She now prefers her own trips because she is guiding people who she knows. Plus, the men that come on her trips are already comfortable with her and her leadership role and she does not need to prove herself. She believes that there are clients who: “Just assume that a man is better, [while] others prefer a female, it is all about assumptions when choosing a guide” (social). Nowadays she feels that she isn’t concerned about the client’s perception of her because her confidence has grown over the years. She adds: “It took me a while to do things my own way [and] develop my own style. I feel [now] I can manage a group and keep them safe, regardless of how they feel about me” (personal). She sees her style of guiding as one that keeps her clients safe, encourages growth and provides a good experience. She reveals “I like to see people learn things, I like to be part of people’s growth, that’s really satisfying to me...I’m a good team player” (present).

She believes that a woman who decides to become a mountain guide can gain the physicality and the technical skills just as any man. She indicates that women survive the ACMG process by approaching problems differently, a woman does not need to: “Be a big brute to be a good mountain guide, [she] just has to be super thoughtful, use the terrain the best [she] can and do lots of coaching” (present). She sees women guides in the mountain guiding community as being supportive of each other in their guiding roles.

Much of the time she is guiding for herself, running trips on her own, which has become a huge part of her life. Her personal life involves friendships with other guides, and she has maintained a few outside friendships. She adds “I would say that my personal life is very entwined with my guiding life” (present). She sees herself as a peripheral

person not needing to be the centre of attention when she is with a group. She acknowledges that she is a drifter within her career because every diverging route that she has taken has always led her back to guiding. Her guiding career has become a big part of her life.

### **Future**

She plans to keep guiding and running her own trips both nationally and internationally. She has developed a solid reputation as a summer and winter guide. Eventually she does plan on: “Slow[ing] down and be[ing] more selective with time and type of work” (future). She eventually sees herself providing support work to the industry.

### **Excerpt from Hillary’s Blog**

Nash and i just arrived back in utah. Someone suggested that i write my thoughts on trekking in Nepal and taking kids to altitude

#### **Health and hygiene**

Start with a good multi-vitamin before you leave. Preferably a tasty one. I would have taken extra vitamin c for Nash. He had the odd bout of mild diarrhea and I would empty half a probiotic pill into something yummy that he was eating.

Have lots of little hand sanitizer packets and get the kids used to them and accepting. Really emphasize no nose picking and eating (seriously) and to keep hands away from mouth unless eating with clean hands, Use a buff or similar that can be pulled over the kids mouth and nose on the dusty trails. The Khumbu cough starts below Namche where the track is most dusty and crowded.

Nash slept in his own sleeping bag in the Teahouses. Not only cozy but avoided any bugs, germs that may linger from other Trekkers

Keep kids heads warm as altitude increases. This helps them acclimatize apparently.

Nash never wore his gore-tex but I kept his hooded down jacket handy (great buys in both Namche and in Kathmandu) plus gloves and warm hat and sun hat.

I gave paracetamol in yummy liquid form for headaches. Nash used it twice but make sure you follow directions carefully.

Peak Promotion, our outfitters, sent us with a bottle of oxygen in case of any trouble. We never used it but reassuring to have (and heavy)

Have some kind of moisturizing oil like jojoba – Nash’s cheeks got quite chapped and he got some dry skin on his bum and upper thighs as well.

Wet wipes and toilet paper in the top of your pack.

Wet wipes for grimy faces and hands

Cory has a steri-pen for sterilizing but I mostly used a gravity filter. I would leave it to filter while at breakfast and it took about half an hour (depending on the grittiness of the water) to filter 3 liters. I would then pop an iodine tablet into each bottle just to be sure and would later use the neutralizer pills to take away the iodine taste. Nash carried a camel back and this was invaluable. Keep the nozzle tucked back inside the shoulder strap to keep it clean.

I took lots of nuts, bars, nori snacks and fruit leathers for the trail. There is plenty of food at the Teahouses so I reckon I overdid it. Last time I was here there were not so many

snickers bars and kitkats!

Doctors – Namche, Kumjung and Pheriche

Get good rescue insurance for peace of mind that includes heli rescue. I used International Medical Group. Alpine clubs also offer good rescue insurance packages. You need to be a club member and you have to organize it in advance.

### **Altitude**

Personally I have always gone a bit too fast and worked too hard while still low. I hoped that with Nash, I would acclimatize nice and slow. It seemed to work for him but I think I physiologically struggle to acclimatize to 18000. I just need to take a lot of panadol and/or excedrin (Cory's recommendation that worked quite well).

So my advice if you decide to take kids up high above 14000 feet/4000m is to absolutely take all the advice for proper acclimatizing: go slow, take rest days where you hike around a wee bit, drink a lot of water and generally do the minimum climbing that you can each day. This is dictated by the position of the Teahouses. Pheriche to Lobuche is a 700m elevation gain (to 5000m) but Lobuche to Gorak Shep is only 300 m and Basecamp is only another 50m. Many go from Lobuche to BC but we stopped at Gorak Shep.

The goal of reaching BC was very loose. I was completely prepared to return to Pheriche if Nash's pulse oxygen sat was still 60%. I always thought we would just make it to Pheriche or Dingboche. The Sherpas all thought that Pheriche would be the highest Nash would go. There were a lot of comments about how strong he was. I would honestly say that he was significantly better at altitude than me (granted I am susceptible to coughs in recent years, should probably get it checked out. My sinuses were very stuffed up which would not have helped my oxygen uptake). But even when I was 21 in the Indian Himalayas, I suffered going above 18000ft/5000m.

At Gorak Shep I felt like shit but Nash's energy was great. Cory had to go to Basecamp anyway so why not go once my excedrin kicked in?

Stamina

The real secret weapon to Nash's health and stamina was Khunga. He basically cruised with Nash all the time and would give him short rides put Nash down then piggy-back him again. I just ambled along with my own pack and the water and food. It was Khunga's first time into the upper Khumbu so he had his fair share of headaches as well. I felt like it was well worth the money to have Khunga.

\*1m=3.3ft

What did Nash think of the trip: he liked the yak and yeti hotel because of the kids and the pool.

What was most memorable for him:

The animals: yaks, pika, horses, danfe, eagles, dokyo, dogs and one very friendly cat!

Response to cold. Doesn't bother him, was not very cold.

Sherpa attitudes – doubts, concerns, then impressed.

Attitudes from Trekkers – slight notoriety

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