




# INTRODUCTION

CHASING  
THE  
ELEMENTS



I've been an outdoors creature all my life. I've doused stresses, hardships and moments of clarity and elation with equal doses of wilderness, travel and action.

I've found myself in hostile situations in the newly-formed Slovakia when I was seventeen whilst attempting to get to the Tatra Mountains to climb and snowboard; I've paddled back to land from an offshore reef where I'd been bitten and made to bleed by 'something' in the water while surfing; I've motorbiked through the bush at night where machete-wielding gangs reside. I've twice won triathlon championships by training in all elements in the Welsh mountains, racing 200 other athletes during the 1.5K swimming leg in a peat-laden lake during a storm in North Wales, falling into mountain ditches whilst still clipped into my road bike, swimming against the tide and alongside a passenger ferry in the Irish sea.



I love the feeling of being present, at any given moment, with complete awareness of my physicality.

This background and my profession as a conflict zone and natural disaster filmmaker has conditioned me to conduct my life with drive, fast decision-making, self-awareness and honesty. I've filmed at ground zero in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan, refugee camps in Iraqi Kurdistan, Zero Point in Turkey and the Syrian border where communities continue to flee from Daesh (aka, ISIS). I've worked through aftershocks in Nepal after the deadly earthquakes.



The backdrop to my life has been my extreme sports blog, [www.iLivExtreme.com](http://www.iLivExtreme.com), which has been a gateway for me to speak with and listen to athletes and adventurers who possess the same compulsion to test themselves in all natural environments and push themselves until their bodies and souls are on fire.

What I've learned is that ego plays a part, but it's also about self-awareness, candour and focus.

I've always felt that there's an invisible wire connecting my body to the great outdoors, to testing my physical endurance and back to my perception of self. I've come to learn that there's incredible strength in vulnerability; make it your friend. Be comfortable with it showing up unannounced and staying a while. If you can master this, with all of the roses and thorns that it can create inwardly and outwardly, you've succeeded; you're living in the moment.

Throughout this book, you'll notice that I've included featured photographs by the incredible action sports photographer Ben Selway. I'm very lucky in that I am able to call upon Ben and his wife Hawk, both great friends. Not only are they both survivors of life's tribulations, but they've learned to enjoy each moment, appreciate the simple things and to live well. Ben's love of the



ocean, vast landscapes and skies casts a light onto how beautiful our planet is.

We must explore and enjoy it, but in so doing recognise that we owe our world compassion; replenish its energies, adore its expanses and do right by it.

Thanks for reading, and enjoy the book

Liv

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