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# IF THE CLEAT FITS...

One woman.  
One bike.  
No Sense of Direction.  
Racing to Rhodes.



**INGRID AVIDON**

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I would appreciate if you would kindly donate, or purchase your own copy, via my web-site, [www.be-ing.co.za](http://www.be-ing.co.za), so that my team can keep me racing. And writing. And paving the way for young African women to push themselves to their limits, through my Foundation.

Thankyou.

## **DISCLAIMER**

**The escapades described in this book are based on real life situations that occurred over two separate Race to Rhodes mountain biking events.**

**Names have been changed to protect the innocent and foolish.**

**Any similarities to actual persons (living or dead) are very, very possible. The romantic connection? Well, that is up to you to decide. As they say, 'If the Cleat Fits, Pedal It'.**


**All writing in this book is my own. Most of the photographs are not. All of the photographs have been used with permission from the dedicated photographers who annually risk life and limb recording the Race to Rhodes**

**Ingrid Avidon  
2021**



“Fortune favours  
the brave”

A Latin proverb that I summon up when I  
am about to do something foolish.



“There is a fine line  
between bravery, and  
stupidity.”

My mom, when I am about to do  
something foolish.

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# MIKE AND THE MECHANIC

## CHAPTER 1



It all started on the second last day of the Cape Epic. You see, I needed to pee - badly. Coffee does that. We were cycling through a flat section, where there were no trees, or shrubs, or large rocks that could offer a relatively private spot to squat and have a pee.

I found a trailer parked about 20 m off the road, stopped, and started the unavoidable rigmarole for a woman in bib-shorts on a cold autumn morning. My riding partner, Michelle, continued on ahead.

I first had to take off my cumbersome, long gloves, as I needed my fingers to undo my helmet and my camel-back. Next, was my cycling jacket, carefully removing the lip-ice, chocolate bars, mobile phone, and rain jacket that I had stuffed into the pockets. I then had to pull my cycling shirt over my head so that I could pull the straps of my bib-shorts off my shoulders.

At last, with bursts of pee already running down my legs, I was finally in the home stretch. I pulled down the shorts, ready to squat behind the tyre of the trailer. But I had forgotten that both my knees had been strapped by an over-zealous Physiotherapy student that morning. I was unable to get into that proper, low-down position that would ensure the pee did not run down my legs, and onto my shoes. Instead I had to remove my shorts completely, stay upright, grab onto the trailer for balance, and lift my one leg as far out to the side as possible.

I was mid-way through a glorious, relieving pee, doggy-style, when a cyclist rode up to the trailer. He happened to be male (most of them in these extreme sports are), which might explain my passion for the sport. But more of that later.

I can't really blame him for looking shocked when he saw a woman in cycling gear - or not in her gear - posing as a pole dancer, albeit a less sexy one with a two-tone tan, tape criss-crossed around her legs, and a very supportive sports bra.

In my surprise, I hopped to face the other way, wee running down my

legs. All I heard was “Yoh! I’m sorry” as he hastily retreated back to his bike. I was mortified, but even more so, when I returned to my bike after struggling back into the pee-dampened bib-shorts, to find him holding my bike for me, with a broad grin on his face. I stared at him, blushing beneath my already red face. “I am impressed by your dexterity!” he said. Rarely at a loss for words, this time I had no come-back line.

As I jumped back onto my bike, I noticed the team name on his bike board: ‘Mike and the Mechanic’. It was a real shame that his team name was named after one of my favourite rock bands. Was he the Mike, or the Mechanic, of the team?

Without another word, I rode off furiously to try catch up with Michelle, the words of the Mike and the Mechanics song playing in my head:



I said:

“Go if you wanna go  
Stay if you wanna stay”  
I didn’t care if you hung around me,  
I didn’t care if you went away.  
And I know you were never right,  
I’ll admit I was never wrong.  
I could never make up my mind,  
I made it up as I went along.  
And though I treated you like a child,  
I’m gonna miss you for the rest of my life.  
All I need is a miracle,  
All I need is you.  
All I need is a miracle,  
All I need is you.  
All I need is a miracle,  
All I need is you.

**(All I Need is a Miracle : Mike and the Mechanics: 1995)**

Michelle was waiting for me on the side of the road. “I have almost run out of food waiting for you”, she said, chewing a Bar-One.

As I rode on, my encounter with the mysterious Mike, or the Mechanic, played over and over in my head. “Dammit!”, I thought, this man had managed to make me feel like a school-girl. I could not believe that I had just perched there, almost butt-naked, bib-shorts in hand, with pee running down my leg. And I could not even muster up a retort vaguely befitting a street-wise woman.

You have reached this far.... and now you want more?

You can also purchase and download the full book on [www.be-ing.co.za](http://www.be-ing.co.za).

And while you are at it:

I am embarking on a 12x12 Challenge in 2022, and would love you to follow my exploits on my blog.

Sign up for updates on [www.be-ing.co.za](http://www.be-ing.co.za)



IF THE CLEAT FITS also includes spectacular photographs like this one!

I need to note my gratitude to the photographers of the Race2Rhodes and the Freedom Challenge who have generously allowed me to include these breath-taking images that are too beautiful not to share... and will definitely whet your appetite to follow the trail - whether by 4x4 or 2 wheels...

Thankyou particularly to the following photographers - the majority of whose R2R images appear in the book and enhance the story:

- Llewellyn Lloyd - Reblex Photography.
- Andrew King.
- Hayden Brown.

The image above, by Llewllyn Lloyd was shot at Lehana's Pass near the end of the Race2Rhodes.

Their images can be located on the [www.freedomchallenge.org.za](http://www.freedomchallenge.org.za) site





## ABOUT INGRID

Brave, tenacious and wickedly witty, Ingrid's self-effacing commentary belies a fierce intellect and a deep commitment not only to extreme personal challenges, but, more significantly, to community upliftment - through health-focused interventions.

It is Ingrid's wish for this, and future, books to sell enough for Ingrid to sustain her foundation which is dedicated to providing inspiration for African women of all ages to get active and out there.

Just grab a bicycle, a canoe or a pair of sneakers and put your body to the test! But read Ingrid's book first!

Ingrid has a PhD in physiology from the University of the Witwatersrand, where she lectured and headed up the School of Physiology Exercise Lab, before she semi-grated to the coast to dedicate more time to her extreme sports, motherhood, and community projects.

Ingrid is available for motivational talks, mentoring and coaching. Read more / contact Ingrid on [www.be-ing.co.za](http://www.be-ing.co.za)

## PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Hilarious. Irreverent. Inspirational. As rapid and raucous a read as the final downhill ride on the Race to Rhodes. Racier actually. And funnier.

A contemporary feminist treatise advocating fitness, health and self-belief... But just so funny. I can't get enough...And I can't wait for the sequel!

I started reading the book before I went to bed. I tossed and turned for a few hours, with vivid imagery of the trail traipsing through the recesses of my mind. I got up and read it to the finish. Beautifully written, totally captivating and tea-spurting-out-of-my-nose-hilarious all at the same time. Bravo - **Mike Woolnough**.

Made me fall in love with South Africa all over again.



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