

Discovering the Essence of a Microadventure

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2010

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the School of Exercise, Physical and Health Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of individuals who participate in microadventures in an effort to gain an understanding of the essence of a microadventure. A microadventure is defined as an intentional, short-term, often overnight adventure experience in a wilderness setting (Humphries, 2014). This study was guided by the main research question: What is the core experience of an individual who chooses to participate in microadventures? Nine participants who self-identified as microadventurers were interviewed. Transcripts of those interviews were analyzed. Five major themes emerged from the data: playful, benefits/costs, deliberately constrained, dynamic experiences, and identity. This study attempted to uncover the essence of a microadventure, a relatively unexplored phenomenon, and contribute to the literature on adventure studies.

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Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank all those who had a hand in inspiring this research and supporting me in the completion of the study. I would like to acknowledge the participants of this study for their keen interest and willingness to share the richness of their experiences. It was a pleasure hearing your stories and I feel honoured and humbled to be able to share them here. Thank you for the inspiration and the ever-growing microadventure to-do list.

I would like to sincerely thank Dr. John Meldrum for his guidance, support and encouragement for the past two years. It has been a great personal highlight to get to work with you on this project and I am very grateful for the opportunity. Thank you to Dr. Nevin Harper for the detailed insight, valuable feedback and guidance.

I would like to thank the many friends and former colleagues who showed an interest in this project and continue to inspire me every day. I would like to thank my family who helped to support me throughout this process. Thank you for believing in me.

Finally, thanks to my partner, Kate for coming along on this journey with me. Thanks for the study time, dog walks and meaningful support throughout this process. This project would not have been possible without you.

Territorial Acknowledgement:

The research, interviews, and majority of the adventures described in this paper take place on the traditional lands of the Coastal First Nations people of British Columbia. The writer acknowledges with respect the Lekwungen-speaking Peoples on whose traditional territories the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSANEC peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

One of the most common ways that individuals experience nature in the modern Western world is through short duration trips to natural spaces (Cordell, Betz, Carter & Green, 2008). The nature of these trips is dynamic, and no two outdoor experiences are ever the same. Short-term outdoor adventures, or microadventures, involve more than simply going for a day hike or spending an afternoon at the beach. They often include overnight excursions and allow participants to engage with their surroundings in an intimate way, while still including many elements of traditional adventure such as: risk taking, uncertainty, excitement, and discomfort (Roberts, 2018). Microadventures have the potential to be transformative, intense, traumatic, exciting, and challenging (Humphries, 2014).

As a whole, contact with natural environments is beneficial to many aspects of health, helping to reduce stress, and increase emotional wellbeing (Hinds & Sparks, 2009). Outdoor activities can also be an excellent tool for improving psychological and physical health (Barton, Bragg, Pretty, Roberts & Wood, 2016; Ewert & Yoshino, 2011; Clough, Hough-Mackenzie, Mallabon, & Brymer, 2016; Maller, Townsend, Browne, & St. Leger, 2005). As well as benefitting health, spending time in the outdoors can provide an intrinsically rewarding experience that positively influences a person's day-to-day life (Godbey, 2009; Hinds & Sparks, 2009).

Adventure can be an intimidating word for many people (Culp, 1998). Individuals with multiple commitments and busy lives might find it difficult to consider finding the time, energy, or inspiration to participate in more adventurous activities. Thus, microadventures could be an increasingly popular option for people to experience the outdoors. Microadventures retain much of the animating qualities of traditional outdoor expeditions but in a more accessible and achievable format (Humphries, 2014).

The concept of microadventures appeals to an individual's adventurous side; a microadventure can push an individual to break routine, even among everyday commitments (Roberts, 2018). A microadventure seeks to accommodate the pressures and stresses of the modern world and still fit in a connection to the natural world around us (Humphries, 2014). Heading out after work to hike in the mountains and sleep out under the stars before returning to work the next day can be an achievable goal for a person maintaining a full time job.

In his book *Microadventures: Local Discoveries for Great Escapes* (2014), Alastair Humphries outlines many examples of what a typical microadventure may be. These microadventures are always short-term, local to the participant and usually include an overnight element. A typical example of this would be: packing gear, leaving one's place of work but instead of going home; heading to a wild location nearby and spending the night. In the morning, the microadventurer would get up and head back to work. Microadventures may be an ideal way for busy people to fit adventure into their lives and receive the benefits of an adventurous activity and experience in the natural environment. However, people that participate in microadventures may not necessarily describe themselves in this way; they may view the trips as more than short-term leisurely pursuits.

There is a great deal of research on the impacts and implication of time spent in nature, as well as the perceived benefits of adventurous activities (Clough et al., 2016; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Russell et al., 2013). These research areas lead me to thinking about a variety of questions that relate to microadventures. How much time in nature is required before the desired effects are achieved? What specific benefits are gained from microadventures? Is a microadventure still as satisfying an experience for those who choose to participate? Is it lessened at all by the self-imposed limitations or constraints? Leisure constraint theory suggests that it is not merely the presence of constraints that determine if a person will participate, rather the successful negotiation of these constraints that determines

how and if one participates (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). With an understanding of constraint theory we can seek to discover the type of constraints that a microadventurer would need to negotiate in order to pursue their goals and potentially how they use these constraints for the enhancement of the experience.

Microadventurers may be individuals who navigate and use constraints to impact their own experiences in nature. Microadventures, on the surface, may seem like a more accessible option for further participation in the outdoors, but is this the case? This study seeks to not only understand the lived experiences of microadventurers and discover what those experiences mean to them, but to also discover who the people currently participating in microadventures are and share their stories.

Purpose Statement:

The overall goal of this study will be to explore the lived experiences of individuals who participate in microadventures. Despite the increased popularity of the microadventure phenomenon (Roberts, 2018), there is a lack of published material on the concept of microadventures and short-term adventures. This research seeks to fill this gap and add to the library of work on adventure. This study seeks to find meaning and gain insight on the essence of a microadventure.

While this research is conducted with a small population of adventure enthusiasts and is not generalizable across all populations, it may offer the opportunity for the reader to gain insight and understanding about the notions of microadventures. In order to aim for rich and meaningful understandings, this study utilized in-depth qualitative interviews to engage the narratives of the participants, and discover the essence of a microadventure.

Research Questions:

Research questions help to focus ideas by providing a structural dimension to the research process (Creswell, 2013). These research questions are open ended, inviting the views of study participants (Creswell, Hanson, Clark-Plano, & Morales, 2007). The following questions provided a guide to explore the experiences of individuals who choose to recreate through microadventures.

Main Research Question

1. What is the essence of a microadventure? What is the core experience of an individual who chooses to participate in microadventures?

Sub-questions

2. Are there minimums in the type, difficulty, or distance required to make it a microadventure?
3. What constraints do microadventures work through and intentionally use?

Operational Definitions

Microadventure: an intentional, short-term, often overnight adventure experience in a wilderness setting (Humphries, 2014).

Nature: physical features and processes of nonhuman origin that people ordinarily can perceive, including the “living nature” of flora and fauna, together with still and running water, qualities of air and weather, and the landscapes that comprise these and show the influence of geological processes (Hartig, Mitchell, de Vries, & Frumkin, 2014).

Wilderness: a western concept applied to large areas of uninhabited land containing native plant and animal communities relatively unaltered or unaffected by human society (McDonald, Wearing, & Ponting, 2009).

Outdoor adventure: leisure pursuits in a natural environment, composed of one or more of the six elements (Davidson & Strebbins, 2011); including, but not limited to: hiking, biking, climbing, walking, and kayaking.

CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction:

Spending time in wild spaces can positively affect the wellbeing of an individual, and increase holistic health (Russell et al., 2013; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Similarly, participating in adventurous activities can improve an individual's health and wellbeing (Clough et al., 2016).

In modern society, many lifestyles are becoming disconnected from nature and individuals are more constrained when attempting to access natural spaces (Miller, 2005); therefore, it is important to think creatively about how to manage one's time and fit in adventurous outdoor activities. The majority of the research in this area is qualitative in nature and focuses on a given population, rather than humans or society as a whole. Most of the research into the impacts and outcomes of adventure and nature are based in self-report data and are told through story telling or interviews. The research that describes physical measures of health tends to be more quantitative or even mixed methods approaches. This chapter explores nature and its impact on an individual, adventure and its impact on an individual, adventures in nature, constraints and microadventures.

Nature and its Impact on an Individual:

The natural world has long been a fascination for mankind. There is no question that nature can have a considerable effect on a person (Bratman, Hamilton & Daily, 2012). There are many benefits of nature that have been researched and discussed. Conversely, there are some drawbacks as well. This chapter highlights the physical, psychosocial, spiritual and restorative benefits of nature. The physical, psychological and environmental drawbacks are also considered.

There are many ways that the natural world can affect the physical body. The biophilia hypothesis states humans have an innate affinity for the natural world (Wilson, 1984). This perhaps relates to our evolution and to a time before the majority of humans lived in urban, built environments. The biophilia hypothesis has long been a way for humans to explain the abundance of health benefits found in the outdoor environment (Howell, Dopko, Passmore, & Buro, 2011). It is also widely known that elements of the natural world have positive effects on the environment and have health benefits for humans. Trees produce oxygen and enhance air quality and as such will have a positive effect on one's physical health, which may contribute to feelings of wellbeing (Hartig et al., 2014). Time spent in nature may help address other global chronic health issues such as depression (Rosenberg, Lange, Zebrack, Moulton & Kosslyn 2014; Fruhauf et al., 2016) and cardiovascular disease as well (McCurdy, Winterbottom, Mehta & Roberts, 2010). Exposure to nature correlates with a reduction in hyperactivity in children (Berry et al, 2015), increased test scores (Strife & Downey, 2009) and greater creativity in youth exposed to nature (Atchley, Strayer & Atchley, 2012).

While nature can have an affect on the physical body, perhaps one of the most impactful areas it can benefit humans is psychologically (Bratman, Hamilton & Daily, 2012; Hinds, 2011; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Compared to those who spend the majority of time indoors, outdoor learners are shown to have increases in psychosocial health (Mutz & Muller, 2016). The ways that nature can affect the psychological health of an individual are increased self-esteem, lowered stress, mental restoration, elevated mood, and increased feelings of nature connectedness (Barton, Bragg, Pretty, Roberts & Wood, 2016; Ewert & Yoshino, 2011; Ambrose-Oji, 2013; Mackerron & Mourato, 2013). When comparing individuals who exercise indoors, and those who do the exact same exercise in the natural environment, those in the outdoor group have statistically shown to have increased positive

affect, relaxation, and fascination and less negative affect (Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011; Bratman, Hamilton, & Dailey, 2012; Rogerson, Gladwell, Gallagher, & Barton, 2016).

The spiritual benefits of nature are described through the feeling of being connected to the natural world (McDonald, Wearing, & Ponting, 2009). Connectedness to nature is associated with improved psychological health, general feelings of well-being and greater positive affect (Capaldi, Dopko & Zelenski, 2014). Nature connectedness and well-being may be mediated by meaning in life (Howell et al., 2011). Those who are highly nature connected may derive a sense of meaningful existence from their closeness with nature, and this may in turn boost well-being (Howell et al., 2011). Nature connection is shown to be strongly associated with feelings of spirituality (Saraglou, Buxant & Tilquin. 2008).

The restorative effect of nature has been extensively documented (Kaplan, 1995; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Ryan et al., 2010). According to Kaplan (1995), there are four components of a restorative environment. These include: being away, fascination, extent and compatibility. For many people, being in nature covers all of those components. Being in a natural environment will remove an individual from their stressful environment, which will have a positive effect on their general effect (Kaplan, 1995). Using the natural environment as an escape from the pressures and stresses of one's life will remove them from that environment, and even act as a buffer between stressful life events and health. This explains that often during times of stress, individuals will seek time in green space for restoration (van den Berg, Maas, Verhij, & Groenewegen, 2010).

For all the benefits nature can have on an individual, there are some drawbacks to consider. For instance, modern urban youth commonly experience feelings of being afraid and uncomfortable when they are exposed to wilderness settings during mandatory school trips (Bixler & Floyd, 1997). Furthermore, many participants on outdoor adventure programs report that being alone in the wilderness gave them an overwhelming sense of fear and

anxiety (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Given the rawness of the natural environment, many people closely associate deep wilderness with death (Wu, 2013). Often not considered is the effect that nature has on those closest to the serious nature user. A study conducted on the significant others of mountaineers showed that a person's partner's absence into wild places can cause psychological distress, anxiety, and loneliness (Wu, 2013).

Adventure and its Impact on an Individual

Participation in adventure has been associated with developmental outcomes such as personal growth, enhanced interpersonal skills, and group development (Ewert & Garvey, 2007). The unfamiliar nature of adventure programming environments has been credited with fostering new perspectives, an increased sense of mastery, and even spiritual growth and transformation (McKenzie, 2000). These outcomes have been attributed to the resolution of cognitive dissonance from which the participant emerges with an enhanced self-concept (Nadler, 1993). For these reasons, it is clear why many people choose to use adventure as recreation. The physical, psychosocial and spiritual benefits of adventure are highlighted, as well as the physical, psychosocial, environmental and gender biased based drawbacks.

Adventurous activities have been shown to increase physical activity levels in the person who participates in them (Clough et al., 2016). Participating in physical activity can have incredible positive effects on the health of human beings. These benefits include: decreased chance of cardiovascular disease, improved circulation, decreased chances of developing disease, and lower occurrences of virtually all causes of mortality (Janssen et al., 2010).

Adventure also has many psychological benefits. These include positive affect, self-efficacy and resilience. Additionally, an adventure provides opportunities to overcome challenges and have optimal experiences. Finally, adventure provides opportunities to fulfill basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Clough et al., 2016).

Many people utilize adventure to feel part of something bigger (McDonald et al., 2009). The awe experiences of adventure, for some people, are tantamount to a spiritual experience. In a study of youth and combat veterans, the awe associated with outdoor adventure is correlated positively with overall wellbeing (Anderson, Monroy, & Keltner, 2018) and for this reason it can be viewed as a major benefit of adventure experiences.

However, despite all benefits of adventure, there is a dark side to adventure that should be considered. Adventurous activities can have a very high level of risk, which has a negative impact on a person psychologically. While mitigating that risk and overcoming a challenge could add to the experience in a positive way, the fear and anxiety associated with adventure can be a barrier for some people to be involved (Koole & van den Berg, 2005). Outdoor expeditions can cause extreme levels of stress and worry for those who are in a close relationship with an individual who partakes in such adventures, such as a parent or partner (Wu, 2013). These feelings of fear and anxiety will be important when considering adventurous physical activity.

Traditionally women are more constrained than their male counterparts when being involved in adventurous activities (Doran, 2016). Doran argues that women struggle with the same constraints as men, plus many others due to societal pressure on females and lack of role models in the adventure industry. Adventure has been seen to be male defined and male dominated (Knapp, 1985). The outdoors has been identified as an area for masculine activity, subsequently denying access to many women (Little, 2006). This preference for one gender over the other, historically, is a clear and obvious limitation. More efforts have been made toward gender equality in the realm of adventure. While advances have been made in for women in adventure, further research is required to address this issue (Doran, 2016).

Rose and Paisley (2012) argue that there is a prevalence of white privilege in experiential education. The majority of leaders, guides, and participants in adventurous

programming tend to be middle-class, white individuals. As well, given the relative cost of participation in adventurous activities, people of lower socioeconomic status are often excluded from participation. This lack of equality in experiential education is a barrier to participation for many and one that requires further study (Rose & Paisley, 2012).

Adventures in Nature

Adventure and nature tend to go hand in hand. Adventures in nature could be described as outdoor physical activity as there tends to be a physical element to an outdoor adventure. An adventure in nature differs from simply being in nature because there is usually a physical element, as well as an increased perceived risk (Davis-Berman & Berman, 2002). Outdoor adventures include but are not limited to activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, canoeing, swimming, hiking, mountain biking and camping. Adventures in nature are positively related to increases in physical activity (Sharma-Brymer & Bland, 2016). Contact with nature promotes health and well-being (Maller et al., 2005). Exposure to adventures in nature can aid in relaxation, mental restoration, positive emotions toward self and place, increase social connectedness and feelings of tranquility and peace (Irvine, Warber, Devine-Wright & Gaston, 2013).

Adventures in nature can help promote successful ageing across physical, social, psychological domains (Boyes, 2013). These quests can also produce optimal levels of stress, anxiety and disequilibrium, the resolution of which promotes growth, learning and increased resilience (Ewert & Yoshino, 2011). People who choose to participate in adventurous activities need to successfully negotiate the constraints they face in order to participate (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991).

There are many documented examples of how adventures can positively impact the life of an individual, however there have been criticisms. Brookes (2004) views outdoor education as a “long dead horse” that many simply refuse to acknowledge. His argument is that many of the educational benefits of learning in the outdoors could be achieved elsewhere and rebukes the common held belief that outdoor adventure education is absolutely essential. (Brookes, 2004)

Constraints

Leisure constraints theory has continued to develop since its inception in the 1980s (White, 2008). The term ‘constraints’ is used in a technical sense to refer to the many personal, task-related or environmental factors that act as boundaries to shape the behaviors that emerge during learning experiences (Brymer & Davis, 2013). Constraints research describes not only the barriers commonly faced by individuals in pursuit of leisure activities, but attempts to explain the process with which one negotiates those constraints to participate. Identifying and negotiating the barriers to physical activity are important to understanding why certain individuals are able to participate in a given activity and why others are not.

The most widely accepted theoretical framework of leisure constraints was proposed by Crawford and Godbey (1987). They contend that constraints intervene between preferences and participation (structural), but they also affect preferences in several significant ways, most notably through the operation of two other types of constraint (interpersonal and intrapersonal). Crawford and Godbey defined an intrapersonal constraint as the psychological state of an individual. This is a person’s attitudes and opinions about themselves and their chosen leisure activity. An interpersonal constraint is the result of relationships, or lack thereof with others. The final type of constraint is structural. These are

physical or environmental factors such as time, money, and physical state (injury or fitness level).

This model was later expanded upon by Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991). These authors indicated that leisure constraints could be explained with a 3-dimensional hierarchical model. The hierarchical model ranks the different types of constraint and shows a path one must negotiate through them to participate in an activity. It shows that intrapersonal constraints must be negotiated first, followed by interpersonal constraints and finally structural constraints. This is significant because a person will most often cite a structural constraint as their main barrier to participation such as lack of money or time, but it might actually be the intrapersonal constraints that will most affect their participation. (Crawford et al., 1991).

Perhaps the most important takeaway from constraints research is that more constrained people do not necessarily participate less than less constrained people (Crawford et al., 1991). Participation is not dependant on a lack of constraints, but rather successful negotiation through them. According to this theory those individuals who participate in microadventures do not have any more or less constraints than those who do not but they are more successful at navigating their constraints and perhaps even get some enjoyment or satisfaction from that process. More and more constraints are being viewed in a positive light. They may be seen as something that enhances an experience rather than a barrier to it.

Microadventures

Since 2012, the concept of microadventures has gained popularity on social media. On various forms of social media, mainly twitter and instagram, microadventures have been gaining traction and recognition (Roberts, 2018). The microadventure movement started in

the United Kingdom by British adventure – Alastair Humphries, to get individuals with busy lives more active in the outdoors. On social media, there have been over 350 000 instances of people searching and using the term microadventure. Microadventures are any adventure that is close to home, cheap, simple, short and yet very effective (Humphries, 2014).

Microadventures have the spirit of a big adventure, but condense it down to a time frame that is more realistic for the average person. They are often described as an overnight outdoor adventure that is small and achievable, for normal people with normal lives (Humphries, 2014).

Another view of microadventures could be that they are an intentionally constrained adventure in nature. Participation in microadventures requires the successful negotiation of constraints, but for the purposes of the activity, it may add to the experience. You are intentionally restricted in time, gear, distance able to travel, and locations.

The research on microadventures is limited in that there is not much formal research that identifies microadventures specifically. There are some studies conducted on short-term adventure experiences, the results of which are encouraging. Short-term adventure experiences can positively affect levels of resilience (Ewert & Yoshino, 2007). Short-term nature exposure can promote greater feelings of connectedness to nature and increased desire to live sustainably (Zelenski & Nisbet, 2015). The Japanese practice of *shinrin-yoko* (or forest bathing) has shown that time spent in nature, even short term, has a positive effect on all five of the human senses (Ambrose-Oij, 2013). When compared to walking in alternative settings such as urban areas, the forest walks were found to reduce stress levels measured using blood pressure, pulse rate, heart rate variability and salivary cortisol (Park et al, 2007).

It is known that time in nature and adventurous activities have many positive affects on the physical and psychological well being of an individual, so a microadventure may be the perfect way to achieve these and other benefits. The convenience of a local, close to

home adventure may appeal to individuals who are weighed down by many of the constraints of daily life. Through constraints the microadventurer may actually have a heightened or increased experience due to the limitations set in their way. Part of the appeal of a microadventure may be the mental challenge of negotiating those constraints in order to participate. Through the shared lived experiences of microadventurers we can gain insight into what that experience means to them and discover the true essence of a microadventure.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

Phenomenology

Phenomenology describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants (Creswell, 2013). The phenomenon in this study is the concept of a microadventure. The focus of this study is to describe the core experience of individuals who participate in microadventures. This research aims to discover an understanding of the lived experience of microadventurers.

In an effort to fully understand the experiences of those individuals, a series of semi-structured interviews was conducted. This was intentionally chosen to give the participants a platform to describe the meaning of their experiences as best they could with some flexibility if they felt they wanted to expand or describe certain aspects that they felt strongly about (Creswell, 2013). The researcher seeks to find meaning within and across all interviews and collects what information the participants have in common (Creswell et al., 2007). In this type of qualitative research, the researcher acts as the tool that gathers, filters, and organizes the data. This was integral to the research design as the researcher conducted interviews, transcribed and performed initial analysis. In order to understand the researcher has connection and awareness of the topic (Creswell et al., 2007).

Phenomenology as a concept has varied meaning and uses and to many and can be a world view, a philosophical approach (Smith, 2018). Phenomenology can also be used as a way to view the essential nature of the experience of an individual (van Manen, 2007). In this study, phenomenology was used as a way to view the essential nature of the experiences of individuals who participate in microadventures.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Because the goal of this study was to describe the lived experience of microadventurers, the participants selected were people who self identify as microadventurers; people who participate in microadventures as recreation. The researcher used the technique of snowball sampling to recruit participants. The method of recruitment involves using an individual who has the desired characteristics (in this case – a microadventurer) and using their social networks to recruit similar participants (Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton, 2010). There is a downside to interviewing so many like-minded individuals as it may limit the diversity of opinions; however, the benefit is that the people chosen are those who are actively participating and were accessed through a wider reach than otherwise possible. As the researcher is a professional outdoor educator and also participates in microadventures in his spare time, the researcher reached out to connections in his network via e-mail for referrals of appropriate candidates. The researcher used their existing connections in the outdoor recreation community to find participants that met the criteria for participation. After completing an interview, the researcher accepted suggestions or referrals of other potential candidates to interview.

In order to participate in this study: all participants were required to be English speaking, over the age of 18, and an active participant in microadventures.

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, ethics approval was sought and gained from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A). To achieve data saturation, semi-structured interviews were planned with the approximate number of ten participants or when data reached saturation. Saturation as described by Creswell et al. (2007) is the point where major themes in the data have been identified. Data saturation was reached after eight interviews as recurring themes were present in each of the interviews. A ninth interview was scheduled and completed because of a commitment made to that individual and their desire to

share their story. In total, nine semi-structured interviews were completed and included in the research. The ninth and final interview was included but did not yield any significant new information, which adds to the support of data saturation. The interviews were recorded digitally and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for the participants to describe their experiences in diverse ways, which were meaningful to them. It allowed for the researcher to ask clarifying questions as well as follow-up questions if it was determined that a participant had more to say on a particular topic or idea.

The researcher formulated and followed a general interview guide (see Appendix B) which allowed him to pre-determine questions but be flexible in the order of questions asked to suit the interview (Patton, 2002).

Before interviews began, each participant, in accordance with ethical guidelines, signed a consent form (see Appendix C), as well as consented verbally to on-going consent. Participants were informed that their names would be changed and every effort would be made to remove any identifying features.

One-on-one interviews

Step 1: The researcher contacted interview subjects via phone, electronic mail or in person to inquire if they would a) be an appropriate subject for involvement in the study and b) be interested in participating. Those contacted by email were sent an invitation to participate that was approved by the Human Research Ethics Board (see Appendix D). Those that were chosen were offered an interview – in person at a location of their choosing. Some interviews took place in public places such as coffee shops, while others took place at an individual's place of work or private residence. The participants were given the option to choose the location based on their own comfort levels.

Step 2: Before the interview, each participant was given an opportunity to read and sign the informed consent form. After consenting to the form and ongoing verbal consent, a copy of the form was left with the participant and an interview was conducted.

Step 3: Interviews were between 30-45 minutes depending on participant contributions. All interviews were audio-recorded.

Researcher Bias

The nature of the research design situates the researcher as the research tool (Creswell et al., 2007). In this way, it is important to acknowledge that a bias exists and guides that researcher. It is impossible to refute the possibility of beginning research without preconceptions or bias (Lester, 1999). Plummer (1983) discusses that it can be useful to gain understanding of the researcher in the frame of the research, rather than simply viewing the researcher as an impartial observer. In the case of this study, the researcher is a professional outdoor educator and an active participant in microadventures. I have been working in the outdoors for over a decade and have long believed in the benefits of outdoor education and adventurous experiences for individuals and populations as a whole. As well as working and recreating in the outdoors on an expedition basis, I actively participate in microadventures. It is my belief that even small doses of wilderness can be effective in achieving the desired benefits of time spent in nature.

Reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process (Koch & Harrington, 1998). As Malterud (2001) states “a researchers background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the

framing and communication of conclusions.” For this reason it was important for me as the researcher to be aware of this and keep it on the forefront of the data collection and analysis. As well I included the main research supervisor and committee members involved in the process throughout the research as having multiple investigators can foster dialogue as well as lead to complementary as well as divergent understandings of the study (Koch & Harrington, 1998).

Data Analysis

Data analysis began once each interview was completed. The researcher searched for meaning within each interview and then searched for similarities or differences in the meaning across all interviews. For the purpose of this study, a series of nine semi-structured interviews were conducted until similar themes and ideas were consistent. Each interview was transcribed verbatim. The researcher listened to the audio recordings of each interview a minimum of three times before, during and after the transcription process. As well, each transcription was read and re-read multiple times by the researcher.

When each transcription was completed, the researcher highlighted important statements within. Transcripts were sent back to the participants for review to ensure their accuracy. Each transcript font was assigned a unique and distinct colour using Microsoft Word. As themes emerged, important statements from each interview were copied and pasted into separate documents representing the themes. If a quote or statement was applicable to multiple themes, it was placed in each applicable file. Initial analysis yielded themes entitled: “costs”, “culture/identity”, “constrained”, “dynamic”, “exploration”, and “purposeful”. These themes were determined because there were many important statements with a wide variation in colours, representing the times that they were mentioned or discussed by each interview participant.

When initial themes were sorted, the researcher and the principle supervisor reviewed the data and organized the themes into major themes and sub-themes (see table 2). The result of this was the organization of the major themes: “playful”, “benefits/costs”, “deliberately constrained”, “dynamic experiences”, and “identity”. These major themes were formed from the collection of sub-themes that were then grouped together to form a major theme. The sub-themes are: “benefits: purposeful, connection, challenge, and getting out there”, “costs: sacrifices comfort”, “constrained – time, gear, location”, dynamic experiences: solo vs. group, exploration, changes over time”, and core to the identity: sufferers, skill builders, mature.

Assumptions, Limitations & Delimitations

The researcher *assumed* the following to be true of this study:

1. Participants responded to interview questions honestly.
2. Participants were able to accurately describe and explain their experiences.
3. An interview was an appropriate way to understand the experiences of an individual.

The researcher also acknowledges that the following *limitations* of this study may impact the researcher, participants, data, or data analysis:

1. The sample size is small.
2. Recall bias – since the interview relies on self-report data, some information may be lost or altered through an inability to remember, or misremembering.
3. Social desirability bias- responses may be altered in an attempt to overprescribe feelings associated with microadventures as it may seem desirable to an individual.
4. Numerous demographic factors of the participant may have impacted the information presented (such as: age, gender, and life-stage)

The researcher will additionally understand that the following *delimitations* may impact the study:

1. Participants interviewed were all individuals who currently participate in microadventures.
2. Participants interviewed were all English speaking.
3. Participants were all competent adults, over the age of 18.

Chapter 4 – Findings

Introduction

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of microadventurers in a manner consistent with qualitative phenomenological design. Semi-structured interviews, ranging from 20-50 minutes in length, were conducted with nine individuals who identify as microadventurers. Each interview was recorded, transcribed and coded as outlined in the methods section. This chapter outlines brief biographies of the participants, as well as the findings from their interviews. The types of activities that each participant were involved with were varied, as was the breadth of microadventures that they participated in. Each participant could easily be described as “experienced” in the outdoors with a skill set more refined than the average person. The outdoor activities that the participants do as microadventures include but are not limited to: hiking, mountain biking, skiing, kayaking, canoeing, long distance running, swimming, surfing, camping, ski touring, snowboarding, and many more.

Participant Biographies

Each participant has a unique history when it comes to adventurous activities and their own approach to microadventures. The following is an introduction to each participant. Participant names have been changed and all identifying features have been removed to protect the identity of the participants.

Table 1.

Baseline Demographics of Participants

Name (Changed)	Gender	Age Range	Types of Microadventure	Interview Length
Alan	Male	40-50 years	Camping, Climbing, Paddlesurfing, Kayaking	29:50
Amy	Female	20-30 years	Camping, Hiking, Paddling	26:29
Barney	Male	30-40 years	Camping, Hiking, Paddling, Skiing	43:54
Bill	Male	30-40 years	Running, Biking, Camping, Hiking	34:37
Carlos	Male	30-40 years	Running, Biking, Hiking, Camping, Paddling	22:36
Greta	Female	20-30 years	Skiing, Hiking, Climbing, Paddling, Camping, Surfing	37:45
Kalvin	Male	30-40 years	Running, Camping, Trekking	47:59
Kyle	Male	50-60 years	Climbing, Hiking, Mountaineering, Camping	26:01
Rochelle	Female	30-40 years	Hiking, Camping, Paddling,	20:59

Carlos

Carlos' interest in adventure stems from exposure at a young age, exploring the area around his house. He has a keen interest in human powered and multi-element adventures, sharing his adventures to inspire others, and an extensive knowledge of the local area.

“I'd be there for the weekend and really just have free reign from everything from you know, building rafts and trying to float down Finlayson Arm, to exploring up in the woods behind the house, or exploring some of the beaches along the coast. That was kind of the earliest and now I'm just trying to push further and further with microadventures; what you can do in a day or two, and adding a little bit more of the endurance element and just getting creative.”

Carlos is currently employed in the field of outdoor education and participates in microadventures with great frequency and plans them around his unique work schedule.

Rochelle

Rochelle has always been adventure-inclined but her introduction to microadventures comes from a desire to reset or recharge from her busy lifestyle. She is passionate about water-based adventures, finding new gems in her backyard and keeping the cost of adventuring down.

“In the past I worked a job where I didn't have much time off so the microadventures I went on were like a one night stay ... for one night on one of the Gulf Islands. I slept on the top of a mountain after work and then started the next day at 8 AM. That was before I even knew what a “microadventure” was. It was just something to get away and watch the sunset and sunrise.”

Rochelle is currently working in skilled labor and uses her weekends as microadventure time. She is also currently planning some larger-scale adventures including a long distance paddling trip focused on environmental issues.

Barney

Barney's interest in microadventures coincided with the decision to try something new. He decided to take a different direction after finishing his degree and decided to pursue a new path professionally and personally.

“When I was in university, I was in a co-op program and there was a job posted (in adventure tourism) and I thought it sounded really cool but I never did it as a co-op. I decided that I would do a different job that would make me more money and allow me to stay at home. I decided that when I graduated, I would apply for that same job and try that out since I was going to take a break from more conventional pathways in life of like ... university straight to a career.”

Barney is currently employed in the outdoor industry and works seasonally in different locations around the world at different parts of the year.

Kalvin

Kalvin's participation in microadventures is rooted in basically two things; his need to be physically challenged, and his need to feel like he is making the most of his free time. He is very committed to microadventuring and participates as often as he can, usually weekly at a minimum.

“I've worked essentially Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 for going on 10 years now ever since I graduated from university. I have always needed, you know, they've always been “inside” jobs and I've always needed something to release because working inside ... builds up, like, a tangible physical tension in you if you're athletically inclined like I am. I grew up in a pretty outdoorsy family...fairly rural and just like always had a taste for nature but then my career path took me to the cities. I lived in Montreal after school, I lived in Vancouver and then I moved back here so it was always...without, you know, the brand of “microadventure” or trying to put a label on it or box around it ... I can always remember

being like okay: “after work, what am I doing with my time?” I've always felt this crazy pressure about time ---what am I doing with my time? Am I making the most of my time? My girlfriend will tell you that I'm like pretty fucking annoying to be around when it comes to time management because I'm up really early. I'm just ruthless about scheduling because I have this fear of not making the most of my time because I view going to work as such a huge give of your time. Its like: okay well I got some 40 hours of working and then I sleep a bunch and so ...like what am I going to do with that precious free time that I do have?

Kalvin is currently working at a job he considers primarily “indoors”.

Kyle

Kyle began his interest in adventures when introduced at a young age. It was then that he felt he found his purpose. He has participated in many adventures throughout his life from big large-scale adventures to microadventures. “I think I was 7 years old and had an older brother took me cross country skiing in Banff. I've written a short story about that, so that was a big influence. I think that the greatest influence was hearing an internal voice. If I were to put words to it, it would be “make your life in the mountains”.”

Kyle is currently working in the field of outdoor education and participates in microadventures as often as he can.

Amy

Amy's interest in adventure started at a young age and was centered on her time spent at summer camps, as well as an attitude of outdoor recreation in her family life. Her connection to the summer-camp life is what guided her into a life of adventure.

“I did definitely do like some hiking and stuff on vacations with my parents but was never super into it same as like cross-country skiing and cycling. I'd do it as a kid, but I was

not super into it. In summer camp, I got more into it and then guiding trips at camp is just like a really good way of like learning how to do that with an established system and then I had like kind of learned how to do everything that way and then started doing my own trips there.”

Amy is currently working with youth as well as in the outdoors. She participates in microadventures to help build her skills, connect to the outdoors and spend time meaningfully with friends.

Bill

Bill began his interest in adventures at a young age as well. He began with a multi element trips that including cycling, fishing, and camping. It began as a desire to get away and spend time with his friends.

“Yeah I suppose from an early age I grew up with cycling that was what sort of got me into adventures...and fishing with my friends from like teenage years and before that as well. I got the experience of being away and in the outdoors. Experiences the outdoors and stuff...13, 14 developing them skills...being outdoors...being away from urban places.”

He attributes his interest in microadventures to the British explorer Alastair Humphries who championed the “microadventure movement” in his native United Kingdom. Bill is currently employed in a position where he spends a lot of time indoors at a desk. He uses his microadventures for the physical and fun aspects.

Alan

Alan attributes his interest in adventurous activities to his early childhood and the way that he was raised. Alan did not have a conventional upbringing and was frequently moved from country to country due to his parent’s jobs. One consistent was his family’s chosen recreational pursuits were centered on outdoor adventure and van life.

“I started young...having been born overseas... our family, we travelled a lot so we

were always traveling new locations. We were a family who grew up in VW vans so all the way through my life we had a VW van and then myself up until probably about five years ago...six years ago had a VW van before I sold it. So the adventures would come from being able to just drive to different locations and access the wilderness to come back to the van in many cases.”

Alan is currently employed in an indoor job in the outdoor industry. Alan balances his work life, family life and mixes in microadventures whenever possible. He participates in many outdoor pursuits and uses microadventures as a way to stay connected to the outdoor world and fit that time into his lifestyle.

Greta

Greta has always been interested in outdoor recreation pursuits. Her passion for adventure was starting at home in her family life but she really started to realize her own passion for microadventures when she moved away from home to study at university.

“Microadventures probably started out at a young age with my family just starting on weekends or in the summer holidays to go out as a family as much as possible. I would say though I really started participating in my own microadventures when I started attending university when I was 17. I started to make a connection through the various outdoor clubs at university and with people in my class.”

Greta participates in large-scale adventures as well as microadventures. She uses her adventures as a lens of exploring the world around her and as a way of relating to the people in her social network. She participates in a variety of activities in the outdoors from ski-touring to sea kayaking to multi day hikes. She is currently employed seasonally in the outdoor industry and works in different locations around the world in the outdoors. She is also planning and participating in several large-scale adventures including several summit

hikes in New Zealand and a ski exploration trip to Kyrgyzstan.

Themes – Introduction

Throughout the coding process and after constant review, major themes began to emerge. Through consultation with the thesis supervisor and further review, five major themes were formed. Within most of these major themes, some subthemes were also present (see table 2). The major themes were relevant to every participant whereas some of the subthemes may be very relevant to a few people and less applicable to some others.

The five themes that were considered to be universal across the participants were: microadventures are playful, microadventures have benefits and costs, microadventures are deliberately constrained, microadventures are dynamic experiences, and microadventures are core to the identity of an individual.

Table 2.

Number of Participants who Discussed Themes and Subthemes

Major Theme	Subtheme
Playful N=9	
Benefits and Costs N=9	Benefits - Purposeful N=9 Benefits – Connection N=7 Benefits – Challenge N=8 Benefits – Getting out there N=5 Cost – Sacrifice N=8 Cost – Comfort N=6
Deliberately Constrained N=9	Time N=9 Gear N=8 Location N=9
Dynamic Experiences N=9	Solo vs. Group N=9 Exploration N=9 Changes over time N=9
Core to the Identity N=9	Sufferers N=4 Skill Builders N=3 Mature N=2

Table 2 shows the major themes and subthemes discussed by the research participants and the number of interviews that were applicable to each theme. Major themes were mentioned by all nine participants whereas sub-themes might not have been.

Microadventures Are Playful:

For the purpose of this study, the term playful refers to microadventure being game-like. The participants will set the rules to their game and attempt to be victorious by following the set of rules they have made for themselves. Carlos explains this:

“Pretty much every time I come back [from a microadventure] with like 3 new ideas and they might be changed into three different iterations by the time that happens but yeah ... The nice thing about a microadventure vs. a big grand adventure is you don't have to plan it too much and it can change five times before you got there and it doesn't really matter because the logistics and kind of details don't matter so much on a smaller scale.”

Carlos refers to the flexibility and inspiring nature of his microadventures that lead him to think of new and unique ideas for future trips. Calvin refers to this idea when it comes to taking existing trips or things someone else has done and modifying them to increase the difficulty level:

“Certainly like some of the cooler ideas I've had ... had been informed by other people some of which who I know, some of what you ... I just came across on the internet ...like [a friend] rode to Mexico like 10-15 years ago ...with a surfboard...and I was always like: ‘that’s a cool trip, you crazy bastard!’ All this time later I’m like...I’m gonna do that trip and I’m gonna do it harsher! I’m gonna go north! If somebody is like ‘oh I want to do a bike-surf tour’ or something even though that that's cool and I support that ... it's more the idea of...doing cool shit with your time, living a healthy life and being fulfilled by these meaningful experiences.”

For Calvin an interesting aspect of microadventuring is to adapt a trip or experience to his current skill level and always trying to up the ante.

Microadventurers, it seems will rarely do the same trip, the same way twice. Sure, they may go to the same places again and again but each time they will try a new route, go in

a different season, or try a different method of getting themselves there. For Bill, he mentions having a strict plan and how it affected his adventuring:

“I remember when I first did a multi-day bike-packing trip and you sort of plan it all out to the nail before I went. It was a super detailed plan. It was one of those times where I went to a place and it didn’t really work. I think that was one of those times where I had that experience. I made this rigid plan and if then that plan doesn’t happen and it can happen that way, you have to back it up a bit and so now I don’t plan that much.”

The flexibility and free style nature of the microadventure is what Bill is seeking from the experience. He is looking for something to go wrong and for him to be forced to adapt. He goes on to explain other ways he adapts his adventures for increased enjoyment:

“Doing something new or taking a new person ... it’s generally a rewarding, fun experience. I know what has to be done and so the more the more you do it the more you believe that you're capable of. Build up that experience of what I can do and then say, “What else could I fit into that?”

Microadventurers also seem to like to take something from their everyday life and make that a part of their adventure. Examples of this are evident when one considers the average everyday concept of meal preparation. Greta reveals that one playful aspect of her microadventures is based around food:

“Any opportunity to make a nice meal outside ... I’ll take it. Food is a really big element for me and we usually like planning some kind of intricate meals that we can cook on a stove and experimenting with different kind of meals. We will often strive to make a 3-course meal but like, outside or on a mountainside. We always make sure we have a starter, a main, and a dessert. That’s kind of a big a big thing for us.”

She continues to describe the importance of having a meal in a unique location:

“When I got to hike up to that summit and watch the sunrise ... going from feeling

pretty frustrated and tired - struggling mentally at 3:30 – 4:00 in the morning to getting up this mountain carrying a heavy pack to - I'm sitting at the top cooking breakfast with two of my best friends and just enjoying this amazing sunrise.”

Kalvin also references this idea that things that are normal and mundane in your everyday life are elevated and more exciting during an adventure. Something as simple as reading a book can be so much more impactful on a microadventure:

“An adventure doesn't have to necessarily be new things it can just be things that are natural and raw and clean and pretty and allow you to think about things like esthetic and things like your place in the world... you know and you can read a book and ponder the deeper meaning of it and I just don't like get that same detachment from like the grind of daily existence when you're in the city... you can read the same book in two totally different ways if you're sleeping under the stars or if you're at home.”

For Calvin, he is interested in making his microadventures more challenging by removing an aspect or replacing it with something more challenging. His example is about taking the vehicle out of the equation to add to the experience.

“For me, microadventuring is really contingent on the vehicle, which is unfortunate. I'm a big climate advocate and this year I'm really making a big push for human powered (trips) more and more.”

He continues:

“I think something like that is really the way forward - like a human-powered. Human-powered is the key; I'm trying to take the car out of it.”

By removing the option of driving to a given location he is increasing the difficulty of his microadventure in a way that is interesting and meaningful to him.

Microadventures Have Benefits and Costs

This theme can be broken down further into sub themes in an attempt to explain further. This theme can easily be broken down into “benefits” and “costs.” On the benefits side the subthemes are “purposeful”, “connection”, “challenging”, and “being out there”. The reasons that an individual partakes in microadventures are numerous, diverse and distinctly individual. The costs will be explained after the benefits. Both benefits and costs were mentioned and described by all nine participants.

Benefits – Purposeful

The subtheme of purposeful attempts to describe what it is that an individual is seeking when they decide to go on a microadventure and what they actually get out of the experience. When it comes to a purpose for microadventures Kyle states:

“I typically do that [microadventure] if I have some element that I want to put some attention to... like there's some fork in the road that I want to use the adventure as a tool for navigating...for navigating life.”

This shows that not only is Kyle choosing this purpose for his microadventure, but also he is seeking some level of clarity on the rest of his life. His use of microadventures allows his mind the space it requires to understand other complicated life issues. Kyle continues:

“...One of the greatest gifts in life is to actually see value in smaller things so I think that would be something that one would get out of a microadventure.”

For Alan he discusses how his desire to spend his time purposefully leads him into an entirely different hobby. He says:

“I started spearfishing as well because if I to head out and there was no swell and I want to be able to go get in the water some way and so I still have everything I needed when I

take my spear gun out and actually go underwater and hunt. The ultimate thing for me is feeling the energy of the ocean, seeing where it leads onto the land and being a part of it is where I get rejuvenated”

To satisfy his need for rejuvenation as well as participation in some type of adventure, Alan learned to spearfish so his journey out to the surf spot wouldn't be spoiled by a lack of waves or swell. He ensures that his trip will have an adventure one way or another.

Benefits – Connection

Another sub-theme relating to the benefits of microadventures is connection. People speak of needing to feel connected to nature in some physical or spiritual way. Rochelle said:

“...The connection with being outside and the environment and I think it is a spiritual connection to me in the world and then to be in the outside world... it makes me feel alive.”

She continues:

“Just being re-charged and it feels like my ... feels like when you take a little bit of time to unplug from your everyday world, then you can ... it makes your life more enjoyable. It makes you feel like you're actually doing something with your life and not just not the Monday-Friday 9 to 5, go home watch TV ... you're actually living and you remember those moments.”

For Rochelle and others, the connection to the natural environment and spending time in the outdoors is an escape from her life. It's a meaningful way for her to spend her time and she creates memories that she will think fondly on.

Amy also references this:

“...That connection to like self and nature ... even to other people, like that connection that you make in that kind of adventure or outdoor environment is so unique. Yeah and like this sense of self like: I feel like my sense of self and who I am is so deeply tied to being someone who goes outdoors and spends time outdoors. That is a fundamental

part of who I am so I can't imagine not doing that”

Amy also states that connection is one of her main motivations to participate. Even if her microadventure isn't a pleasurable one at the time she gets something deeper out of it.

She states:

“I think it's like a deep sense of connection...whether it's to yourself or to nature or to other people like there's you are deeply connected and present and what you're doing “

Barney mentions that for him, participating in a microadventure can be like hitting the reset button on some of the more boring and predictable aspects of daily life. He states:

“I think you can cope with a mundane lifestyle if you're on your days off doing something that is a really engaging and physical versus like people who just spend all week in the city and all weekend in the city and spend a lot of it indoors”

Kalvin also mentions this connection to the outdoors. He refers to it as a way to cope with the pressures of his day-to-day:

“...You know I've always done “knowledge work” so it's like a chance to like not have a screen around or like, not being in a conversation and just like have that quiet a bit. The quiet and the time for reflection is really important especially the immediately after the workday.”

Bill has a similar viewpoint:

“When you're on an adventure it sort of drowns the humdrum of life...all the emails and phone calls and that rubbish, you don't have to think about stuff like that. You switch that part of the brain off. I think that's one of the deeper and obvious attraction and just sharing and getting out into some awesome places. It makes memories that don't fade away.”

Benefits – Challenge

Some individuals will participate in microadventures because they are actively

seeking a challenge. These individuals are hoping to get something meaningful out of their experience and as such, the experience cannot be too easy. For many microadventurers, an element of challenge is essential.

The idea of challenge and pushing your boundaries appears to be important as discussed by Greta:

“I would say I'm fairly adventurous in nature...I'm willing to push my boundaries a bit, but I'm also in a situation in life I know everybody's going to react different to a different kind of situation. Right now I have no ties... I don't have any. I'm kind of the only I'm the only thing holding myself back. I don't see many barriers in my life. I think almost everything is possible”

For Bill, the idea of a microadventure being a challenge is absolutely essential to him:

“You've got to feel reasonably tired, like you've put some effort in at the end of the day. Overcome a few obstacles ... a few dramas maybe.”

As Bill states, it's absolutely necessary for him to have some challenge aspect in his microadventures. Calvin echoes this sentiment as he rather succinctly puts it:

“People are lacking those types of experiences at any scale and we're afraid to engage with things that are challenging and uncomfortable I think and it creates a lot of value in your life anyways more than just like how good you are at your sport or whatever... it reframes the way you approach challenges in work or challenges in your relationship.”

Calvin explains why he feels challenge to be an important aspect of microadventure. In his opinion, people can avoid challenges and conflicts more often than embrace them in the real world. In the outdoors, on a microadventure, the same is not possible. The more experiences you have that make you face challenges, the more prepared you will be for the next one coming down the road.

Carlos knows that with his level of experience and amount of gear he should be able

to exist comfortably in an outdoor setting. Sometimes he likes to add other elements or go out in more interesting situations to increase the challenge for him. He states:

“To know that I have all this other equipment and I don't need it's a really cool feeling...almost like “back to the roots” kind of thing and it also adds like maybe a little bit of an element of challenge. I've been in lots of kinds of outdoor settings and I like to challenge myself in all sorts of different kind of weather climates”.

For Carlos, the opportunity to have a higher challenge will push him to go out in certain weather situations where other people may stay at home. His increased challenge is an incentive for him to participate.

Benefits- Getting Out There

As Barney discussed, for some the goal of a microadventure is to get to some location that is understood to have some geographical space from others. He says:

“I feel very satisfied with being able to see some of the remote like ... what I consider and what I know other people would consider, like: the most beautiful places in the world. It seems like knowing that there was a challenge to get there that not a lot of people and may have seen what I've seen...the wonder and awe is what I think about and what I strive for and my microadventures. The goal of any microadventure is to get to a location where the view of what you're seeing is beautiful and stunning and whether it be wildlife related or like actual like picturesque - the viewpoint but I mean that's why I go on them.”

Alan also mentions this idea of getting out there. For him, the benefits of microadventures can begin for him even as he is in transit to his chosen location. He says:

“Just even the drive ... by that time I can start breathing ... my atmosphere and my energy changes even if I'm not getting any waves.”

There are many benefits to going on microadventures. The ones that came up consistently across most of the interviews were purposeful, connection, challenge and getting

out there. Each person described may benefits associated with microadventuring but these specific benefits came up in many different interviews.

Costs – Sacrifices

On the other side, there are some costs associated with participating in microadventures. All nine participants described the costs to a microadventure in some form. Some of the sub-themes with relation to cost are “sacrifice” and “comfort”.

Many of the subjects interviewed alluded to having to sacrifice something in order to participate in microadventures. These sacrifices discussed can include financial matters or a lack of property. As discussed by Bill:

“I don’t own a house...maybe that would be a sacrifice. And I’ve maybe not had as long a career in certain jobs because I prioritize my lifestyle. I won’t have the job if I can’t do this adventure ... that sort of “freestyle” attitude.”

While Bill discusses that he may not be as far in his career or life plan as some of his peers, he also mentions that he does not regret his circumstance and happily adopts this attitude to continue to do adventures. Calvin also echoes that sentiment:

“I feel like maybe if I had a quieter lifestyle I’d probably own that house by now, but instead I spent all my time and resources obsessing about what to do next.”

Calvin continues:

“I think sometimes like a friend or a peer who's like “I bought a house or condo”. I've been financially ... a bit irresponsible and a lot of it is driven by like this insatiable black hole of like needing to do stuff... but no I don't regret it.

I think that life is lived in experience, not in possessions.”

As well as sacrificing potential income or owning property in the future, some of the participants also lamented the monetary cost of going on microadventures. According to Rochelle:

“...Keeping it cheap is important... it’s preferably not going to involve another ferry or lots of driving ... keeping the cost down is important.”

Amy also discusses the financial strain of adventuring, but as is consistent with the others, she doesn’t regret her choices:

“Sometimes money is a factor, just like...packing food for trips and gas and stuff but again like ... it’s worth it.”

Another often-mentioned sacrifice of a microadventurer is the social aspect of it. This can be in reference to friends, family or work-life. Alan discusses the strain it can put on his family life but also recognizes it can necessary for him to function well in that setting:

“Some family time [is sacrificed] for sure. I have to be a little bit selfish to be able to do it but I find that by being a little bit selfish I can give back a lot more and I can spend more time with the kids. It’s better for your mind frame to able to problem solve with them better. By taking that short amount of time to fill whatever it is that I need, that allows me to be more present with other people.”

Carlos also mentions that his adventuring can cause him to spend a lot of time away from home, but in doing so he feels he is a better person to be around when he is at home:

“For me the biggest things is being away from home a lot but it's not the same as going out and doing my own microadventure. I’ve got to do that kind of stuff to keep happy and keep sane”

The final sacrifice that is mentioned a fair bit is the social side of it. Friendships either suffer or are completely abandoned because of either a lack of time available to spend with someone or the gradual growing apart due to lack of mutual interest. According to Greta:

“I think I have let go of lot of friendships that aren’t as meaningful anymore. I definitely want to balance work and microadventures. I think I give up a lot of the social

element that comes along with the work: so going to the bar after work ... drinking ... going out for dinners.”

Greta mentions that she doesn't actively socialize as often as she used to because it hinders her ability to go on adventures. Calvin echoes this sentiment exactly:

“I miss the friendships aspect of it because I just like...I don't want to go to the bar on Friday or the pub and have some pints and hang out. I'm just not interested in that”

Costs – Comfort

Another subtheme of cost is comfort. There are many instances in which an individual will give up their feelings of comfort to participate in microadventures. Usually, the individual will disclose that being uncomfortable for a little while actually contributed to their overall experience. Calvin said:

“You're out on your Sunday bike ride and the weather turns to shit and you're cold and then you get a flat and you got to change that and your hands are cold and you're like this is uncomfortable and then you get home and it's fine”.

Amy also refers to the feelings of discomfort and her preferences when choosing a microadventure:

“I don't mind being uncomfortable and I think I have pretty like high tolerance to being uncomfortable outside like I can definitely do it I just think sometimes there's that like, desire: I can be comfortable and just do something else fun.”

Like Calvin, Amy recognizes that being uncomfortable is often a part of the deal to participate in microadventures. However, Amy does recognize that she will sometimes choose to do something else because she is not always willing to sacrifice that comfort.

As with most things that have many benefits, there can also be costs associated. The participants did not seem to want to fixate on the costs whereas they were much more eager to describe the benefits. The costs associated with microadventuring that were most

referenced were sacrifices and comfort. In most cases the participants could easily rationalize or justify their decision to pay the costs to participate in microadventures.

Microadventures are Deliberately Constrained

Part of the appeal of a microadventure is that it doesn't require the same amount of money, time, gear, or destinations that sometimes are required for grander, larger-scale adventures. People who participate in microadventures are intentionally constraining their adventures for the enhancement of the overall experience. As with costs and benefits, all nine participants describe deliberately constraining themselves in the pursuit of a microadventure. This theme can be broken down into some distinct sub-themes of how microadventures are deliberately constrained. The subthemes are "time", "gear", and "location".

Deliberately Constrained – Time

Microadventurers have a desire to make the most of their time. Those interviewed seemed to be aware that their time is finite and valuable and have a desire to spend it in a way that is meaningful to them. They also expressed frustration when they aren't able to be as involved in their activities as they would like to be due to time constraints. Microadventurers will make time to participate in their adventures and they will endeavor to manage their time effectively to afford them the opportunity to participate in microadventures. It is something that came up again and again in the data. As Bill says:

"I suppose its just choices of priorities I suppose...you just gotta squeeze other things and make that time. There's lots of time in the day, you don't need a massive mount of time for these things sometimes."

He is referring to a choice that he's made to use the time that he has and make the most out of it. It's a feeling that is also shared by Greta:

“I really liked the idea of getting out and also really like the idea of doing what you can with your time so even if it's just for an afternoon or weekend. In microadventures you just have such a limited time you have to you have to make the most of what you got.”

For Rochelle, there's also that feeling of being spontaneous and using the time you have:

“That - you get home from work on a Friday and to have a little conversation and say ‘Hey we've got day off tomorrow, let's get in our boats and go find ourselves a little camping spot’...so spur-of-the-moment...”

As Alan states his life situation has evolved to a point where he needs to be really intentional with his time and like the others, he wants to make the most of it:

“Life has gotten really busy over the last little while ... a few kids...full time work and a partner that, she's also very focused on her job so that means that time for me, things are tight. So fortunately the way that I've been able to work it is we do things, as a family sometimes. We make sure we get out. We always at least once a week get out and do something. I have one day off that doesn't fall on the same days off as my family so I can drop the kids off. And I have the day to myself...”

For Calvin, making the most of your time is essential. For him, if you're doing that at a minimum, you won't have any regrets. He says:

“Micro-adventuring is to like it maximize the time you have and not feel any regret about the constraints. I've never, like, a lot of people get very existential about working 40 hours a week and yeah I think about that and like it bums me out sometimes I'm like: ‘fuck, working sucks’. But overall I'm like ‘man I like I like the work I do, I make pretty decent money and I don't have any regrets about what I do with my free time’. I feel fulfilled in that in and that bleeds over into everything else and that sense of adventure, even if it isn't epic...still...”

Deliberately Constrained – Gear

Another way that microadventurers intentionally constrain themselves is through the gear they decide to take with them. For some, they will try to take as little gear as possible, and others will design their microadventure based on the gear that they have.

For Carlos, restricting the amount of gear that he takes with him adds to the challenge of overall experience of the microadventure. He says:

“...one thing I really like about it is: well firstly I love gear. I have tons of gear. Working as an outdoor professional, I have way too much gear ... more than I can ever need and sometimes it feel stupid going out on a trip and not bringing all the stuff that I paid the exuberant amounts of money for. I love that kind of stripped down feel like I'm bringing, you know, I've got thousands and thousands of dollars of gear I'm leaving at home and I'm just bringing like a small tarp and a ground-sheet. Something like that I know I have all this other equipment and I don't need it's a really cool feeling. Almost like 'back to the roots' kind of thing and it also adds like maybe a little bit of an element of challenge. I also like too, 'how can you be the most prepared with the least' kind of thing”

Carlos takes it even one step further when discussing the different ways he constrains his gear. For him, it's almost as if he's trying to find the bare minimum he can take and still have a successful trip. Bill shares this attitude as he discusses his packing style when he first started to where it is now:

“It was a little bit more rudimentary than it is now...a little bit...you chuck everything on [his bike] and hope for the best. The bike, where it is now, it's fine-tuned. The whole weight issue is the most important thing. You just minimize the amount of comfort until you find that balance. ... What works and what doesn't work.”

For Bill he is attempting to make his bike lighter and lighter each time. What he makes up for in less weight on his bike, he ultimately loses in comfort and that's that fine

balance for him when constraining gear. As Barney puts it simply, sometimes he will make his entire adventure to suit the gear he has on hand. He says:

“I never really find myself like wanting to do something and not having the right gear or having the right knowledge because if I didn't have the gear or the knowledge that I probably wouldn't have even considered or thought about ...I almost like make my adventures based on like the gear that I have.”

Rochelle says something similar:

“My microadventure isn't going out to Tofino and renting a surfboard or renting scuba gear, it's using the gear that exists... that I have.”

For Barney and Rochelle, they are building the microadventure around the gear that they have and in that way are constraining the adventure based on gear.

Deliberately Constrained – Location

In an indirect way, all microadventures are going to be deliberately constrained by location because they are also constrained by time. It makes sense that one would not be able to travel long distances without taking the time to get there so microadventures are generally restricted to areas that are much closer to home. As Calvin says:

“That's something I really believe in... doing more with less. That's why this year I've made a big commitment to try to do more human-powered. I have a lot of plans this year about riding my bike to the run you know instead of driving. Which like sometimes you have to like I'm planning a Rocky Mountain trip this summer so I'm gonna drive. But y'know I've got some stuff planned in the Olympics as well I'm going to try to ride to that... its close enough.”

For Calvin, he is restricted in where he can get to in the time frame to do his microadventures. So if he wants to do human-powered adventures, he needs to go somewhere closer and more realistic. It's the difference between going to the Olympic

Mountains and the Rocky Mountains for him.

For all the microadventurers who choose to participate on the West Coast of Canada, they are limited by the particular climate of that location as well. Weather constraints are one thing that has come up a few times in the data. As Carlos states:

“I’ve had some things work and not work weather-wise. Its more related to comfort rather than more of a safety issue, but is totally changed what that microadventure is going to be and sometimes it's changed for the better or made there be more creativity led to something that wasn't initially planned.”

The unpredictability of the environment is a location-based constraint that has an effect on Rochelle as well:

“When you're out in the wild you never know if and when it's going to rain or if that temperature change going to happen. You can’t just always know what animal encounters are we going to have ... it’s the essence of the unknown.”

As Alan states the limitation of location can have an effect on the adventure. When you’re used to travelling and having adventures abroad, a microadventure can be the perfect fill in for that craving.

“I think it directly relates to my childhood and the way I grew up. The way my life is now...I can't travel as much anymore but with work I'm able to design places to go and to understand the true meaning of those experiences together.”

Microadventures are Dynamic Experiences

The lived experiences of microadventurers are without a doubt dynamic. The dynamic experience was something described by each participant. There are several sub-themes that compliment with this theme. Those sub-themes are “solo vs. group”, “exploration”, and “changes over time”.

Dynamic Experiences - Solo vs. Group:

Many of the participants discussed that they participated in microadventures in a group setting, as well as by themselves. Nearly everyone interviewed discussed that they participate in both types of microadventures. Even those individuals who said they almost always prefer one way or the other discuss that sometimes they partake in the other way.

There are some distinct differences in what the individual is looking for when it comes to solo vs. group. As Carlos states:

“...the group one you get a little bit more like in kind of the elements that you’re experiencing in that activity, while when you’re by yourself you’re kind of experiencing a little bit more in yourself and just kind of more deeper reflection and lots of time for kind of thought. I find I get a little bit more lost in my head on those kind of solo journeys.”

For Carlos the group experience allows him to do more advanced activities and go a bit further because you trust the skills of the other people in the group. For Carlos, the solo experience is more of a time for deep reflection and introspection. Both have their merits. He continues:

“When it’s with people, it’s more in the experience of what you’re doing and just being kind of present in that activity verses that deep thought.”

Bill also reflects on the difference between solo and group experiences:

“I always heard this expression someone said “it’s not an adventure until something goes wrong.” I do sort of tune into that. It always gets pretty adventurous when some drama does happen. I find the solo ones are good as well. There’s something missing with the solo ones, but you do get that simplicity of decision-making.”

For Bill he seems to enjoy that group experience more so but he does appreciate that when he is on his own he can make decisions quickly and have that autonomy. He continues to discuss how a group experience can keep him accountable.

“Usually if there’s other people involved that helps because you don’t want to let people down. That’s a big one.”

Those who prefer to participate in microadventures with other people do have some preferences when it comes to the people they microadventure with. Barney said:

“Having people with you is has so many pros where you know you're chatting and it's fun and you're bonding and I mean I realize it would really depend on the situation. I think generally though I would prefer to be with people and then choosing wisely on who you're with ... whoever is on my skill level and endurance level.”

Not only is Greta choosy with the people she microadventures with, she also uses her adventures to choose and maintain her friendships:

“I think it's really important to have a diverse group of friends and to surround myself with people who are interested in activities like microadventures and outdoor sports but I want to say that it helped me kind of eliminate ... it's kind of help me identify what I look for and what I admire in people.

For Rochelle, she tends to prefer to microadventure by herself:

“In the past it’s been by myself and solo. Microadventures...solo. Typically solo and then recently I have started to explore with another person and that's been fun and, yeah typically it’s by myself and I think that's my preference.”

For Kyle, he shares the sentiment as he enjoys adventuring alone but it depends on what is needed for him at this time. He said:

“Well it depends on what's needed. I think that sometimes I need to be alone so ... historically I have gone out and solo’d an ice climb or you gone on a solo backpack or something. Yeah it's a process of discerning what I need - what my needs are.”

Dynamic Experiences – Exploration

The subtheme of exploration is a re-occurring trait within the data. The participants

describe the hunt of something new as something that is important to them and attractive to the concept of microadventures. As Alan says:

“I always had an interest to discover new things based on how I was growing up and I really enjoyed sharing that with other people so for me it didn't matter it just had to be a new location for myself. If it's being in a place other people and found and it was extra work to get there, it did really matter. It was more about me wanting to find it for myself and I can get lost in my location and take it all in so this experience of actually going to a new spot that inspired me to keep going.”

For Alan it was all about that new experience for him. He was inspired by places that he had yet to go and that were what inspired him to keep adventuring. For Alan, he even chooses the specific activity based on how new it can feel each time. For him, surfing is something that he is very familiar with. One of the reasons that he is attracted to surfing is although the activity is the same, the environment is dynamic and allows him to experience something new each time:

“The nice thing about surfing is that conditions are always different, you never know. Again I don't know. There's a component of the unknown. I would say that it might have an opportunity to go somewhere nice and that's that creates a better atmosphere for me to be more open to learning, changing and hopefully growing.”

He continues to describe climbing, another activity that allows him to experience in a dynamic way:

“I'd look for a new slab of rock somewhere nobody account and then see if it looks as though it had the potential to be climbed and spend some time cleaning it and bolting it and spend some time cleaning it. I'd stay away from places other people had been.”

Exploration is often associated with adventurous activities. It was referenced by many of the participant in their interview. It may be driven by a desire to be an explorer on a

grand adventure. As Bill comments:

“I think the “newness” ... touching back on that again. Trying to find somewhere new... last December I remember trying to find this cabin and it became a bit of a mission like – we gotta get there. Trying to find a new route ... that’s really cool. It makes it adventurous...doing something that no ones done before.”

For Bill it had to not only be something new to him, but to have the feeling that his adventure was one that nobody else had done before, that was what was behind his motivations. He continues:

“There’s something in the “there is no one else doing this.” Its unique to you.”

For Greta, sometimes it’s the unexpected or unexplored element that can really make that a meaningful experience. She says:

“ For me the best experiences are always when I let go of my own personal expectations to be honest with you. The minute I allow myself to enjoy the unexpected, I enjoy the unexpected and the unexpected isn't as much of a challenge.”

Dynamic Experiences – Changes Over Time

The final way that microadventures are dynamic experiences is that they change over time. Many of the people interviewed referenced that their adventures and the types of adventures they do currently are different from what they did when they first started out. Kyle describes how his attitude toward microadventures has changed as he has aged. He says:

“...It’s changed...I think that early on it was ‘I need to prove myself’ and I'm not saying that that's completely gone but it's mostly gone. Now it's more around making a contribution. Now my microadventures are set around putting new rock climbs up that other people will use ... a contribution to the community ... something that other people are going to use them and enjoy them.”

For Kyle, he recognizes that his attitudes that he held as a youth have gradually changed over time and as he gets older, he's more interested about leaving a legacy and inspiring the next generation. He continues:

“I'm at different stage in my life right now I look back at my life and I see that I used to put a huge amount of energy into getting out and I think in part that's because I had to...I was a slave to adventure. Now I'm interested in going out and if I go out it's great if I don't go out doesn't really matter. I have less energy to put towards logistics and details than I used to so I actually want things to be simple.”

An individual like Kyle who used to do many grand and larger-scale adventures, he has realized that overtime he doesn't need or can't commit to these type of adventure. For him, microadventures are an opportunity to get what he needs from while minimizing his commitment.

For Amy, what started as a fun way to spend time with her friends slowly turned into so much more.

“It was about spending time with other people but now I think its a bit more motivated by like, place and exploring the island and like, seeing new things and that connection to space and the land.

What she seeks and receives from her microadventures has changed over time. For Bill, he can look back and see how the modern world has developed since his foray into microadventures and how that impacts his adventures:

“There's so much knowledge now ... on the internet. If I had had that 15-20 years ago I'd probably have got to where I am now quicker. With reading about or looking at examples...like if you haven't got a bike-pack bag...there's so many alternatives now you can sort of just rustle up. Being a DIY-er I sort of like that approach.

Microadventures Are Core to the Identity of the Participant

The final major theme that has been presented in the data is that each participant of microadventures feels a strong sense of identity related to their microadventures. There are some traits that are core to all microadventurers and it is possible to break the types of microadventurer down into 3 distinct groups. These groups make up the sub-themes of this major theme. They are “sufferers”, “skill builders”, and the “mature”.

Identity – the Sufferers

This sub-genre of microadventure refers to those individuals who are interested in high challenge, endurance type activities. Colloquially in the outdoor world there is the concept of the different types of fun (type-1, type-2, and type-3). Type-1 fun is the type of fun that is fun when it is happening. You are realizing that its fun at the time and you look back at it as fun. Type-2 fun is an experience that is not at all fun at the time and is actually quite difficult, but with time and reflection you actually remember that experience of being fun. Type-3 fun is when it isn't fun at the time, and on further reflection and thought, you still don't remember it as fun. The sub-genre of suffers is very happy in the “type 2” fun category. As explained by Calvin:

“I'm real at home in type-2 fun...so that so yeah but I think people would talk about nature like: Are we having fun? What makes this fun?

He continues:

“That shit your parents tell you about character building experiences ... its real. You learn a lot when things go sideways and they make you a better person in all aspects of your life. Even if it's like you know... shit gets hairy on the mountain and it's like... you're like ‘oh man’ which has happened to me ... People are lacking those types of experiences at any scale and we're afraid to engage with things that are challenging and uncomfortable I think and it creates a lot of value in your life.”

For Calvin the suffering or the challenge is absolutely core to his experience and

helps him with other aspects of his life outside of his microadventures. On the concept of type- 2 fun, Bill says:

“I don’t actually mind the rain or the cold really but then after 3-4 days and everyone’s wet and cold ... you’re just like ‘oh bloody hell’ but it's going to get better. You’ll have that type 2 fun. You just gotta get through it. Something will happen, something awesome always happens even in the rubbishy rain.”

Despite things going wrong and not according to plan Bill manages to maintain a sense of optimism that something worthwhile will happen. Carlos also refers this to feeling that sometimes it’s good to get out and push the envelope a bit and just go all day and then sleep when you get tired”. He continues:

“...now I’m just trying to push further and further with kind of microadventures - what you can do in a day or two and adding a little bit more of the endurance element and that's sort of thing and just getting creative.”

Greta describes some of the harder challenge trips she has been a part of:

“So [we are carrying] all of our backcountry ski gear, a winter tent, winter sleeping bag - all out backcountry gear and enough food for breakfast. That was about 18 kg each that we carried up 1500 vertical meters. It should take about 3 hours to get to where we were camping for the night - a pretty iconic Peak just outside of the town that I was living in. We got up at 3 in the morning and had about 3 hours sleep and skinned up the rest of the way to watch the sunrise. So for me the personal challenge was the physicality of it. Walking up 1500 meters ... my personal challenge was functioning on little sleep ... was the mental effect of that as well just keeping myself in my group members motivated ... staying in the positive state of mind... but those are things I kind of wanted. I guess I was seeking a difficult challenge. I needed something to bite into... to sink my teeth into.”

Greta describes not only the feeling of being very physically challenged, but the lack

of sleep adds to the mental strain of her adventure. This idea that you must physically exert yourself to the point of exhaustion is something shared by the individuals in the “sufferers” group, but not necessarily the others.

Identity – the Skill Builders

This sub-genre of microadventurer is one that loves to be in the outdoor and hopes that each microadventure they participate in will help sharpen their skills in the outdoors. These are the people that enjoy the experience of being outdoors and are hopeful to add more skill to their repertoire. As Amy puts it:

“...it’s definitely a way of spending time with friends who had similar interests and also of like pushing your skills like, developing our skills and just really enjoying being outside together.”

She continues:

“I want to let go and relax but I think I also like seeing new places and doing new activities and developing my skills and that is definitely there's a big draw an appeal and doing that”

As Barney describes below, he chooses his adventures based on his skill level and as such, is a way of managing the risks associated:

“...the adventures that I do consider or have chosen to go on ... have reflected the knowledge and skill that I have at the time paired with that the knowledge and skill I obtain ... over the years. I rarely find myself like wanting to do something and not having the right gear or having the right knowledge because if I didn't have the gear or the knowledge then I probably wouldn't have even considered or thought about it.”

For Barney, he doesn't push beyond what he is capable of. He builds skills through his various adventures and when he feels like he is capable, he will add more into his microadventures when he is ready. For Rochelle it's about building those skills that she has

in preparation for larger adventures. She says:

“It’s also meaningful because I feel like every little day trip or a little overnight that I do people will contribute to bigger adventures. And I’m also a big fan of bigger adventures so I think that every little piece, the more you spend outside, the easier it is to do larger adventures.”

Identity – the Mature

The final sub-group of microadventurers is what the researcher refers to as the mature group. These are individuals who have a past of being very involved in adventurous activities and as their attitudes and life situations have changed over time, they are able to keep their feet in the world of adventure without the commitment of participating in large-scale grand adventures.

As Alan describes, he can even see two types of microadventurer. One who is determined to get out and do things as fast as possible and one who is more content to enjoy the process of the experience:

“I think you probably can divide pretty quickly with somebody who either is needing to do something as fast as they can and then be able to say that they conquered it - that would be in one category. In the other would be people who would be able to enjoy the actual experience and the trip itself.”

The sub-text of what Alan is saying is that he used to be in the first category and now how is sitting comfortably in the second category. He is more likely to enjoy the experience of it all rather than being motivated by the end goal. Kyle also mentions different types of adventurers.

“...lots of young adventures would have a hard time micro-adventuring because they have the inability to choose an objective that'll fit the time slot. They're going to be delayed and late. That happened to me lots and its also process of listening to an internal wisdom of

“well I think this is going to be a little bit too much, how about we do this?” So yeah it's a process of listening... listening to experience and listening to a deeper voice inside that tells me whether something is going to be too much or if it can be turned up a little.”

Through his reflection he is able to make choices that are rooted in experience and by nature it is suggested that comes with time. The more mature adventurer is drawn to microadventures because of that very reason. They are able to rely on instincts and inner wisdom learned over the course of their life.

Kyle continues:

“I'm at different stage in my life right now I look back at my life and I see that I used to put a huge amount of energy into getting out and I think in part that's because I had to. ...I realized that about myself when I recognized that wasn't happy if I didn't go [on adventures]. How did it change? Recognizing richness in other things...recognizing the larger... the larger questions and also writing (to the process of writing). There were a ton of microadventures that I went on that were profoundly valuable ... that I never noticed as being valuable and I didn't notice that until I began to write about.”

For Kyle and Alan alike, they realize that their microadventures are valuable but with added experience and further reflection they can often find more meaning. An undeniable fact about the mature microadventurers is that they are in a different stage of life than their younger days and have since experienced a shift in priorities and responsibilities. Family, career and general life commitments take centre stage and larger scale adventures are pushed to the outer fringes. The microadventure acts as a connection to the outdoors and are a more realistic and achievable means of experiencing adventure.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of a microadventurer in an attempt to discover the essence of a microadventure. Through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, findings were generated and presented in the previous chapter. This chapter will discuss the findings by the major theme as they relate to the literature, implications of the research on current practices as well as future recommendations for further research.

Theme One: Microadventures Are Playful

The findings generated some discussion with regards to the motivations of the participants. One thing that attracted individuals to the concept of microadventures is that they are playful. They are completely unique to an individual, can be created and adapted at their free will and can often force the individual to make adaptations along the way. Part of the attraction to a microadventure is for the individuals themselves to create their own set of rules and regulations and do their best to succeed within the parameters that they have set for themselves.

Playfulness in adults can be described a state of mind or an internal predisposition that is composed of creativity, curiosity, sense of humor, pleasure, and spontaneity. Playfulness allows adults to approach activities with the same openness of mind with which the child approaches play; the beginning is known and a precise end is anticipated but the unfolding may vary (Guitard, Ferland, & Dutil, 2005). This is evident in microadventures as nearly every participant had multiple stories about enjoying their microadventures and they very often took a turn or went somewhere that they were expecting which added to the overall experience. Greta stated, “we pushed ourselves more than we thought we would, and

ended up having so much fun. That was a total highlight.”

By Carse’s (1986) definition of games, a microadventure would fall into the category of an infinite game. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, an infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play (Carse, 1986). A microadventurer may wish to be successful in the game they have set for themselves and part of the enjoyment is making an attempt at success, however a typical microadventurer is also often thinking of ways to enhance that experience or increase the difficulty.

A player of a finite game will seek power; however the player of the infinite game displays self-sufficient strength (Carse, 1986). From this we can easily draw the comparisons to individuals who participate in microadventures, as they are self sufficient and reliant on their skills and abilities, gaining and sharpening of which will help to add to the experiences.

To be playful is not to be trivial or frivolous, or to act as though nothing of consequence will happen. Instead, being playful is allowing for possibility, whatever the cost to oneself (Carse, 1986). Play requires uncertainty, and allows a person to explore new roles and take risks (Hicks, 2004). While participants take their microadventures very seriously, they often felt that they left some room for the unpredictable, which enhanced their experience.

Based on the nine interviews completed for this research, a microadventure will be unlikely to want to have the same adventure twice. They will go to similar places but with less gear, or at a different time of year, or with a different person than in previous times, or attempt to get there faster. They are continually placing constraints on themselves and enjoy navigating through the challenges.

Another way that a microadventure can be playful is the addition of some novelty that would seem mundane or typical in daily life and attempt to do that in a remote location. Participants discussed this when referring to specific thing that they enjoyed doing in a

wilderness setting. This can include things like making a 3-course meal, attempting to brew an acceptable cup of coffee or even reading a book in the outdoors. Something about doing these typical “normal” life experiences seems more fun in the wilderness. The playfulness or gaminess of a microadventure could have implications on future research as well as inform the way we evaluate the experience of a microadventurer.

Theme 2: Microadventures Have Benefits and Costs

The benefits of outdoor adventures have been highlighted in chapter two. Outdoor adventures have numerous positive impacts on physical, psychological, and social health. The findings generated that all participants got some benefits from their participation in microadventures. The findings showed that the benefits of a microadventure could be broken down into four subthemes: purposeful, connection, challenge, and “being out there”.

Microadventurers don’t end up on adventures by accident. They make a choice to participate and are deliberately seeking an outcome from that experience. They will deliberately participate in a microadventure as a means to achieve some other goal, be it nature connection, quiet refuge from their busy lives, or a difficulty physical challenge.

Those with an increased sense of nature connectedness are strongly correlated to increased life satisfaction (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). This could explain the findings that show that a major benefit of microadventures is connection. Participants referenced spiritual and physical connectedness is achieved as a result of their microadventures. The restorative effect of nature was also discussed.

Beames and Brown (2016) define challenge as a demanding task, seen as a test of ones abilities. Microadventurers actively seek out challenge for the purpose of enjoyment of the activity. If an activity is not challenging it may become boring or uninteresting and therefore the challenge aspect is key for microadventures.

Again and again participants referenced the ability to remove themselves from built civilization as a main motivation for participating in microadventures. The ability to go to beautiful, pristine, and rarely seen wild places was a big draw for some participants. Microadventurers like the idea of being in a location that not many other people have been before. It appeals to their inner explorer.

The findings also showed that participating in microadventures did have some cost associated with it as well. The costs can be further broken down into sacrifices and comfort. The main sacrifices discussed were financial and social. Some participants referenced that they spend their money and time on their adventures and as a result they usually have less money than their peers in similar life stages. They also spend their disposable income on gear or adventure costs and as such are less likely to have savings. The findings show that some microadventures must sacrifice family time or friendships as a result of their microadventures but almost all were able to justify their decisions. Many participants conceded that at times on their adventures, they sacrificed their own comfort in order to continue or participate in their microadventures but as was the case with sacrifices, they were easily justified.

Theme 3: Microadventures are Deliberately Constrained

The findings generated indicate that microadventures are deliberately constrained experiences in nature. Leisure constraint theory highlights the various types of constraint associated with participation in a given leisure pursuit. These are structural, intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints. Crawford, Jackson and Godbeys' (1991) hierarchical model of constraints shows that successful participation in a given activity is not related to the absence of constraint, but rather the successful negotiation of these constraints. The most commonly cited constraints that limit participation are time and costs (Crawford, Jackson and Godbey,

1991). A microadventure is appealing because it is an attempt to limit or eliminate those major structural constraints. They will not take up as much time or money in comparison to larger scale grand adventures. Within this theme, three sub-themes were identified. Microadventures are intentionally constrained in time, gear, and location. Constraints were formerly seen as barriers to participation in a given activity but a microadventure is intentionally adding constraints to increase enjoyment of an activity. This is important because it could lead to further study and potentially unlocking the key to increasing participation in the outdoors. If constraint negotiation can add to the enjoyment of the experience than perhaps there could be changes or alterations made to the way that we market microadventures to the broader population to increase participation. Further study is required. There could also be some link between this theme and the previously mentioned “playful” theme.

Theme 4: Microadventures are Dynamic Experiences

The findings generated some discussion around the dynamic nature of microadventures. The subthemes generated were solo vs. group, exploration, and changes over time.

The experience of a microadventure has similar and different impacts depending on whether or not the participant is alone or with other people. Individuals who participate in microadventures by themselves are often the same who participate in microadventures with others. Solo adventures are often seen to be logistically less difficult with plenty of time for inward reflection but are also seen to be deficient of something when compared to a microadventure with others. When an individual seeks an adventure on their own, they often have some internal goal that they are hoping to put attention towards. Those who participate in groups are often seeking some form of group connection rather than inward reflection.

People who participate in microadventures are often very particular about who they participate in adventures with. They are generally unwilling to be experience a microadventure with people they don't know well and aren't of a similar skill level than they are.

The discovery of new places and things are important concepts that come up consistently in the data. Every microadventurer has an inner explorer that must be satisfied. The drive to experience something new drives the concept of microadventures. If they can't get to a new location, they can get to a familiar location in a unique or interesting way. Facing the unexplored or unexpected can be a tool for the microadventurer to increase their own resilience in their lives. Lessons are learned on microadventures that are then applied to the real life experiences of the participants.

Microadventures change over time. This is indicated in the data. As a microadventure grows and participate in more adventures their goals and outcomes can shift. What one seeks from a microadventure initially can change and adapt by the end of that microadventure itself. For many what started as a fun way to spend time with their friends has turned into something much more, seeking a deeper connection to natural places and a more meaningful group experience. Finally, with social changes happening faster than ever before and the prevalence of social media and the internet, microadventurers are being more and more inspired by the trips of others and information sharing is more common and accessible than ever before.

Theme 5: Microadventures are Core to the Identity the Participant

The findings revealed the importance of microadventures in the identity of the participant. Analysis across the data showed three distinct category of microadventurer. These categories are *the sufferers*, *the skill builders*, and *the mature*.

Analyzing the data, recording the occurrences themes were discussed and confirming those with the thesis supervisor determined the initial subsets of microadventurers. Member checking occurred in which each participant was presented with an explanation of the types of microadventurer and which type they had been assigned based on their interviews. The participants were then asked to confirm if they felt their assigned type of microadventurer was an accurate representation of themselves and their feelings. This type of member checking not only helps clarify the findings but also helped to ensure accuracy. (Creswell et al, 2007).

The sufferers refer a subset of microadventurer that searches for high challenge in their microadventures. They seek a demanding physical excursion and set lofty goals for themselves. They will often run, bike, or hike all day long and into the evening and sleep under a bivvy bag or tarp shelter as opposed to a tent. The lighter the pack, the better. Microadventurers in this category will often push the limits of their physical selves as well as try and limit themselves in gear and food. The sufferers don't mind being uncomfortable, and for some it's a required element of a successful microadventure.

The skill-builders refer to a subset of microadventurer that uses their adventures as a means to grow and expand their abilities in the outdoors. They are aware of their limits and will not push beyond their comfort zone until they are ready and prepared. They choose the adventure based on their existing level of skill. They enjoy being in the outdoors and use microadventures as an opportunity to grow their experience and practice hard skills.

The mature microadventure is the final subset. These are generally the older and more experienced people who have spent their lives in the outdoors. They have adjusted to life's circumstances and are fitting in adventure whenever possible. These people have generally moved into a different stage of their lives where they still seek and need adventure but don't necessarily require the intense challenge that they may have in the past. The mature

microadventurer has refined the adventurous experience to a point where they can get the benefits of adventure and outdoor experience in less time than a full on adventure. They still recognize a need for adventure and can fit it into their lives efficiently.

While the major theme of microadventures being core to the identity of the participant is mentioned by each participant as being important to the way they identify and represent themselves, the distinct categories of microadventurers requires more research. While the categories are correctly assigned to each individual in the idea of microadventures as a whole, their category may be different depending on which activity that adventurer does. As well a microadventurer may “level up” as they gain more skill and confidence in that given activity. Further research is required into this final concept which is an interesting finding but may not be a true theme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research adds a perspective in adventure studies that had yet to be studied academically. With the increase in popularity of microadventures paired with the prevalence of adventure on social media, microadventures are being completed more and more everyday. This research will add an in-depth, qualitative perspective on microadventures as well as the perspectives of current microadventurers through their stories, thoughts and feelings.

The research will also inform the impact and implications of microadventures on a given population. There is potential for microadventures to be a tested and applied to a given population to see how they are affected by the phenomenon. There is potential to engage individuals with disabilities, minorities, seniors, and as well other marginalized populations to study the impact and microadventures on a chosen demographic.

The practical implications of discovering the core experience of a microadventure could be better understood if broken up according to the five themes outlined previously. Those are that microadventures are playful, have costs and benefits, deliberately constrained, dynamic experiences, and core to the identity of an individual.

The playful aspect of a microadventure could help better understand the motivations and what keeps people coming back to microadventures. Further study could be done on the “gamification” aspect of a microadventure. There are possibilities for further publications or blogs about how to make your next adventure a game or descriptions of how others have experienced or altered their microadventure and it could lead to increased popularity.

The benefits and costs are another theme that has immediate practical implications. As long as the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs of a microadventure it stands to reason that one could be convinced of its worth and perhaps attempt a microadventure of their own. As is the case with each of the participant interviews, the benefits vastly out measure the costs and for the individuals in this study, participation in microadventures is an easy decision.

The microadventurers in this study deliberately constrained themselves in order to participate in microadventures. This is worth noting because it does have practical implications as it adds to the growing research on constraints. The fact that these individuals may be adding constraints and navigating through them instead of trying to remove or avoid constraints could lead to further research on the topic. This could tie into the “gamification” aspect as well as the participant having the ability to create and play their own game within each microadventure and choose their level of challenge along with it. This may also give the researcher some good places to start for future research, for example: how can constraint negotiation be a successful tool to increase participation or what are the various ways that individuals constrain themselves for the enhancement of the experience. Is there a way to

discover and target these individuals to learn more about this process to help bring adventure to more people who claim to be too constrained to participate?

The dynamic experiences of microadventures highlight the need for variety. This has immediate practical implications as it shows that a microadventure is not satisfied with the same things again and again and a variation must be made available. This could lead to increased engagement and retention of individuals in given program or in the wider microadventure community.

The identity piece has perhaps the most potential to affect current practice as it shows that there is a community of individuals out there who participate and enjoy microadventures. Growing this community responsibly and inclusively could lead to increased participation in microadventures, which would lead to increased people being active in the outdoors. This also has the potential to pull more individuals from the world of microadventures into the realm of large-scale grand adventuring. This could have a knock on effect where the total number of individuals who receive the various health benefits of a wilderness experience could increase and there could be more activity in our various parks and campgrounds than ever before.

As a microadventure could be seen as less imposing than a full-scale adventure, encouraging short-term adventure experiences could be marketed as a jumping off point for outdoor recreation opportunities. A microadventure could be lobbied to the public through provincial or state recreation agencies to motivate individuals or families to be more involved in the outdoors.

Since increasing physical activity could lead to a vast amount of health benefits, microadventures could be a way to increase ones physical activity as an alternative to traditional methods like walking, jogging or going to the gym. For similar reasons to increased physical activity, a microadventure could promote and achieve all the positive

psychological benefits of outdoor experiences. Given the relative low-cost and low-commitment of a microadventure, they could also be prescribed in conjunction with other more traditional methods to individuals who suffer from a variety of physical and psychological ailments as a treatment option.

While this was an exploratory study on individuals who participate in microadventures, there are many ways to grow and expand upon the data. A mixed-methods approach could be employed to understand the lived experiences of a microadventurer as well as the data associated with participation in microadventures.

Further study is also required to discover more about the different types of microadventurer. While the participants of this study confirmed the researcher's assessment of their "type", this was based solely on the interview that was conducted which did not have specific questions about the types as they had yet to be theorized. Do individuals change their type as time goes on? Does one start their microadventures as a skill builder and then "level up" to a "sufferer" or "mature" once mastery has been achieved? Are certain types seen as more advanced than others? Since the participants of this study were already active in microadventures, are there other categories? Can one be a "beginner" in microadventuring? These questions and more would be best suited to further study of this phenomenon.

The researcher has a particular interest in the use of microadventures as a vessel for increased participation in the outdoors. An exploratory study of microadventures and their impact on beginner-level nature users could further explore the affect that they have on an individual. This study focused on individuals who had already identified themselves as microadventurers and thus had a strong knowledge base in outdoor activities. To further understand how a microadventure could increase participation in the outdoors more study would be required on individuals who are new nature users or new to adventure.

The researcher intends to disseminate the results of this study in the following ways:

1. Distributing a copy of the study to all participants.
2. Publishing findings in a related academic journal, such as the Journal of Experiential Education.
3. Public presentations to groups and instructors who work in the field of outdoor recreation.

Overall Summary:

This study explored the lived experiences of individuals who participate in microadventures in an attempt to discover the essence of that experience. Through the analysis of qualitative interviews, five major themes arose from the data: playful, benefits and costs, deliberately constrained, dynamic experiences, and identity. The findings and discussion display the phenomenon of a microadventure, which adds more depth to the literature of this phenomenon as well as the fields of adventure studies, outdoor recreation, short-term adventure, and health and wellness.

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Appendix A: Ethical Approval

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Robbie Young	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER: 17-255 Minimal Risk Review - Delegated
UVic STATUS: Master's Student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 24-Aug-17
UVic DEPARTMENT: EPHE	APPROVED ON: 24-Aug-17
SUPERVISOR: Dr. John Meldrum	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 23-Aug-18
PROJECT TITLE: The Essence of a Microadventure	
RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER: None	
DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None	
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL	
<p>This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.</p> <p>Modifications To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.</p> <p>Renewals Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.</p> <p>Project Closures When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.</p>	
Certification	
<p>This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria</p> <p>Associate Vice-President Research Operations</p>	

Certificate Issued On: 24-Aug-17



Appendix B: General Interview Guide:

What events in your life influenced you to become a micro-adventurer?

- Tell me about your micro-adventures– how did you get started and where are you now?

- What attracted you to micro-adventures when you first started?

- What keeps you engaged with your adventures?

- What aspects of a micro-adventure are necessary to make it a “microadventure”?

- How do you manage the constraints associate with micro-adventuring?

- What are the experiences of people who participate in micro-adventures?

- How do you prefer to have a micro-adventure? Solo? With friends? Overnight?

- Do you share anything in common with other microadventurers?

- Can you define a typical “micro-adventure moment”– where you could say “you would only experience this on a microadventure?”

- What would be some things that two microadventurers, who have never met before, would talk about after meeting for the first time?

- How would you describe to someone the feeling of planning, and participating in microadventures?

- How does participating in microadventures compare to the things your friends and colleagues doing?

- Tell me about your commitment to microadventures – what does it take?

- o Has this commitment changed since you first started?

- Describe a typical week of how (micro) adventuring fits into your day and week?

- o How does it impact the rest of your life?

- What are some of the sacrifices you make to continue to do adventures?

- What kinds of challenges exist for you when planning or doing a microadventure?

What keeps you going?

What makes adventuring meaningful and important to you?

- What is your relationship with other microadventurers?
- What do you get out of microadventuring that you can't get anywhere else?
- How do microadventures contribute to your life?
- How would you feel if you couldn't microadventure tomorrow?
- How long does a microadventure need to be, to be effective?
- Describe your ideal microadventure

Appendix C: Consent Form

School of Exercise, Physical and Health
Education, University of Victoria

Participant Consent Form

Discovering the essence of a microadventure

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “The Essence of a Microadventure” that is being conducted by Robbie Young.

Robbie Young is a graduate student in the department of Exercise, Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by:

██████████

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Kinesiology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. John Meldrum, direction of the school of exercise, physical and health education. You may contact my supervisor at ██████████.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to explore the lived experiences of individuals who participate in microadventures to find meaning and gain insight on the core experience of a microadventure.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it will add to the state of knowledge on the subject in an effort to remove barriers and make nature and adventuring more accessible to all people.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as an individual who actively participates in microadventures.

What is involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include an interview with the researcher that will be recorded digitally and transcribed later for analysis. Field notes will also be taken

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, particularly on your time. The study will require you to be interviewed for approximately one hour.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include adding to the overall state of knowledge that will hopefully be used to inform leisure researchers on the phenomenon of microadventures. The research will help to remove barriers or perceived barriers to participation in outdoor adventure and make that form of recreation more accessible. This will allow more people to

see themselves as outdoor adventurers and increase participation and access in the outdoors, which will have many further benefits to that individual's well-being.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be withdrawn and returned to you, or used only with the express consent of the participant.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will continue to check in with you throughout the interview process. For privacy reasons, the names of each of the participants will be changed in the analysis of the research.

Anonymity

Anonymity will be protected in dissemination of the research as each person will be given an alias, however, due to the face to face nature of the interview, complete anonymity is not possible.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by the use of an alias, as well as data stored on password protected electronic devices.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways through a published graduate thesis on the University website, as well it is the authors intent to publish the research in a scholarly journal and present the findings in seminar, or conference settings.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:

Robbie Young: principal researcher and graduate student at the University of Victoria.
 [REDACTED]

John Meldrum, graduate student supervisor, director of the school of EPHE at the University of Victoria, [REDACTED]

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and the researcher will take a copy.

Appendix D: Sample Email:

Hello,

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “The Essence of a Microadventure” that is being conducted by me, Robbie Young..

I am a graduate student in the department of Exercise, Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria and as a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a masters degree in Kinesiology. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. John Meldrum, director of the school of exercise, physical and health education. You may contact my supervisor at [REDACTED]

The purpose of this research project is to explore the lived experiences of individuals who participate in microadventures to find meaning and gain insight on the core experience of a microadventure.

My hope is to conduct interviews in the first two weeks of August, and the interview process should take approximately one hour. Please let me know if you are interested and I can provide further details.

Thanks very much for your time, I look forward to discussing this project with you further.

Sincerely,

Robbie Young

Appendix E: Transcription Script:

Alan Microadventure Interview:

Alan, male, mid forties. Works downtown in an outdoor retail business as manager. Has wife, two kids. Former outdoor guide and sea kayaker. Grew up doing microadventures with his family out of their van. Currently really interested in paddle surfing. Has one day a week to himself where he will usually participate in microadventures, usually surfing at Jordan River.

First off tell me about your microventures - how did you get started and where are you now?

Started young...having been born overseas... our family, we travelled a lot so we are always traveling new locations. We were a family who grew up in VW vans so all the way through my life we had a VW van and then myself up until probably about 5 years ago...six years ago had a VW van before I sold it. so the adventures would be able to just drive to different locations and
Access the wilderness to come back to the van in many cases.

Where did you grow up?

Born in Pakistan. We moved to Greece... out to England... to Holland...back to Greece and Thailand as well

What events in your life influence you to become a microadventurer?

I was working with a group home and that one of the things I was asked to do was to go to take some of the participants, the folks who lived in the in-home out on a on an adventure and Recreation so I take them to the location and they would recreant by playing chess ..and I I couldn't relate to that comes back to getting much out of it for it so I asked if it was possible to take them to Tofino and do it overnight camping trip. I got permission to do that and they were two participants I took over night for two nights and we spent time at the beach we went whale watching and we explored in the forest. The changes I saw him and those two were huge and so from that point forward I started to take these individuals in the group home on actual Adventures that. Would appreciate that got more out of it than chess.

So when you first started it was kind of the way your life was just necessitated Adventure ... it was the family lifestyle that sort of thing...what kept you coming back to that has you about to move past that ?

I always had an interest to discover new things based on how I was growing up and I really enjoyed sharing that with other people so for me it didn't matter it just had to be a new location for myself. so if it's been a place other people and found an extra work I did really matter. It was more about me wanting to find it for myself and and and I can get lost in my location and take it and take it all in so his experience of actually going to a new spot that inspired me to keep going.

What are some ways that you typically access these new places but you know are you

kayaker? Paddleboarder? Surfer?

Starting with climbing... a lot of climbing searching out new routes so I get excited about being able to hike in on a wet rainy day look for a new slab of rock somewhere nobody account and then see if it looks as though it had the potential to be climbed and spend some time cleaning it and bolting it and spend some time cleaning it. I'd stay away from places other people had been. I want to find me a few spots on the island. Kayaking the rivers was another way of actually scoring these areas so did Lots by white water paddling down here on the island and then.

Branched into sea kayaking to explore the west Coast in the North Coast Gulf islands and eventually get a different vantage point and explore in that respect and then the end over the last probably eight years it's been the paddle boarding... paddle board surfing and paddleboard touring.

What keeps you engaged when you're out on your adventures?

well I would say that I get really grumpy if I don't get a chance to you to get out. My demeanour and overall beings is much more cranky much more... The difference between getting out and going on a quick trip for the day is really night and day for me and I can breathe I can relax and I can get back to the everyday necessity of life...having this small interfals of experiences.

So its like a relaxation technique and you notice if you miss that, your overall mood is effected?

Yeah, I become more anxious. I have much more coping mechanism if im able to manager tricky situations so much easier if I get a chance to get out and recreate. I can't tell you if it's the physical component or it's the location that does it. I can probably sit on waves on my board at Jordan River for a number of hours maybe catch one and feel better than I would if I would never gone out.

Its not necessarily the activity associated it could be the place or it could be be the combination of the two.

Yeah

How do you how do you manage the constraints associated with microadventures?

Life has gotten really busy over the last little while ... a few kids...full time work and a partner that she's also very focused on her job means that time for me this is tight. So fortunately the way that I've been able to work it is we do things as a family sometimes .. make sure we get out. We always at least once a week get out and do something. I have one day off that doesn't fall on the same days off as my family so I can drop the kids off. And I have the day to myself whether it's going to house or I'll be able to take off and head out somewhere.

How do you prefer to have the Microadventure or do you prefer to go solo prefer company how do you typically do that?

For myself the microventures are a mix of both. I wouldn't take anybody on them so they have to be somebody who has the same mindset and chat about some of the same things we on the same page. Or not even say anything at all just going to take it all in. Probably 50% of the time I'm on my own. Just to be able to take everything in and process it. There's a few key people that I would head out with if I need to have a shared experience.

You're choosy about your microadventure partners, rather than take any old person.

Yeah. 100%

Is there anything that you think you would share in common with other microventures?

yeah I would say... I think everybody's different in terms of what they need to get out of these trips, these adventures. and one thing is is always having optimism... always being able to see the the white light in any situation. It makes these trips way better. To be able to head out with somebody knowing that you may not get as far as you want to get to or you might not reach the top of what you're doing but enjoying your travel in the trip more important for me than succeeding in the goal and so much by that I don't have these expectations. I don't get disappointed and I can kind of take off take it all in. Even driving to these locations I enjoy turning left and going a different way to get there I'll take my time which is to Jen's (wife) horror. She likes to go the fastest or straightest way and I actually enjoy that process...finding a new way

What do you think if there was like two people who had never met before and I said these people are both microventures and they're meeting for the first time what are some things you think they would talk about?

I think it would be a passion for the experience. I think you could probably. I think having an opportunity to..like..Ken and I..quite enjoy heading out either if it's a climb or just new location even if its just for tea.. and just philosophizing and talking to somebody that I can easily relate to and I think I'd be happy to be stranded in a tent somewhere for a little while to take little nuggets out of the trips that we're doing ...as opposed to just going to a place and doing some climbing and then headed back pretty quickly.I think you probably can divide pretty quickly with somebody who either is that needing to do something as fast as they can and then be able to say that they conquered it would be in one category and in the other would be people who would be able to enjoy the actual experience and the trip itself. There's probably more categories in there but I see that as two distinct.

How do you describe to someone the feeling of planning and participating in microadventures like... is there much planning for you do you to like pick up and go?

I tell you now have built a career on over planning ahead and figuring out all the possible issues and scenarios of things going wrong and having to plan for it. To be honest now I will often disregard all that and I'll head out on my own knowing I'm comfortable in the conditions I'm going in so I know ultimately that I'm safe but not knowing what is around the corner in terms of the wind and the weather and knowing that is a backstop for me but just heading out and looking down and seeing what direction the bull kelp is blowing.. is moving..to be able to know that I got to change the course that I'm doing and keep checking. I feel im more present that way than doing a lot of pre planning. I prefer to leave a lot of that

stuff behind and head out and then be more present with what's physically happening around me and then not responding to that

Do you think that that's different ..so you know now you're at a point where you're confident in your skills and abilities and you've you got a lot of training and he know if you think that's different than when you maybe first started out anyway.

100% Yeah yeah I think you don't know what we don't know and I think that's good you think that's out being cautious and being understanding ...studying the weather in understanding and knowing where your skill sets are and that figuring out..over time where your safety net is and living within that and then sort of over time stepping out of that. Knowing yo've got some sort of safety net will give you an idea of how far you can push it. I think you got to start by working on yourself first when you do that so it has to do for Learning and then you if your lucky enough to pair up with somebody else's got a lot of experience and you can share that with them and learn from them and then you start to get a feeling for where your limits are. I think in order to continue to grow and experience if you pre-planned everything then it leaves nothing' to actually experience from the trip itself...or less away of it. There's always gonna be things your going to see but to be honest when people come back from these trips... the instructional courses at that I run in the past I've never known if I've made an impact or not. I'd like to think there is times when I have said something or been able to lead somebody to an opportunity to grow but often I'll hear that is something completely different and often something they've seen on their own and learnt on their own and so it for me the guided trips or the ten day instructor training courses figure out what it is that they need to learn for themselves and the adventure is more a vessel to get them there.

How does participating in microventures around for you for relaxation, rejuvenation..how does that compare to other things that you are friends and colleagues do?

I have some colleagues that I would say participate in these and they see it as an absolute necessity or need for it and they're passing it onto their kids and then I also work because I work downtown I have a lot of colleagues who don't get an opportunity to do this and that they probably use the gym and it's not over a 12 hour period. It's more like an hour or two hour or so..

but they have that physical activity as an outlet and so for me I think they're looking for the physical ...physical aspect of release versus the experiential aspect of it.

What are some sacrifices that you make or continue to make in order to participate in these Adventures?

Some family time for sure. I have to be a little bit too selfish that's be able to do it but I find that by being a little bit selfish I can give back a lot more and I can spend more time with the kids better for your mind frame from be able to problem solve with them better. By taking that short amount of time to fill whatever it is that I need that allows me to do be more present with other people.

What are some challenges that exist for you when planning or executing a microadventure?

Time constraints for sure. Fortunately I have a day and then on top of that I would do more overnight trips and get back to work if I didn't have to drop the kids off first thing in the morning. I work with my partner to be able to get enough feel as though I'm indulging myself more than allowing her to also have these adventures to be able to do on overnight quick overnight trip. \

Another thing I love to do is SUP surf..its very dependant where we live on the direction of the winds and direction the waves how much swells been building over time. If those things don't line up then it means that that may be out for me .

How often do you find yourself looking up the wind direction and the wave direction?.

Every other day. And of course if there are days I know I can't go, then I don't bother because I don't want to know whether its going to be a good day or not.

You mentioned that you have one day that is just for you, is that by design or it just kind of worked out?

It just kind of worked out but now that I have it set up this way, I can't change it. I've talked to friends who have had something similar and then when their schedule got changed their whole mood and way of being being also changed. I'm also excited about our daughter getting older so I can take her on more of these adventures and pass those experiences on.

What makes adventuring meaningful and important to you?

The Oxford dictionary has the word adventurous as risk. Bilbo Baggins said that it was something that makes you late for dinner. So for me there's a bit of an unknown or a bit of new a new experience and so I have an opportunity to ...the nice thing about surfing is that conditions are always different you never know. Again I don't know. There's a component of the unknown. I would say that it might have an opportunity to go somewhere nice and that's that creates a better atmosphere for me to be more open to learning, changing and hopefully growing.

There has to be some sort of a physical component to be able to continue to grow and a little bit of risk is good but I wouldn't say that means that I'm a risk-taker.

I like to know this does a safety net but I do like to push out of it and I think through the experiences...early on when we were running guiding companies one of the things that was different from other companies was actually push the envelope and develop the skills but then take individuals into into conditions that they felt were risky even though they weren't. The waves were bigger than anything they paddled in, but after the waves that it just came to flat calm. They'd see the waves and focus on that and then gets scared but us knowing that they'd blow through that no problem at the end make that stores and they talked about it because they have the immense amount of energy in doing things they thought they couldn't do

Where do you think it comes from - that desire to find new place discover new things in life ?

I think it directly relates to my childhood and the way I grew up. The way my life is now...I can't travel as much anymore but with work I'm able to design places to go to the true

meaning of those experiences together. The other big thing for me had to do with guiding and taking people out so it was exciting for me to pass on these new spots and see how they reacted to it which is something that I really enjoy.

What's something that you get out of microadventures that you say you are you say you can't find anywhere else.

I don't know if I can explain it. The "peace" side of it.. I can do that in yoga class. I think the...the ultimate for me is a short window where I can fire off and get out. For me, the water is where I find a lot of calm and a lot of energy and peace all wrapped in one.

I started spearfishing as well because if I to head out and there was no swell and I want to be able to go get in the water some way and so I still have everything I needed when I take my spear gun out and actually go underwater and hunt. The ultimate thing for me is feeling the energy of the ocean, seeing where it leads onto the land and being a part of it is where I get rejuvenated. Probably these microadventures are rejuvenating. In the elements in feeling . One of the things I used to like about rock climbing is that you didn't just drive past the spot look at it or ski passed actually took your time to slowly work through the faults to make it to another point. You're intimately involved in these locations so I've talk to people who had traveled somewhere then they say what the they went to Greece and I talked about it and it stopped in Athens and they travel through and then for me, you know, it's really different experience because its hands on.

We have friends from France who live there and we would stand I spend my entire summers in the ocean and we would dive for clams and we would go and put nets and corall the fish and csatch that. We'd shake the olive trees in the olives I would eat on plants with me as a matter of getting my hands in their part of it that time I would say is a big part of the adventure.

How would you feel if suddenly you wake up tomorrow and you can an adventurer anymore.

I'd find another way and I'd find something else. I've had set backs before. I used to instruct skiing.. adapted and also able-bodies and there's some things that just because the body doesn't do anymore..like can't ski anymore because they are different types....and I'd just try something different kind of just changing. Early on I discovered that there are other things that you can do, but you need to try other things.

How long does a microadventure need to be, to be effective?

I would say.

I don't know. It would be less than 12 hours there I don't think it would fit within that that window. It doesn't even need to be overnight. It just needs to be a dramatic change what I'm doing everyday. So if I can get that change surrounded in a completely different environment and that would be the Catalyst for adventure... Paddling around Trial island would be a two-hour adventure it may not be the same as if I was paddling for 2 or 3 hours out by. somewhere between Port Renfrew and Sooke because it's a bit farther away, I don't get a chance to do it that often. Just even the drive... by that time I can start breathing when I go to throw my gears in the car for surfing and I'm driving out, my atmosphere and my energy changes even if I'm not getting any waves. The process at least throwing the gear in the back

of the car and driving out and driving to that without setting getting on the water for 2 hours and coming back which would be like a 4 hour trip for my would be a microadventure... that's all I need. If I get more, than I'm really grateful. I think theres a piece there that if you can be grateful for what you get and be aware of that then I think you also take more out of it and it will mean more to you.

Could you describe your ideal microadventure?

I would say probably to get out on the west coast of the island. I'd procure a small boat and fire off to a remote location with enough gear or equipment for an overnight or a couple nights which includes the camping gear, a touring board and surfboard. I'd be able to surf when conditions were good our tour if the waves weren't there. To maybe be able to do that you can pick back up where things go back again to remove myself from everyday life. To put myself in an area that's more remote and be physical in that space ... to get dropped off at the West Coast paddle out many times so right now...it's a massive topic: the concept. I think its an interesting one. For the concept of this study ... you're looking at the defining the timelines of micro adventures but I would say that yeah sure and I think about that. It depends on what that individual can get out of it and then measuring that's going to be really difficult but I found the programs which one of the catalyst for creating chance in the outdoors. Having been reducing prices. Theres fewer and fewer 30 day trips, 10 day trips. So its interesting.