

## Book Review

### ***The Mountain in My Mind*, Charlie Botting (2020), a note from the author, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2020**

*The Mountain in My Mind* is my first book and I wanted to share with you a little of my story, some of the writing process and what the book is all about.

The idea for this book began with a conversation in the truck where Kevan asked me if I thought about writing a book from my journal. A book about my transformational journey to self-actualization. I thought this was crazy. Not until I held the finished printed book in my hands did I stop thinking it was crazy.

But I knew I had a story to tell and so that's what I did. I mapped out my chapters, very grateful that I'd kept such a detailed journal for my time at the ranch. I decided I'd write about my first six months here. In that time I completed my wilderness guide school and my five month immersion program, so it seemed a natural start and finish for my book.

The book details my transformational journey for you. I started as a guide school student and quickly progressed to teaching guide schools and guiding guests through the mountains. I drove a skidder, ran a chainsaw, shot a .22 rifle. I stayed at five of our mountain camps, rode seventeen of our thirty-five horses and learned about myself and others from nature, our horses and my fellow community partners. Through this, I developed a strong connection to the wilderness and nature that surrounded me.

I learned about the wildlife and habitats in the South Chilcotin Mountains and played my part in their conservation. I learned about the balance of the animal species in the area. I observed the impacts of human activity on the wildlife. I scouted for all kinds of animals and gained an in depth knowledge of their behaviour and habits. Seeing wild animals roaming free in their natural environment was a deeply moving experience.

During my time at the ranch, I learned about the supportive community philosophy we have here. I internalized the philosophy and learned how to live by it. I then became a part of developing it. This was what started me on my transformational journey. It was what inspired me to continue climbing my personal mountain, to overcome every challenge and celebrate every success. I grew in ways I could never have imagined and achieved more than I ever expected. Every day was a first time experience and from every event I learned something that helped me grow and evolve.

That's where my writing came in. I started with small projects but my work quickly snowballed into creating blog stories, podcasts and a whole new website, Trails to Empowerment. I filled files with paperwork, researching and developing our philosophy. I learned from books and podcasts the philosophy that was central to the ranch. I used my writing to show my fellow community partners and the world how this philosophy is applied to our lives at the ranch.

By the end of October, I became a mentor guide, community partner, wilderness steward, skidder operator, writer, editor and researcher. I gained self-confidence, achieved self-actualization, learned how to overcome challenges, developed a positive attitude, contributed to my community and conserved my environment.

I wrote this book in six weeks. Then came the editing and printing process. I phoned the printer with many, many questions that they were always happy to answer. I researched and hired an editor. I got my

mom back in the UK to proof-read my finished manuscript. Then Kevan, Fenja, Dale and Manon helped with the final read through. Fenja helped with the graphic design of my cover, photo pages and page layout.

Lots of people told me writing, editing and printing a book in three months was impossible, crazy, not going to happen. None of those people were my community partners at the ranch. That's how, more than anything, I know I'm in the right place.

I did the impossible every day and my community partners were with me every step of the way.

All the events in my book were the vehicle from which I could climb my personal mountain to self-actualization. This book is my opportunity to inspire you to embark on your own transformational journeys.