
Evaluation Extreme Sports As The Addiction

Evaluation

When looking back at the content of the research I have put together for my study on Extreme Sports, I have come across a question of what motivates Athletes to participate in Extreme Sports. The website addicted to success suggests the following:

- Money: In some cases. Yet only a few chosen ones will ever make a decent living out of their chosen sport. In triathlons for example the majority of participants are amateurs, who for some non-financial reason have taken time out of their frantic work days and busy personal or family schedule to train for hours and hours, and weeks and weeks on end to swim, bike and run for the limited duration of a race.
- Fame: Maybe, but most people have never heard of Ross Clarke Jones (big wave surfer) or Chrissie Wellington (an undefeated triathlon world champion who defeats most of the top men). Fame is a fickle, fleeting thing. Unless you're extremely talented, media savvy, a good role model and great at your chosen sport, it will only take a generation and then you're forgotten and hardly anyone will remember who you were.
- Ego: I think you can tell in an athlete's personality when this is the case. Unfortunately if your ego is bloated enough and the sport you are doing is extreme enough there is only one thing that will happen. Your ego will get crushed. Or someone better comes along.
- Challenging yourself: Competition with others and with yourself brings out the best. This is the definitive reason or motivation most will participate in any sport. Self-improvement is the main reason people want to challenge themselves.

Are Extreme Sport participants addicts? As mentioned in my study, the participants that take part in these risky sports usually have daredevil like attitudes and they thrive off risk and fear. You really can't judge a book by its cover because people who are involved in extreme sports see positive effects from the experience they get while doing such activities. Our brain and body are designed to get scared in these times. They are supposed to alert us about feelings of harm and or fear. Participants who go through these activities are responding to fear in a positive way and the brain rewards them for that.

Where does the addiction part come in you may ask?

Well the chemical Dopamine can cause the feeling of addiction. When you are partaking in an extreme sport you fall in to a state of fear, once you overcome this fear your brain rewards you with Dopamine. The Dopamine is the part of the equation that makes you feel confident and happy. It gives a natural high that makes you feel overall good about yourself. When a participant is constantly putting themselves through extreme situations for pleasure, they are constantly feeling that sense of happiness. If you take that away the extreme aspects of the activity, you take away the happiness they receive. They keep pushing themselves through no matter what the risk in order to get that sense of confidence and happiness.

Have you ever watched someone bungee jump? Did you feel a rush of excitement or did your heart pound in fear? "It has been widely assumed that extreme sports people are for the most

part risk taking, sensation seeking individuals who lack connection to the natural world (Zuckerman and Neeb, 1979; Breivik, 1996; Zuckerman, 2009)”

According to psychologist Eric Brymer, Extreme Sports are good for you. Away from the realm of “Adrenalin Junkie”, true Extreme Sports require a high amount of focus and offer opportunity for a fun experience. He defines “Extreme Sports” as in which the most likely outcome is misjudgement and death as all athletes do when hearing the words “Extreme Sports”.

“Research suggests that participation in extreme sport activity might develop valuable personal attributes such as courage and humility (Brymer and Oades, 2009). Other research suggests high risk sports allow participants to explore and embrace “fundamental human values” which can have formative and “transformational benefits” (Brymer and Schweitzer, 2013).”

His recent studies showed that “Extreme Sports” athletes are actually better than the rest of us. They have lower anxiety, are more independent and self-assertive and have a higher sense of reality. Anybody who participates in these types of sports will nod their heads in agreement because they know that these sports will make them a better person.

Extreme Sports are more dangerous than your good old traditional sports. They require specific equipment and feature spectacular stunts, such as acrobatic flips and 360-degree turns. Any athlete who dares to participate in these types of sports will experience high level of speed, wind, height, depth and of course adrenaline. As everybody knows, Extreme Sports are so life-threatening that participants of these sports must take extra care to avoid injuries or even death.

Despite the danger involved with Extreme Sports, athletes continue to take part in Extreme Sports because, they seek adventure. Athletes who choose to participate, want to push their mental and physical limits but, Extreme Sports don't appeal to everyone and that's perfectly fine. There has been extreme efforts put in to assure the safety aspect surrounding the sport. Everybody knows that whatever these sports are called, they are dangerous. Extreme Sports are not a fixed group. They change everyday due to the dedication, creativity and originality of the people who participate in them. Over time, many people that gravitated towards these kinds of sports, thought of themselves as outsiders. These people created different ways to participate, dress and relate to one another. Gradually, as new sports, fashions and attitudes become more popular, the new sports became less an alternative and more a part of the culture.

This proceeded into arguments among participants about quitting or whether they were losing their outside edge. More businesses, Corporations and their advertisers for products such as RED BULL and Mountain Dew wanted to associate them with the new sports to reach younger audiences. The creation of the XGAMES by ABC and ESPN, part of the Walt Disney corporation; the Gravity Games by a partnership including NBC and the Dew Tour organised by a branch of NBC sports all were examples of this. Perhaps the biggest indicator of this shift is the organisers of the Olympics who felt they needed new sports to reach younger audiences by adding Windsurfing, Mountain Biking, Snowboarding and Freestyle Skiing.

Most people fear getting injured and not be able to continue doing the sports they love because access to mountains, river or places to test our boundaries is an essential part of what it means to be human. Most athletes are not looking for sensation but, are looking for other rewards like connecting with nature and a better understanding of themselves. Instead of NO FEAR

mentality so often associated with Action Sports media, athletes actually do feel fear and it is a good thing to have because fear reminds you to pay attention and this is important. You can't be on autopilot or making status updates on your phone while you're packing your parachute before jumping off a cliff, and not before kayaking off a thirty-foot waterfall.

In 1996, there were only 200 skate parks in the United States but now there is over 3000. Even with the acceptance of the new sports among society, some athletes still see themselves as outsiders of the sports and want to push their limits and create something new. These are the athletes who have pushed the sports to the place they are now, and these are the athletes who will push these sports to a place we can't even imagine. Rodney Mullan who is a professional skateboarder said in the book for Extreme Sports,

“Skateboarding is as much, or more of, an art or mode of expression than it is a sport. What Skateboarding has given me is precisely that: a form of expression that drew me to it, and, in so doing, I was able to express and be who I wanted to be through it, in a sense. And establish myself within a community that were all essentially outsiders like myself. And by doing that, it gave me a place, a sense of belonging.”

4 years ago, I started in Parkour and Free-Running and Skateboarding myself, and now BMX, I strongly believe in this quote and follow it every time I go out to practice and believe that other athletes or anybody that has a dream and goal in their life, should follow it too.

Track athletes are no different. 9 time Olympic track and field gold medallist Carl Lewis said: “The joy that comes from ‘going beyond’ is the most incredible feeling in the world. I have felt it many times. And I have enjoyed watching others experience it.”

‘Your time is limited, so don't waste it, by living someone else's life . . . Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.’