

AH: With what we'll call the mainstream outdoor community, I think often when you see marketing for it, it almost tends to be very competitive, like a sport. Well, okay, [chuckle] I should probably explain myself, but in our culture, yes, there are people who are looking at this as a sport. There are folks who are just interested in it, but it's expensive, you haven't done it before, you don't really know exactly what's involved in doing that activity. It can kind of be intimidating to just get into it, when all you see are these hardcore people just trekking up this mountain. [chuckle] So there's that aspect that's very intimidating about it, but then there's also just the general intimidation of the everyday person, I think, too.

For me, it's not just about cultural advocacy. It's also about body-type advocacy. When you're fat, curvy, however you identify your body, and you're trying to approach an activity, it can seem intimidating. I think that when you look at it on the perspective of some of these advocacy groups like Latino Outdoors or like Outdoor Afro or Brown Girls Climb. All of these other groups, we tend to focus more on the community and learning aspect of it versus the, "I'm climbing the highest mountain." [chuckle] I don't even want to call it friendlier because I don't mean to say that the other is aggressive and not friendly, but more approachable.

I think on the cultural aspect of it, when we talk about our folklore on hikes or we share some of those experiences with each other, I think that's what really brings people to the table with Latino Outdoors. We are making it more approachable, because we are embedding our own culture in that experience. We're providing that space to talk about it and to talk about our relationships with it. So, whether it is talking about folklore, whether it's talking about your first experience going to a waterfall with your grandfather and your dad or something like that, I don't really see that kind of practice in the mainstream community. Maybe I'm mistaken, maybe it does happen, but I personally have not had that experience. I think it's been very much more of a sport and more of a you're a pro or nothing.