

Ultraman. An interview with Anton Krupicka

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The Third episode of FBK Magazine's experience at the Trento Sports Festival. It is the turn of an interview with Anton Krupicka, a 40-year-old American ultrarunner, who told us about his relationship with curiosity, nature, and competition. All in all, he told us about the relentless quest that drives us to get to know ourselves more and more deeply.

In a Science Communication Magazine, it is hard to find someone who can tell more about the virtuous combination of sports and research than [Anton Krupicka](#), if we consider his three [Bachelor](#) degrees in philosophy, physics and geology, earned in Colorado, where he lives. Forty years old, Krupicka practices extreme sports, mostly running in the mountains – his palmares shows major victories, for example, over the 100-mile distance – but also biking and climbing. In addition to practicing competitive sports at a very high level, he explores. Suffice it to say that after arriving in Trento for the Sports Festival, he and his partner Hailey Moore went on a “short” bike ride: they biked to Rome, returned to Trento by train, and biked again to explore the Dolomites, reaching Cortina. “Actually our goal was to just get around”. Since Rome so crowded, however, “We were excited to get back to the mountains”.

Krupicka entertained the audience at the Sports Festival, prompted by a series of really [good questions](#) from Simone Battaglia, one of which was about the connection between his eclectic background and being an athlete. The answer, in a nutshell, was “Curiosity”.

An athlete like him cannot get tired for a fifty-minute interview for sure, and he had no trouble making time for a chat with FBK Magazine.

The interviewer already made you the first question I wanted to ask you: it was about the link between having three Bachelor degrees and being an athlete. I really liked your answer: “Curiosity”. What is curiosity for you?

I guess curiosity is for me maybe the point of being alive, being human. If you get to a point where you are no longer interested in learning or growing as a human, then you may be dead. That's the

way I feel. So, remaining curious, remaining open to new experiences, trying new things, meeting new people, I think that's the point of being human.

Thanks to your activities you spend a lot of time in the wilderness, in nature. Are you worried about the future of our planet?

Yes, it's a short answer. I guess, so much so I almost try not to think about it, because I get anxious, it makes me depressed. At the same time, I believe in the ingenuity of humans, and I'm hopeful, you have to remain hopeful that we can at least continue to make progress and that's what we have to try to do. But yeah, of course, like you said, spending time in the natural world you can't help but notice the changes.

Your great-great-grandfather emigrated to the US coming from the Czech region. I am a historian, so I am curious about it... are you interested in the history of the pioneers in the United States? (Anton Krupicka was born in Nebraska).

My great-great grandfather brought his family to the United States because the government at the time was giving free land to anyone willing to settle, to build a house and farm. He must have seen an opportunity in that. I think about that now, how scary, intimidating it must have been. I think that is part of what is unique about America, is that it's made up of people who traveled a long way to take a chance, to have a big adventure basically. Of course it created a lot of problems, because you have to always put people together, but that's what I take from my family history.

"Love of the game" is the basketball players' motto. Do you love the races? Or do you rather love the training that takes you to the races?

I love both. I really like competitions, because you have the opportunity to try your best at something, to be at your best, and when you go to the races it's all constructed around you trying your hardest. It's a unique opportunity, I guess. We don't always have the support system around us to do our best on something, and racing is that. On top of that, on training, it's like life, is just up to the most intense level beyond the race and I find that to be an extremely compelling experience and I hope to get that experience the rest of my life.

I think that among ultrarunners there is obviously competition, but above all there is respect and complicity. Do you agree?

I think so. When you run 100 kilometers or 100 miles on the mountains, even if you win the race you are destroyed, you are very humbled, and as a result I think... it breaks your ego rather than building on it and so everyone has respect for each other, no matter how long it takes you to finish, because there is a common experience of what you went through to get to the finish line.

What about the future?

Uh, what about it... it's a difficult existential question... There are a lot of adventures that I still wanna have, definitely in running, but including climbing and cycling, personal challenges, personal projects. I still want to race, but I recognize that I am not at the top of the sport anymore after 15 years. That's fine, that's the natural progression of things. I'm still excited to push myself in more informal settings.



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