



## Parkour Mindsets and Their Hidden Influences



Three Parkour practitioners with similar athletic backgrounds, share their takes on the values and culture of the community, what brought them to the discipline and the pros and cons of making Parkour a competitive sport.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP: Max:** Let your movement continue to represent yourself and your values, and then go from there.

**Sam:** Be aware of the source of your motivation, making sure it comes from within. Do what is fun and progress will follow.

**Silke:** Don't put yourself down if a session didn't go well. Celebrate that you showed up and learnt something.

**Max Henry** Practitioner since 2007, coach since 2010 and author of The Parkour Roadmap.

- **INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND:** Max did competitive gymnastics, which led to severe injuries that made him abandon it. A background in Maths has enabled him to identify the nuances of techniques and teach them to others.
- **VALUES OF PARKOUR:** Max believes leadership and community are at the heart of Parkour, and teaching others is a key aspect of the culture. Parkour nurtures self-development and self-worth. Embodiment is fundamental to the discipline, movement leading to self-discovery.
- **ABOUT COMPETITION:** Competitions are an opportunity for joyful engagement with others. Different types of competition will attract different practitioners. He favours grassroots events which promote mutual support.

**Samuel Govindin**, Parkour artist

- **INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND:** Active in all school sports, but never liked rules, coaches or competition. He is attracted to the playfulness and freedom of Parkour, as well as lack of equipment, coaching and training.
- **VALUES OF PARKOUR:** Sharing learning is at the heart of the discipline. Being present in the space and doing what is possible, rather than aim for technique. Sam integrates games into the practice, as for him it is about the fun. Practitioners must adapt parkour to them and not themselves to the discipline.
- **ABOUT COMPETITION:** It should be driven by the Parkour community, so values are enhanced. If the money is the value, then the community of practitioners doesn't benefit in any way.

**Silke Sollfrank**, Parkour practitioner and professional freerunner.

- **INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND:** Silke started in ice-figure skating and moved to highly competitive gymnastics, with constant pressure for results. While she loved the discipline, she detested competition, without which, she was not allowed to practice. In Parkour she found enjoyment and freedom.
- **VALUES OF PARKOUR:** She appreciates that once you let go of focusing on technique, Parkour will enable you to see how much you are capable of, which is generally much more than you imagine.
- **ABOUT COMPETITION:** Her negative experience made her reject many offers to compete in Parkour, till she realised that it focused on performance, enjoyment, flow, and not outcome. She fears competitions organised by people extraneous to the community, as they don't benefit practitioners and leave core values out of the picture. She favours events organised by the Parkour community.



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