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Top performer

South African climber on track to
set records and change lives

Remy Kloos is a 31-year-old South African woman, on track to be the youngest African to complete the Seven Summit Challenge. She's also aiming to be the first African to complete a double summit – reaching the top of Mount Everest and Mount Lhotse (the highest and fourth highest mountains in the world, respectively) within 24 hours.

*For more information,
go to remykloos.com, dlalanje.org and
sunflowerfund.org.*

To date, Kloos has summited four of the mountains that make up the Seven Summits Challenge – Kilimanjaro in Africa, Aconcagua in South America, Elbrus in Europe and Denali in North America.

She was scheduled to climb the highest peak in Oceania, Carstensz Pyramid, in October 2019, but due to civil unrest, she was not able to do so at the time. She's aiming to finish the Challenge this year by climbing Mount Everest in Nepal in April and Vison Massif in Antarctica in December. The Everest-Lhotse combo climb will make her the first woman from Africa to summit the Lhotse peak.

Looking up

Kloos has only been an avid high-altitude mountaineer for three years. She was diagnosed with depression at 17 and battled for years to overcome it. In its wake, she was left with anxiety, which held her back from being who she longed to be.

"The turning point began towards the end of 2016, when I found myself struggling to cope. In search of perspective, I made the decision to go to Tanzania and climb Kilimanjaro. On 1 January 2017, I was standing on the Roof of Africa and I felt an electric energy. I realised I'd found a deep, soulful connection to mountains. I returned home and 10 months later I found the courage to resign from my job in Johannesburg. I took all my savings and decided to climb the highest mountains around the world and tackle my anxiety head on."

Raising hope

Kloos doesn't just climb for her own fulfilment. She's committed to giving back and launched the #JustClimb initiative to raise funds for the Dlala Nje Foundation in Johannesburg. So far, she has raised R500,000, which has gone towards the expansion and renovation of their children's community centre. She also partners with the Sunflower Fund, a donor recruitment centre and stem cell registry.

On her most recent expedition to Denali, Kloos was the only woman in a group of 11 climbers, including guides. Kloos says that the mountain tested her beyond anything she thought she was capable of.

"The expedition took 18 days, carrying loads of up to 55kg. We climbed 50-degree slopes and traversed exposed ridges in temperatures as low as -30°C. You lose feeling in your fingers and toes and struggle to breathe because of the altitude."

Kloos explains that, in order to summit these formidable peaks, she relies on her grit – perseverance, resilience and the power of the mind. "Leaning into grace is equally as important – focusing on humanity, humility, gratitude and positivity. I always carry an artificial sunflower with me on my expeditions as a symbol of grace and hope."



Text and photography | Supplied