



the LIFE of a HAPPY AFRICAN SKI INSTRUCTOR

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Citizen of the world, born to a Sahelian father and a Provençal mother, I spent my childhood in North America, my teenage years in Africa, and I attended university in France, studying hotel management.

I have the privilege to travel and feel at home on 3 different continents, changing hats and skin according to people, circumstances (and moods?!), comfortably adapting the way a chameleon changes colours to blend with its surroundings.

Having inherited a Motherland and a Fatherland, I have chosen Canada as my Daughterland to settle and finally embrace my fascination for winter.

Despite coming late in life to skiing, and even later to instructing, I discovered I had a real passion for teaching. I'm impassioned not only because of the people I meet, and the connections I make, but I'm actually addicted to learning: the knowledge, facts, life stories, psychology, learning about people, about myself. The interaction with my students/clients is the addiction. This has led me to follow the snow from one hemisphere to the other for the last decade, to share and transmit my passion for skiing. I believe every instance of meeting someone, doing something new, and going somewhere different is an opportunity to learn and grow. . . And be the best we can be.

My curiosity and my passion for learning has brought me not only to get certified in 4 different disciplines – skiing, telemarking, snowboarding, and adaptive – but also from different countries, Canada, Australia, and France. With the idea in mind to teach, train, guide, I have finally found the perfect balance of teaching for

a ski school, training instructors, conducting Level 1 Courses, and organizing guided ski trips overseas. I'll never stop exploring!

I continuously take all the opportunities life has sent my way. Ski seasons in the Alps, Japan, Down Under, and all the great seasons I've spent teaching across Canada, from Quebec, to Alberta, and now BC (where the temperatures are more gentle to my African genes!).

From the new faces to the dedicated clients who follow me wherever I end up working, I've learned that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. I easily relate to what they're going through since I started skiing as an adult. I like to tell my beginners "Hey, if Africans can learn to ski, there is hope for you! And you are in good hands!"

The interaction with my colleagues, trainers and supervisors is also part of my addiction. From my '100% Pure Laine' ski schools in Quebec, to the 'United-Nations-in-miniature' ski schools I've taught for overseas, I'm always amazed at how much we can gain simply from exchanging ideas and skiing with each other, if we take the time to listen and observe regardless of our certification or country of origin. We can deepen our understanding, one person at a time, adding tools in our tool box, from the most powerful analogies, explanations, and demos. Education is the most powerful weapon with which we can change the world.

I have keenly attended numerous PDPs, clinics, and modules, mostly for the joy of sharing with colleagues from everywhere, but the highlight of my instructing career so far has been the fantastic opportunity to attend the last 2 Interski events as a supporter, of the Canadian Team in Austria in 2011, and of the Australian Team in Argentina in 2015. And hopefully I'll go to Bulgaria in 2019! Interski is an amazing event every instructor should attend if they have the chance. An intense week, high on emotion and full of excitement, rubbing shoulders with the best instructors from 38 different countries, and also with instructors like ourselves, following their countries' certification pathways. Envision an Austrian colleague who explains over a beer how they cater to the aging public; an Italian insisting on how kids should be taught, a Korean sharing on a chairlift ride how and why they teach short turns in their country. You will expand your horizons and discover different ways of thinking from other nations, with their strengths and weaknesses, and you will develop the ability to understand and accept the differences between people and what makes everyone so special and unique. You will bring something back to your lessons and which will make you a better teacher and a better person. After all, it's all about people in the end.

I'll finish off with this quote from Nelson Mandela that really resonates with me: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart".