

OPINION

Climb every mountain

After a bad climbing accident and years regaining her confidence in the sport she loves, **Eleanor Lister** embraced the value of stressful situations and taking on new challenges in the hope of growth and learning

UNFORTUNATELY, I sort of enjoy challenging myself and stepping into unknown situations (like the time I jumped on a ship with 12 hours' notice and spent two years sailing around Antarctica and Australia, but that's a story for another time).

Challenging ourselves can be unpleasant. Stress and discomfort can be horrible. Being comfortable with "failing" is difficult.

But there's a lot to be said for the benefits of facing situations head on and doing the hard work if it means growing.

About ten years ago I had a particularly nasty climbing accident in which I nearly lost my forearm. It was a completely isolated incident, and I was very lucky it wasn't worse.

Two metal plates, 13 screws, and six months later I was given the all-clear to return to rock climbing. Physically I'd healed, but I couldn't have anticipated how much of a challenge it would be mentally to return to the sport I adored. My confidence had been shattered.

I found myself half-way up a cliff crying. Tunnel vision. Terrified I'd hurt myself again. Unable to go down due to rising tides, the only way was up.

I realised I had two options: I could either sell my gear and retire from climbing (tempting...), or I could figure out how to work through the fear.

If I wanted to carry on climbing, I really only had one option.

There were also no shortcuts, I had to do the hard work to see improvements, and it was going to take time. I had to start from scratch, and rebuild trust and confidence in my climbing partners, equipment and myself.

It took years to start genuinely feeling comfortable climbing again. There were a lot of tears, a lot of frustration, and I frequently considered stopping. But there were also a lot of rewards, a lot of great days and a lot of growth which made it worth it.

I started trying to let this mentality into my every day. Embracing stressful situations and taking on new challenges in the hope of growth and learning.

When Andy, the editor, asked me if I would like to write a column, I immediately felt anxious. I've never written a column before. "Absolutely," I told him, still anxious.

He told me I could write about anything. My stress increased trying to think of a subject. I have a lot of thoughts and interests, but how does someone even write a column? Does anything I have to say hold any value? What if it's rubbish?

I'm new to the newsroom team and the world of reporting. I recently joined the team seeking a career change, looking to learn new skills and try different things.

I sat in the anxiety of my new task and realised maybe the theme was obvious:



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doing things that make me nervous, and why I try to do them anyway.

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awkward and vulnerable, often with the perceived risk of embarrassment.

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invitation to write a second one. Fingers crossed.

When I decided to jump into a completely new career, with little experience, I felt uncertain and nervous. It would have a steep learning curve. I also had to be prepared to go through a lot of trial and error while learning.

But in the short time I've been with the JEP, I've learnt a lot. I've developed new skills, and I've met some wonderful people. Reinforcing the value, for me, in trying new things.

If I can inspire just one person to try something new, even if it makes them nervous, that would be a wonderful result.

● Eleanor Lister is a local rock climber who has recently joined the JEP editorial team. She grew up in Jersey, spent some time travelling, fell in love with climbing while in Australia, came back to Jersey – which she found to be an incredible climbing place – and joined the Jersey rock climbing club, with which she has been climbing since.