

JJ YOSH

HOPES TO CHANGE THE WORLD THROUGH INSPIRATION

JJ YOSH IS A TELEVISION HOST, ADVENTURER, FILM MAKER, BACKCOUNTRY CHEF, MOUNTAINEER, AND ACTOR ON A MISSION TO CHANGE THE WORLD THROUGH MEDIA.

INTERVIEW WRITTEN AND CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM JACKSON, CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER OF INFLUENTIAL MAGAZINE, SPANISH INFLUENTIAL, AND TEEN INFLUENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF JOE MORAHAN / SHANDREW PR.

In college JJ discovered his love for nature on his first backpacking trip and quickly realized exploring our earth was the key to helping our world. Since that time, JJ has led countless groups of people all over the world to explore some of the most beautiful places on earth. Now JJ produces engaging media to inspire people to get outdoors and explore their backyards.

I'm thrilled to bring to you my exciting interview with JJ Yosh. Grab your favorite snack and beverage, and discover what makes JJ Yost an influential person we should know.

From where does your passion for the great outdoors come?

I don't know if I can explain my passion; it just is. I can't say it has an origin. That's what I find so unique and beautiful about it; although I can recall instances in which I had epiphanies that led me to the path

I'm on today. One such instance occurred in college at UC Santa Barbara. I co-founded an outdoors club, The Excursion Club, on one of my first excursions. I lead a group of college students into the backcountry to a remote mountain Ridgeline. I recall reaching that peak and feeling a sense of awe as I shared that moment with my fellow comrades. It was in that moment I realized my calling: to encourage people to explore the outdoors.

How do you prepare mentally and physically for your travel adventures?

I'm a huge planner, so I enjoy creating lists for myself. I have a gear checklist I've created for every kind of excursion, from backpacking to climbing to snow camping to kayaking. These lists help me prevent forgetting any items. I also create bins for my different adventures to help me stay on top of organization and prepared for any activity at a moment's notice. This obsessive organization allows me to keep myself mentally prepared for most anything. Fitness and health are paramount in my life, so I try to keep myself physically fit which allows me to be physically prepared for most anything.

What keeps you sane during your adventures?

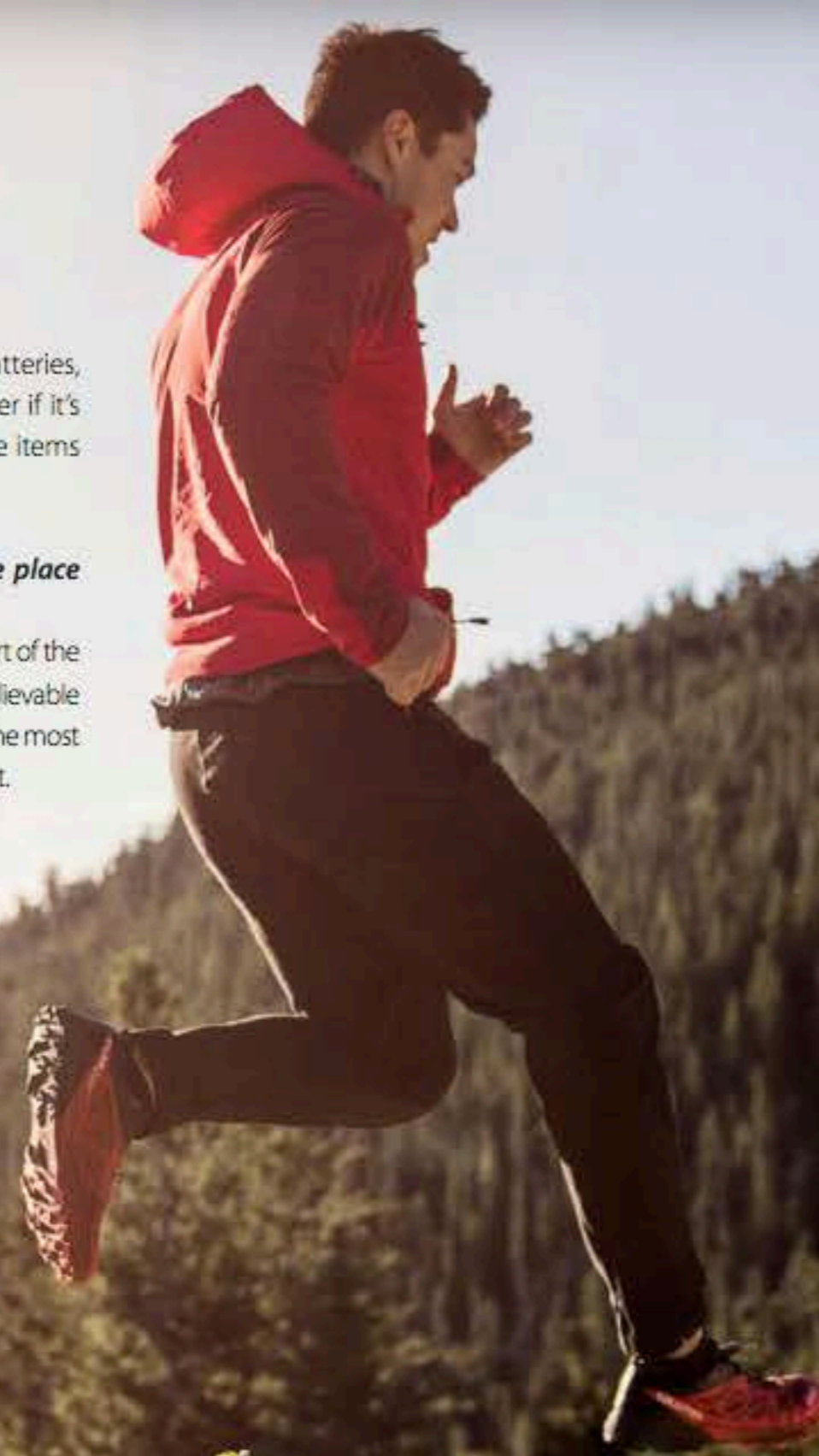
No matter how great and fantastic the adventure, there's always a moment where you need to recharge. I prefer to step away and take a walk in nature to clear my mind. Without these nature hikes I'd lose my mind. Thankfully my employment integrates nicely with these breaks.

What do you never travel without?

I never travel without my smart phone, extra batteries, snacks, water, and a flash light. It doesn't matter if it's a simple hike or a jaunt around the world; these items always seem to come in handy.

Of all the places you've explored, what's the place you connect with the most?

I really love Havasu Falls in Arizona. This place is part of the western rim of the Grand Canyon, and is full of unbelievable waterfalls flowing into turquoise waters. It's one of the most incredible spots I've ever had the opportunity to visit.





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What is it about being in nature that speaks personally to you?

When I'm outdoors I feel timeless, unrushed, and completely accepted. Outside I can be whoever I want to be. This sense of freedom is one of the most awesome feelings in the world.

What's your favorite extreme natural environment to explore?

My favorite extreme environments change from time to time. One year I was completely into tropical waters, where I wanted to scuba dive in every popular exotic location. Then another year, all I wanted to do was climb 20 thousand foot peaks, so I found myself on challenging icy terrain. Now, I think my favorite environment is red rocky canyons found in areas like Utah and Arizona.

What has been your most luxurious travel adventure?

My most luxurious travel adventure was recently in the Maldives. I was sent on assignment by Maldives TV to see first-hand the best of the Maldives. For ten days I journeyed around to exclusive high end resorts, experiencing all the adventurous activities each island resort offered. It was an absolute marvelous lifestyle living in overwater bungalows during my stay. I hope to visit again.

Having traveled so much already, is there much left on your wish list?

I've traveled to many destinations, but I still have a list of places waiting to visit. I really want to embark on an exploration of Iceland. This country has some of the most stunning sunrises and sunsets on earth. I'd like to do a stopover to the Faroe Islands; one of my favorite terrains is northern tundra with glaciated peaks, on my way to Iceland. There's something about land that appears so unworldly that appeals to me.

I'm a bit of a nervous traveler. As a prolific traveler, do you have any tips for me?

My most useful tip for anyone looking to break into the outdoor world is to start small. The worst thing you can do is overwhelm yourself by taking on an outdoor challenge which far too much. This goes for traveling in general. Organize small trips for yourself first and move on up. This way you always have something to work towards. Another helpful tip is joining other pre-existing organized trips. Planning a trip can be a huge amount of work; by the time you get to your destination you're too exhausted to enjoy it. There are many tour companies and group organizers that literally plan the entire trip for you, so you can sit back and relax.

How can the rest of us bring more adventure into our lives?

The media allows us to see extraordinary places we wouldn't normally see. For me the media has been pivotal in shaping my dreams. Today we have more than film, television, and magazines to transport ourselves into other worlds; we have social media and the internet. For the rest of us, soaking in videos and pictures of beautiful places via social media platforms like Instagram is a perfect way to expose ourselves to our vast world. The powerful thing about images is they can inspire us to travel to those actual places.

How do you hope to impact the world?

I hope to lead by example. The outdoors has transformed my entire perspective. It's very important people explore their own backyards. I want to create empowering films that not only transport people to these beautiful locales, but also inspire them to get out there themselves.

When are you most happy?

I'm happiest when I am outside exploring epic mountains or swimming in warm Azul waters. There's something so special about nature that instantly purifies my soul and clears all worries and stresses. I try my best to get outside every day because I know it makes me a better person. ●



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