

*i did it because
it was fun*

A LOOK BACK ON SKIING FROM A TRAILBLAZING ATHLETE IN A TIME WHEN EXTREME SKIING WAS A FLEDGLING SPORT DOMINATED BY MEN

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We too easily forget the women who came before us. The ones who metaphorically and literally broke trail. Kim Reichhelm is one of those women, yet she has accomplished what few could in the late '80s and early '90s. Reichhelm came onto the scene when skiing was simply fun. There was little pressure to be featured in movies or gain sponsors. Things have changed now, and pretty dramatically. "Now it's big time," she says. "I'm one thing that concern always asking them who going to go from here. "I don't know." That's my answer. You need to ask yourself this question a lot." Reichhelm's career

Despite this, Reichhelm admits to being a tad bit jealous of the new generation of skiers for one reason: There's more opportunity. "When I was a girl I was making it up, trying to be one of the boys. Now these girls have role models."

Like you, Kim.



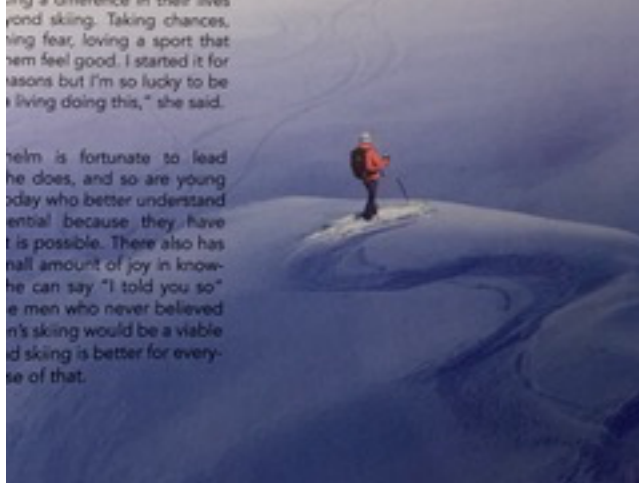
Beyond the injuries that athletes have always endured, she knew getting into the industry that the careers of professional skiers were short lived. In the height of her career—and arguably still to this day—very few people earned a real paycheck. Envisioning her ski career in a pre-Instafamous world, she studied marketing in college. She worked at a ski company and apparel company. She relentlessly walked the floor at the Snowsports Industry of America trade show. "I did everything I could to be prepared as an athlete and professional ski racer," she said. That meant thinking beyond her few minutes of fame in *License to Thrill* and that time she sat on David Letterman's couch. Instagram hadn't even been invented yet, so the concept of being able to build your own platform was far more difficult than it is

of snowsports participants and the industry in her vision. There also weren't a lot of women who either owned a lease or held a role in upper management in the snowsports. Reichhelm said that not much has changed and she attributes this to the lack of pay and opportunity. "Women are smarter than that; they want more," she said.

None of this deterred her, however. "I wanted women to love the sport as I do, I wanted to help them get through the barriers so that they overcame," she said. So she pushed and sacrificed and made things up the way so that Women's Ski Adventures would become a reality.

More than 20 years later, Women's Ski Adventures is a world-renowned firm offering women a chance to ski in a fun, safe, supportive, and re-energizing environment while also taking their skiing abilities to the next level. Kim has been very purposeful in choosing to not grow it exponentially if it corporate. It's her way of staying connected to the sport she loves. "It makes me feel so good every day I ski with those women. Every day I'm making a difference in their lives beyond skiing. Taking chances, trying new things, loving a sport that makes them feel good. I started it for my own reasons but I'm so lucky to be living doing this," she said.

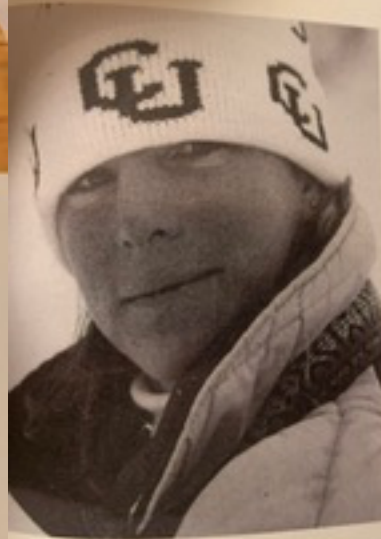
Reichhelm is fortunate to lead the firm as she does, and so are young women today who better understand the industry because they have role models. There also has been a real amount of joy in knowing that she can say "I told you so" to the men who never believed that women's skiing would be a viable industry. "I think skiing is better for everyone than that."



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This thoughtfulness paired with the work ethic she has, allowed her to see the need for professional skiing at women's only ski clinics and pro tours that she began. "I think skiing is better for everyone than that they often withered or



Life & ski hacks from Kim Reichhelm

- ✦ **GET SOME INSTRUCTION**, even if it's just a two-hour group lesson. You don't need a private lesson, you just need something to focus on. It's almost impossible to improve if you don't, and a great way is to take a lesson on yourself and watch it to see where you can improve.
- ✦ Guys grow up learning that it's OK to make mistakes but they don't learn to think before they open up their mouths; women are constantly putting themselves in check. Men are saying stupid things and acting inappropriately and they're OK with that. Women need a little of that; **WE DON'T NEED TO BE PERFECT.**
- ✦ **MAKE SURE YOUR BOOTS ARE WORKING PROPERLY.** The plastic deteriorates in old boots and they no longer support your legs. It makes it much more difficult to ski fluidly and in control. That's by far the most important piece of equipment and they should not be tight or painful.
- ✦ **LOYALTY, ESPECIALLY IN AN INDUSTRY THAT IS SO SMALL, WILL PAY OFF.** The guy you told to piss off last year is now the president of the company you want to be sponsored by this year.
- ✦ The most valuable thing I can teach someone is to look ahead—**LOOK THREE TURNS AHEAD AND HAVE A PLAN.** If you're not looking ahead, you are reacting and you can't ski gracefully. Anticipate what you need to do.
- ✦ **WE NEED KEEP FIGHTING THE FIGHT.** We need companies to address the needs of women and be supportive of those companies who are willing to listen and make change.

