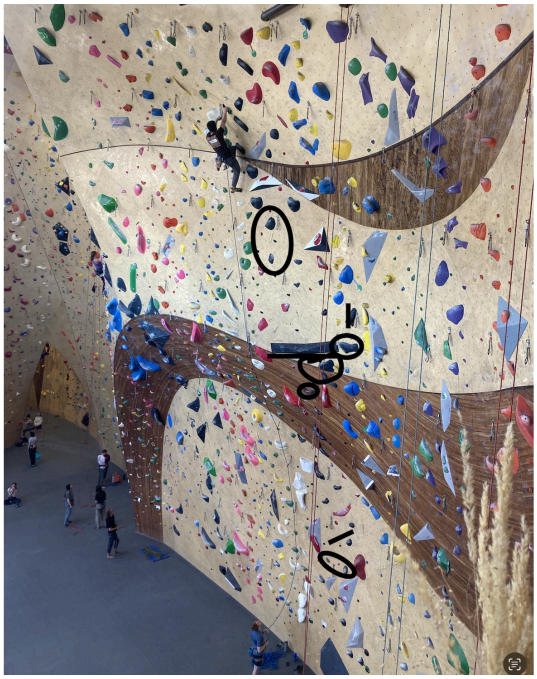

Climb 1: Talk to me about this route!

00:00:02.020 --> 00:00:05.095
Gabriela Hernandez: Thank you so much for meeting with me today. Now that I have the right picture pulled up, let's begin this interview. So first, I am just really interested, you know. Just talk to me about this pink route that you did, which is the first climbed that I had filmed, and whatever strategy that you're thinking of as you look at it like, what is your thought process going on right now?

00:00:26.960 --> 00:00:29.710
Taylor: So first thing right off the bat is, I've climbed this route once before, and so I know where the cruxes are. I know that it gets considerably more technical once you get past the lip. And so the first thing from a general standpoint, not even like considering this climb is like figuring out where the best rests are, and I know that based on my current endurance, I know, like where to pick those spots without with taking into consideration, like like my anticipated levels of fatigue are

and so like for this pink route, just looking from the ground, all of these kind of beginning moves are relatively simple.

Gabriela Hernandez: Can you mark to me where the crux is like with the marker?

00:01:29.160 --> 00:01:31.030
Taylor: first crux is *draws crux…I know that, like at that point of transition, past the lip and then setting up for that big left hand. It's a double bump, and so the right hand is really good, that you can kind of match on, and then, as you throw up left, you're going to this kind of like crimpy side pull, and then have to bump again to another like crimp, But it's a little bit more positive kind of like a crimp jug, like the second hold isn't as bad. And so it's just just to move that like requires a lot of extension. And like body tension and *accuracy* like a big part of my planning that I've spent recently, but working on a lot. This is just being more accurate on those bigger throws. I just need to be more precise. And so I know that, like getting past that point, making that move, I needed to take a rest after that point just because, the next move after that is also quite difficult. I think it wouldn't be as bad if the volume wasn't there. This big like flat volume right here **marks black volume because then it's basically like a big right hand, and like kind of shifting past this volume up here, and then kind of matching on the crimp, moving out right and then bumping again to this like jug. So it's just a few like a 3, 4 move sequence. That like is quite a bit of lateral movement, and also just like having to consider body positioning relative or something.**
So yeah, everything like in that beginning, like the holds are good. They're all really good. But then you have these Mega bumps here, and then this volume that wants to kick you off the wall with another crux proceeding, or okay, something out here is good. And then the next, like rest is like here.
[[I don't know why that turned into a square]] and then it's another like big move. I think, like. I remember going out right like, kind of piano key like this crimp. So I'm basically like, set up kind of like with 2 fingers on each hand, and then going up like to a big right hand : up to this like kind of crimp jug thing. And then
I've like the first time I tried it like. Took a rest here. and then attempted to like pull into this like undercling, and it just felt really gross. So I just kind of let go. And I also will stop this this time. so, but you're just like gassed at that point at that point. Yeah. And it's like, it just becomes so
sparse. Yeah, they're just not there a lot there. But yeah, I can get into this position of like having my left hand here, right hand on the undercling. But then, like. Wait… yeah, yeah, that's like 2 arm lengths to like a sidepull.

Did you break the climb down when you looked at it?

Gabriela Hernandez: when you looked at this route, did you break it down more so, or were you looking at in It's like totality?

Taylor: I think, like where I started to break it down is moving into those kind of crux sections, beginning because it felt so good and like kind of straightforward the first time the beginning, like, I didn't really think that much. I didn't need to break it down. I guess, the the biggest consideration for the beginning of it was just being a little bit more fluid and like fully with the movement to like conserve energy.And then I really started to kind of be more intentional about my movement, and like breaking up the different cruxy sections as I transition passed through it. I think, like. I don't know if it's I'm able to like articulate where that like range of difficulty is. But there's a certain point of like being able to flow through movements kind of like mindlessly and just, And then you get to like a certain level of difficulty, and you really have to kind of hone in on all the details. whereas, like in the beginning, you don't have that…

What does moving mindlessly mean?

Gabriela Hernandez: when you say, flowing through movements mindlessly, can you say more about that?

00:06:59.910 --> 00:07:00.810
Taylor: Sure, it's looking at a section where holds are familiar and they're pretty juggy and then be looking at like this space between the holds and knowing there's like a certain kind of like having that like spatial and like bodily awareness, to know like where those limits are so like. If looking at like a particular sequence. there's like the spacing is pretty reasonable, and I know that I can like pull one arm through like a section of holds. I know that it's pretty up and down. There really isn't much like consideration there. Like if there's a lot of processes and like, I don't know, like kind of tricky, more technical movement, then you really have to start thinking about it. But this climb was just a good example of like these moves are just like left hand, right and left, hand, right, left hand, right like, and then just transitioning out here was great. And then it's just like right hand, left hand, right, left hand, like it's just kind of like I can read the movement like really early from the ground. I also know that this is like within my my range of like not having to like over exert use an excess amount of power.

Spatial awareness?

Gabriela Hernandez: And I remember you saying, like a huge part of like you feel like spatial awareness is something that is that you're really good at, because you have to, with the way you move through the world. And it sounds like you're really leveraging that when you're climbing.

Taylor: I would also say, too, that, like, confidence in my spatial awareness, kind of like drops off as you get more tired, which makes sense right….like once you tap into those kind of like upper limits of your

power reserve. You don't know exactly if you're going to be able to pull through movement. But like, if you look at the first half of the climb, or if I look at the first half of the climb, I know, like with like pretty strong certainty that, like, I know that I'll be able to do that beginning half with ease. But then, like once you get into the upper sections of the plan. Then, that like body awareness, and just being able to anticipate, like the success of those potential moves like, comes a little bit less…I don't know, like, just become like less confident….
Like, knowing my personal limits like knowing how I'm feeling that day. And then, like.
it's sort of like, it's almost like, the icing on the cake kind of thing like if I can get past like the first half the climb, I don't know exactly like how much power and like energy I'll have left. But like, that's when my my brain really takes into like a higher gear.

Mentality of competitions

Gabriela Hernandez: when you say icing of the cake is that like I'm just like stoked if I can even get up there. Okay?

Taylor: And that's like the mentality that I go into conversations with, like, I know that like like, I've only ever topped like qualifier routes because they're just considerably easier. I've never actually topped like a finals route, because they just make the top like, just, really, really difficult. And I, just like, have never gotten to that point of having enough power endurance to get into that top section. And so like,
yeah, like getting past that first half, or maybe like the first, like, two-thirds of a climb, If I get past that point, it's sort of just a matter of like, making it as far as I can.

How do you define success on a route?

Gabriela Hernandez: so how do you define success on a route?

Taylor: I would say, like for me, success on route is definitely just being able to leave everything on the wall. Because again, I know that, like, the likelihood of me topping a final route, It is like really, really low, if not like close to zero. And so I want to be able to feel like I moved through a couple of cruxy sequences**, was able to just like, get fully like deeply pumped. And, like compose myself, and retain, a really solid tempo throughout the climb. Just like left everything on the wall**

Gabriela Hernandez:when you say left everything on the wall. What does that mean?

Taylor: It just seems like I went to like a full and complete exhaustion.

Why do you want to leave all your energy on the wall?

Gabriela Hernandez: Why do you want to leave all your energy on the wall?

Taylor: For me I think that's like, the way that I, what's the word, it's the way that I like correlate my success on a route. Cause I know that, like, there's just a lot of factors that aren't necessarily in my control when I climb, in the sense that, like, if I'm climbing on something that's not as steep like, there can be a lot of drag, or the sequence could be like a little bit less consistent than I initially anticipated, or, I feel like the rest I've anticipated may not be good. you know, like there's, different factors involved, and I think for me, my mentality has always just been like, if I'm able to really squeeze out as many moves as possible and really just go until like I can't even like, hold on to a jug anymore, Like, then I'm I'm satisfied.

Conserving energy plan?

Gabriela Hernandez: And like do on this route specifically, did you have a plan for conserving energy throughout the climb?

Taylor: I think that like conserving energy was just a matter of like, getting to this like, Rest Point, probably like [points to rest]here., and just trying to be again like as fluid, and efficient as possible in that section. And then, I've spent, a lot of I've done a lot of work on like power endurance recently . It's recently to the point where, like, if I can find a good jug, I know that I can get something back with a single arm dead hang. I know that like If the hold is like economic enough to be able to like, not have to squeeze very hard. And there's enough friction that like I can, I can definitely get something back.

Strategy?

Gabriela Hernandez: Were there any moments where your strategy change mid climb?

Gabriela Hernandez: So when I say strategy like climbing like, how are you interpreting that? So I feel like that's kind of the meat of all of this.

Taylor: I'd say, like, I feel like, And I've said this in multiple, answers now, but it's like the the rest are like the biggest. Okay.

00:17:04.660 --> 00:17:11.130
Gabriela Hernandez: So it's like it's centered around resting for you.

Taylor: it's centered around finding good resting points and then being able to regroup as much energy as possible. and then trying to move through those rests points as effectively and efficiently as possible. I know that generally doing like half of a climb, the first half of the climb, in a competition sense, is generally like pretty straightforward, pretty easy. Finding that first rest, being able to like, see from the ground where that next rest is, and then trying to move as swiftly and fluently to that next point as possible. So it's like bouncing between rests, compose myself, lower my heart rate. How do I rely on my skeleton as I am resting? And then, moving like kind of quickly through the next sequence, and then hopefully the next.

Gabriela Hernandez: like, I feel like we're all doing that like, at least like skilled climbers. But I know that you have to do it more than anyone. Yeah, like, definitely very conscious of, like, yeah, getting past that certain point.

Taylor: And then just like, really having to break up a climbing being like. okay, I'm gonna move really quickly through this where I need to take a second and like lock off here, just trying to anticipate that movement and then like if you can move quickly through something like you're going to use up less power and being able to to maintain that… you're able to just kind of pull through movements and not like over exert yourself, I think. Like as I've been climbing like over the years. I really let's dig on where that point of using up like excess power, if it's like being able to visualize and move and say like, Oh, I know that I can like pull through that. relatively easily. And I know that I'm not gonna like overdue it. But I know that like and then on the flip side is being able to visualize something, and knowing that I'm having to tap into that like really deep power, like having to pull like almost fully or like close to 100 of like my pulling capacity, and so like trying to anticipate like how much.

Gabriela Hernandez: So this is something I think about a lot. When I was thinking about like strategies on the wall I was thinking of like I back off a lot… so is backing off an option for you like taking 3 steps back like you can't right like, are you ever down climbing, I guess, is my question. If you discover that a hold isn't what you wanted?

Taylor: Yeah, so like, the only it doesn't happen like super often. There have been moments where, like. I've down climbed like a half a hold that like you throw up just like you throw out to something that's like really bad. And then you come back to wherever you're like, matched on wherever wherever you like. I think the best example is whether or not having, like a huge bump to something so like your hands, are like relatively, even in terms of position. And let's say you have, like a big hold over off the left, like deciding whether a big bump and using a ton of power on the left side To get to that point is the most effective, or crossing into it. <u>And so like, I think the only instances where I've backtracked is if I made a mistake or i have chosen the wrong option.</u> And so like choosing between bumping or crossing.

Gabriela Hernandez: I would say that too honestly. My hands are all fucked up, but because it's harder for you to back off…. How do you think that affects your climbing

Taylor: It kind of sucks, because there have been multiple times in where I make the wrong mistake, and then I can't recover. And you know it's like because there are only 2 points of contact on the wall. If you make that mistake, and you like over correct i… but your body positioning doesn't allow you to fall back into that initial spot…, you're just off, or you're just gonna go off. So it's like higher stakes for me.

Gabriela Hernandez. And so like, what do you think that like means for your climbing.

Taylor: it makes it scary. It makes it just kind of like, I definitely like…I think, like the way I climb in competitions is a bit different than how I climb in the gym. I think like, that's a pretty general concept…. For, like most people, just because, in competitions, there is a lot of holds and a lot of sequences like I haven't seen before, and so I generally take it quite a bit slower. So like, going back to what I was saying about being fluid and just very like quick through those movements in the beginning of a section---That isn't always the case in competitions…Because you really just want to be as precise and like sometimes, if you're too quick… You might like make a mistake and just come. so like the stakes are just higher, because you make like one wrong move, and then you're having to literally rely on like one hand to like catch you.

Taylor: A good example is like how they set for nationals, which is very, very different to how they set them for international, but for nationals…We have some experienced seated climbers who always try to find rests in the form of like sitting on volumes, and so volumes like…the side of a climb. and getting to that rest, and like being able to sit on that volume sometimes takes more energy. … But that doesn't exist international, because having those really good rests is sort of like. like too much of a buffer… yeah, kind of an interesting concept. And it also just like makes the playing field a little bit like less, even because there are certain seated climbers who don't have legs like there's a there's a Belgian climber named Vivitra who's incredibly strong. She's a bilateral above knee amputee and so she's like kind of like the perfect recipe for like a seated climber

because she's super strong, has full core and hip flexors and then she's able to like like if we had climbs that like had like something like this, . And there were like jugs up here like she would be able to like, sit in this. whereas, like, I can't. having those like intentional rests in the form of volumes like…

Planning on the ground on on the ascent?

Gabriela Hernandez: yes, there's a lot to say There, yeah. So would you describe your planning as primarily : pre-climing or ongoing through the ascent, or like, would you say it's evenly distributed.

Taylor: I'd say, like my planning and strategizing is like the beginning half of the climb; like the beginning, half to like the beginning ⅔ of the climb is on the ground, and then the upper section of the climb is on the wall.

Gabriela Hernandez: And are you doing it like, like, are you like looking up and thinking as you're climbing? Or are you immersed in the moment as you're climbing like, or are you kind of slightly looking ahead? And when you're resting, are you looking ahead?

What happens when you rest?

Taylor: I think when I am resting, I really only look ahead to next one or two moves. It is really a matter of like prioritizing, slowing down my heart rate, and trying to be as calm as possible. If you spend for me, at least, if I spend too long : resting, and it's also like really trying to hone in on like where that point of the rest, becoming too exhaustive. like, because if I'm resting too long, I'm just wasting energy. And so like priotizing like the length of the rest, and like being very conscious about like how much energy I'm using during the rest is important. I think for me, if I'm spending time looking up like I might miss that like, point of like, okay, I used all my energy.

Okay? So yeah, when you're on the rest. : it really is a matter of just like survival. Have you thought about that before me? Ask cause like you like, I feel like that's such a Meta cognitive thing to be aware of like is that something you're thinking of like, consciously or was that brought to you? When I asked you or you like. I already knew that

Taylor: I feel like I sort of, Maybe I haven't like articulated it very deeply. But like I I think about it all the time, because I think like as I continue to progress through a climb, that timing changes, maybe in the beginning of the training cycle, I'm not able to get back as much on rest, and I'm like wasting more energy when I get back. But like as I'm able to recover more that that point of transitioning out of the res Is maybe like a little bit longer, like I feel like I can rest longer and have it be more effective. It just depends on my fitness level

Gabriela Hernandez: okay, So for this pink climb, specifically, if you were to encounter like a similar climb in the future, is there any way that this climb has shaped your planning approach… or like the way that you would approach any climb in general?

Taylor: I don't know. I would say, like, nothing like very specifically, come to mind.

Climb 2: Talk to me about this route

Gabriela Hernandez: And we talked a lot about general strategy. So I don't think we need to like dive too much into the next, like, we'll talk about the next climb. But I won't go super Meta on it…. Okay. So then, the other time you did. Was this black one right? Alright. So yeah, just talk to me about this route a little bit.

Taylor: So this route was… the beginning of the climb I had done before and then I had mentioned the day of that like. For whatever reason, they changed the next section of the climb. I don't know if they change the very top, but they definitely change like the middle portion. Think it might have been because the clipping position wasn't ideal or like people were missing the clip but regardless the like, the first …this one's quite a bit different in terms of like planning, because there's a crux really early in the climb, So the crux for me. So it's like out to these jugs. And then it's like here, And then like transitioning like up to here. So it's like basically a match on this jug underneath, and then it's a right hand up to this crimp jug matching on this piano key to like. Get my left hand in a good spot like Punch out right to the side pull and then the first time I did, I did it, I went straight right arm bump up to here, which was like just this really disgusting gastone, just like
really messed up my shoulder. My right shoulder is the one that's like injured, so it just doesn't seem smart. So then I want up this chip. And then bumping off the chip to the jug and that looks at me quite a bit better, and it was less intensive on my shoulder, which is nice. So in terms of like planning, that's one of those moves where it's like, it's like borderline hititng those upper power reserves. So just trying to do this move this movement as like efficiently as possible. and then this next sequence, even though it's like pretty straightforward like it's really powerful because it's just off this like Sloper hat, like I'm matched on. And I'm like kind of knee hooked on the sloper horn thing.

Gabriela Hernandez? Do you get to rest between those?

Taylor: *gestures no*

Gabriela Hernandez: Okay? So you're just cruxing.

Taylor: You're crux to crux like here : like, shake out for a second, and then crux to cru to crux, and then like, I wouldn't say that like, : like, my first rest is probably like, like here, maybe okay? And so like, it's pretty sustained, very like powerful climbing. It is sort of like sloping kind of the edges aren't nearly as good as I had hoped. But it's yeah kind of just like, even though the movement pretty straightforward. And the beta isn't anything like spectacular. It's just really powerful moves. And so the first, like, really good rest is like, here. Okay, so you're basic like, I'm basically having to do like kind of like, half the climb and sustained like…. How how can I do the rest?: And then this point of like… here is kind of where it starts to transition into something that I wasn't familiar with.: Is this is the section to change. And so like moving out right, I knew that like this kind of like jug was like the last good rest before this next section. And this is the section that I like tried, probably, I don't even know, like 6 times or so. Yeah, sometimes. And just trying different sequences and like different…. It was really difficult. I don't know,I feel like it's possible, but, it's very tricky, At first, you know, you always try to like climb something, and it's sort of like
,I don't like to say pure form, but like the form that like was anticipated by the route headers right? And like sticking to one color. But then you get to a point, especially on this time we're like you have to use yellow intermeediates, It's cause it's just not at least for me, I think it's like someone would like more core strength and lower half coordination, could probably cross into this black and, actually, I don't know… Having to use the yellow intermediates was like a second choice. And then, realizing that that was how I had to go. Then, proceeding to do multiple different variations of that, to see like what felt good. And then by, like the 6 or 7 of the time which was like my last attempt, like I felt the closest which was really frewarding. And I think, like, now that I dialed that particular beta, I think it could go for sure, and then I'd love. I'd love to see like what this sequence is like, i think like… you can maybe bring your left hand up to stacked, and then bump out, left in here pretty straightforward, like right hand up to a crimp, and then like this is the next section that, like I was anticipating, it being quite difficult, was like
cause Then you have a left hand, that's a left hand, and then you have to like either like bump up to this chip, but then I literally campus off the chip so that you can get your left hand here because I don't know if it makes sense to like, I don't know if it makes sense to, like, bump up to the right cause. This also looks like the left, So it's 2 left hands in a row which makes it really bizarre. And then I really want to try this upper section, because the upper section is fine, like, if I can get through the middle.

Gabriela Hernandez: This part was hard for me too! I was a weanie here!

Taylor: what does this look like? *points at hold*

Gabriela Hernandez: fine, if you like slopers like it's good. I'd give it like a 6.5 out of 10, so it's not like horrible. But I was able to get my no, I actually kept my feet lower. I kept trying to get a high right foot, and it was spitting me off because my hips were too out. So I ended up just keeping my right foot on here, and then just like like kind of dead pointing. And that was the move. But it took me like 3 times because I wanted to use this, but it was actually quite slippery, and so I couldn't get tension off of it. I think you would like it.

Taylor: Yeah it looks like a kind of like big compression move.

Gabriela Hernandez: How are laybacks for you?

Taylor: It depends. It's very like friction based. It very much depends on like the angle of the side pull, and then also just like, If I can lik, : get high enough on it to transition off of it. I think, like it just depends when you say, like laybacks. Do you mean just like on like something like this?
I feel like I've been on like these purple holds before, and then doing like a layback on something like this is, just doesn't make any sense…so yeah it is friction based and also depends on position of my body. Cause I will get up to a pinch and then like, usually it's a matter of like depending on which side it's like , your bottom hands is kind of in a neutral position, and then the top hand has to like wrap over the top of it. And so, uh if it is a cross to another, or a bump out to a gaston, it's it's very difficult.

Do you use your legs for momentum?

Gabriela Hernandez: So do you feel like when you're climbing like you're using your legs for momentum like…Do you feel like your legs are like you can use them for momentum, like I noticed, like on one of the climbs. You, I think on this one. Did you tie them?

Taylor: I usually do tie them. and I think it helps with like just keeping, the other half of them being kind of one purpose, and being able to use momentum. It is nice to like, flow through something, and like being able to time that pendulum swing. It is like one cohesive unit.

Gabriela Hernandez: Hmm!

Taylor: Because if my legs aren't tied together like there could be 2 legs going in opposite directions like, throws off that weight distribution. Momentum is the number one thing to campusing. ..if you are retain that momentum throughout a time like you're just gonna have to use a lot less energy. And it's amazing, like the difference it makes between them going fast. And so I think, like, yeah, it helps a

lot with momentum… i guess to like answer the question before of like, do I use my legs, I think like, the biggest instances that help using my lower half are big, big lateral movements… every like centimeter really matters, especially with the lateral movements. And so if you can get like a little bit more, like, like the natural sort of like swing of the leg, that helps.

Gabriela Hernandez: I'm not gonna ask the question again, like it seems like with breaking down a climb. We're thinking if it's more well, I don't know, because the pink route we're like, it's easy at the bottom, and then I kind of it just like figure out the top as I go. But I feels like on black. Did you break it down differently? DId you take a different approach? Are you thinking, I'm only considering the bottom, and I'll figure out the top as I go like is that seem to be like your plan, but no matter what?

Taylor: Yeah, I'd say it's like not identical for every climb. But I'd say, like that general framework, it's pretty like pretty intuitive, just like, it's pretty applicable in scenarios, and like like, even though there was a cruxy section kind of starting out a lot lower than the pink, there was still, that general idea was still there.

How did your body feel on the climb?

Gabriela Hernandez: How did your body feel at different points of this climb? And like, did that affect any of your decision-making process?

Taylor: I'd say like, it definitely like had an impact in the beginning. Because if you remember, like, I pulled into this beginning section, and then like tried to do the same beta that I had done before, like this huge bump. And then I kind of like got it a little bit too low, and it was just put my shoulder in a really weird spot. So then I just kind of let go like reset again, shook out, tried again. So I guess, in terms of like, decision making like when there are sort of like low percentage, very like, like maximum effort moves. If my body does not feel good in those positions. Sometimes it just makes sense to let that go, because it's just not worth an injury. I feel like I touched on this, this terrain isn't meant to be campused, like it's not conducive to campusing, and so sometimes you find yourself throwing to a hold, And it is awkward. And it hurts. And it's just it's like there's a difference between something being really hard in terms of difficulty, but like like conducive to your body. And then there's some... And then the other side of that is like things being really difficult because they're awkward, and they hurt and so sometimes you kind of like pass into that that zone of like having to contort your body and like strength through something that is just so gross that, that's just not worth it. yeah. And just being smart, I think, like, I've just grown to be like quite a bit smarter, and like knowing the limits of my body. Because I think like, when I first started out climbing, I was really stubborn and try like ten times, but now I know when to stop

Gabriela Hernandez: I have interviewed another participant who kind of is like, I know there's always a solution. And like my problem solving strategy is just figuring out the solution, because I know it's always there, like, I feel like, that's not how you move through the world.

Knowing when to stop

Taylor: Not at all. A big theme in my life, not just in climbing but in life, is knowing how to pick your battles. I know that my body can only handle so much and I am very injury prone. and I want to climb for as long as I possibly can. I want to be able to climb at the highest level for the next 10 or 15 years, and being able to do the Paralympics. And like, I have these very like exciting goals, and I know that if I am putting myself in a situation where I am just like really susceptible to hurting myself, I guess just going and limit my chances of pursuing the things that really matter. And so, I guess comparing my perspective to someone who doesn't have this perspective, sometimes there isn't a solution, there is not a way, and that's okay. Yeah, I think, like, a good example, is this climb right? Like, I tried this sequence, this like, sequence 6 or 7 times, and I was so gassed by the end of it. Yeah, I felt like my shoulders were really starting to strain and ache and my fingers have had, like my fingers kind of like pulling off of this like foot chip up here, or just like starting to ache a little bit. I had to use so much of my upper part of strength and power. At some point you just have to stop

Gabriela Hernandez: like, do you feel like that trickles into your life like with your problem, solving strategies like just like you said, like, I know when to stop like, maybe in like interpersonal relationships, or anything like ez: kind of like knowing like, almost when to call your losses.

Taylor: Okay, I would say. Like there are situations when i do not know when to stop, but because I climb so much and i know my body *so well,* that like I feel like I do have a pretty good grasp on knowing when to stop.

Gabriela Hernandez: You say that you're you know your body so well and like I would kind of think about. That's like kind of what it means to be embodied right like, how does disability help to contribute to your embodiment? So like, you're like, I know my body so well. And I would say, like a lot of people who are not disabled do not know their body that well, because they don't have an opportunity to slow down, or to just like feel the things that they're feeling so like… do you think your disability makes you more embodied?

Embodiment?

Taylor: I think so, we are having to navigate environments that like are more strenuous and difficult Because it was not made for you. You're having to be like, constantly aware of like, how you fit into the mold of like the world around you. And I think, like climbing is a really special experience for me, because even though I'm like, I'm aware of my lower half, I mean I am and I am not. So my lower half like, even though it's like kind of swinging behind me. I know that if I like : consciously think about it. I can use it to like, possibly like assist, or like manipulative my upper half, to be able to like pull up a particular sequence, but like it's, it's a conscious choice of whether or not to like tap into that other part of like my body. because I mean I do not have propoception because I have no motor control or sensation of my legs. but I know that based on like just basic mechanics, like, if I kind of like might move my hip up one way like my legs are going to follow and It's not so much a visual thing, as it is just like trusting that my body would [?]

Gabriela Hernandez: Iseems like you're like able to like [?]something that you feel like you don't have a connection to when you're seated, you all of a sudden have a connection to when you're climbing. Yeah, which is contributing to a larger sense of embodiment, because you can actually leverage it and use it to propel you up the wall to some degree.Is that kind of okay? I mean, that's really cool. That's totally embodiment's like building that connection with yourself right?

Taylor: And like that's not to say that my lower half doesn't help in like everyday life, and there are some like instances where I don't know, I'm jokingly said like, Oh, what if I like? Chop off my legs like that would probably help my climbing. But in everyday life like bending over and grabbing something and being able to just like use the skeleton that's existing now, is really helpful. And also just answering and then putting my legs on the ground, and one being able to just like transfer distribute my weight through my limbs like momentarily as I like, move is helpful. That relationship is just very different where it's like being, stagnant feature of just like my legs are in one spot and one spot only when I'm doing like kind of everyday tasks. But in climbing, there's a lot more variability there. In terms of like working towards using them to my advantage. It's strange building a relationship with a part of your body that you cannot necessarily feel, i mean it's there, but is not connected to your brain any more.

Taylor: So then it like, when you start going down this rabbit hole of like separating like your consciousness with like your sensations. And then, like you, yeah, start like trusting your body in ways that like you wouldn't normally have to, because that disconnect sort [??]. It's strange.

Gabriela Hernandez: The disconnection warrants like a different perspective, would you say?

Respect for disconnected parts.

Taylor: Yeah, like a different like dynamic, a different perspective of just like. I also think it's really interesting, too. How like when you are a high performance athlete, You have an opportunity to like, use your body in a different way. Like people, I guess, like an example that I really think about a lot, um. And there's like 2 parts to this: It's like taking care of your body, and also like having a positive relationship with your body.
Being in my acute rehab facility, When I was going through physical therapy and all that. And I remember there was this guy who was also in a chair. And he just like just did not care about his body, and he came in one day with his shins just completely bandaged up like. We were like what happened? He said oh, I just decided to like throw myself off of a flight upstairs and go like straight off of the stairs to get down. And it's sort of like a, i have a number of examples. Some of them are really nauseating, with people using their body because they don't have that connection to the brain anymore. And they don't experience anything, they start using their body as a utility rather than like a true extension, like it becomes a tool rather than a part of the whole ecosystem, like I still consider my legs to be a part of me. I consider them to be just a really important factor in my everyday life and in climbing. And I have a lot of respect-- I think that's a really big part--- is having respect for something that you're no longer literally connected to. But there are people who like will use their legs to accomplish tasks like there's…But there's this guy who I've seen a video on Instagram, where he's in the street in like a rural kind of like street market setting. and he's cracking coconuts with his legs, so he's like throwing his leg like very violently onto these coconuts and cracking open coconuts with his Paralyzed legs. And it's disturbing. He's not, And you know these examples, like these people aren't interested in self preservation, it's more of like a carelessness that will maybe amount to accomplishing a goal, like an unnecessary task. People have different relationships with their body, it's interesting.

Define embodiment

Taylor: I think embodiment is having a positive relationship with all parts of your being and seeing those parts as one cohesive ecosystem rather than separate disconnected parts that achieve different tasks.

Gabriela Hernandez: Would you say that the body, this body integration that you're referring to connected to your mind as well like, is a mind part of this ecosystem? Is it mind, body, connection, or is it mind, connection and body connection?

Taylor: I think it's all one thing. like you mind body. I think it is very much connected, even though there's not that literal connection anymore. I think, like, that relationship stems from the mind: that respect and spatial awareness too.

Gabriela Hernandez: so your definition of embodiment is having a positive relationship with all the parts of your being and seeing those parts as a as a cohesive ecosystem rather than different disconnected parts that can achieve different tasks. Okay, is there anything you would add to that? It's really good.

Gabriela Hernandez: I guess I'll ask really quickly, with this black climb. Are there any skills from this that came up or lessons from this climb, that you would that would help to experience your planning approach, or another climb like it…like any lessons learned?

Taylor: I would say so in that cruxy section that I keep coming back to you like I think, I sometimes like. I forget that you can use foot chips. I think like when I was beginning to climb, I used them a lot more as intermediates because I didn't have the single arm power that I do now to be able to pull through movements. And, sometimes, like, I sort of like subconsciously see them as like short spurts. I'm sort of like…. Figuring out the balance of trying to be efficient and from a training standpoint trying to get stronger….
It is important to use all the resources available.

Gabriela Hernandez: sweet. Wow! Thank you so much. That was an hour, I'm sure. That felt like an hour to you. but not to me. But thank you so much. I think we are done.