



Issue 24, June 2022

Hi Steve R,

Welcome to the second-anniversary edition of my newsletter! This newsletter wouldn't be possible if I didn't have the amazing Hannah behind the scenes putting this all together every month and nudging me about my deadlines. Thanks, Hannah!

A personal story about climbing woodworking

About a year ago, on a whim, I joined a nearby rock climbing gym during its grand opening weekend. This is an activity I knew nothing about and had zero experience with, but I decided to give it a shot. It was challenging and a little scary, but I was immediately hooked.

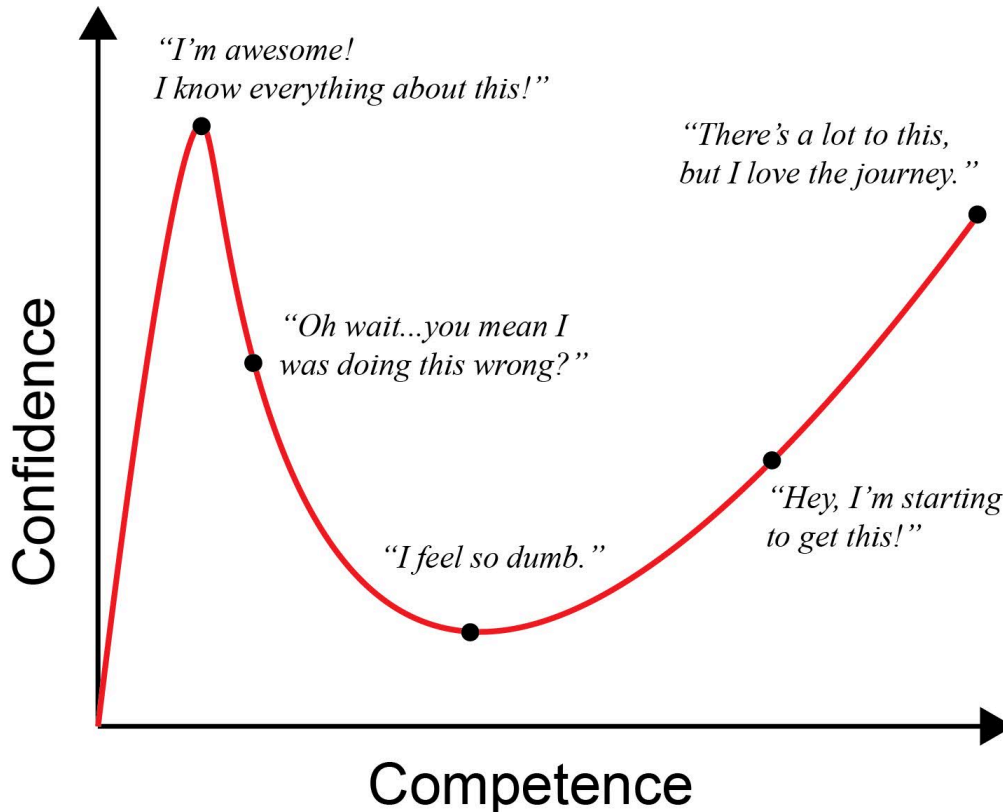
When you climb, you're attached to a rope and tied into a harness. The other end of the rope is attached to a partner on the floor who maintains tension as you climb, manages slips and falls, and safely lowers you back to the floor. This is called belaying.

In order to really enjoy climbing, you need to learn how to belay and then get certified so that you can climb with a partner and take turns climbing. So on my next visit to the gym, I took a belay class where I learned how to tie knots, lower a climber, and learned climbing terminology, jargon, and etiquette. I was soaking it all up like a sponge. Tie a couple knots? No problem...piece of cake. I went home and watched a bunch of rock climbing videos on YouTube. The following day, secure with my plethora of newfound knowledge and wisdom, I confidently hiked back into the gym and took my belay certification test.

And I failed.

What I felt before the test wasn't confidence, but arrogance. There's actually a term for this: the [Dunning-Kruger Effect](#). When you learn something new, it's common to have a

spike at the beginning where you overestimate your knowledge or skills. Watching videos and taking a single class was no substitute for actual practice.



The next day I got to the gym early and practiced over and over with a friend I met who also failed her first test. We tied knots, practiced rope handling techniques, and quizzed each other. We took the test again and we each passed. It really wasn't that hard, but I'm kind of glad I failed the first time because it made me much more focused on my second try. I took it far more seriously. Today, belaying is second nature, but I still treat every climb with the same focus I had on the test. It's exciting knowing that I have a lot to learn by putting in hours, months, and years of actual climbing. It will never get boring or routine.

What I love about climbing is that there is no cap on the challenges it offers. During every climbing session, I discover new routes to try and push myself to climb routes with a higher level of difficulty. (For any of you who climb, I am currently working on completing my first 5.11a rated route.)

Climbing is a great physical activity, but it's not limited to a certain body type or strength level. There are an equal number of women as men, climbers in their 70s and beyond, as well as children and families. A lot of climbing has to do with balance, technique, and body positioning. Scaling a 40-foot wall is a controlled way to face fears, learn from your mistakes and discover what you're capable of when you actually get off the couch and try.

But mostly I love the mental game. Every climb is a problem-solving activity. For every route, there is any number of ways to get to the top: which footholds to use, how to pivot your body, hand placement, etc. There is only one goal for any route, but many ways to achieve that goal. The more practice and experience, the better you get at recognizing which methods and techniques to use in a given situation.

I recently decided to level-up my climbing game and took it outdoors to tackle my first ever climb on a real mountain. It was much scarier, more exhausting, and even more exhilarating than indoor climbing. My first climb was sloppy, but I will never forget the joy of reaching the top, feeling the wind, and taking in the view. I did a thing.

When you're working on a challenging route, it might take many attempts to get to the top, getting further and further each time as you solve specific problems. These are called your "project" routes. And as you probably already know, not much can compare with the feeling of completing a particularly challenging project.



Have a great month!

Steve

The cat content continues

Can't get enough woodworking cat content? Well, I made a couple of upgrades to my catification system for Cobra and Bubbles. The strangest part? Realizing that it's been two years since I made the play system during the 2020 lockdown. 🙄



A conversation about making ridiculous things

On The WTS Podcast, I recently chatted with Matty Benedetto about his outrageously creative [Unnecessary Inventions](#) YouTube channel. Matty is quite the character. Listen to the full episode to learn about his Superbowl commercial and his army of *nineteen* 3D printers.

Check it out on any podcast app or on [The WTS Podcast website](#).



Community Highlight

Keeping it simple

Last month's newsletter came at a great time for Terry, a member of [The Weekend Woodworker](#).

He had designed an ornate wood chime stand that he was dreading building. After being reminded of the beauty of simplicity, he redesigned the project and built this great stand in under two hours.

Well done, Terry!



This Month's Member Projects

Check out these awesome projects made by members of [Powered Up](#) and [The Weekend Workshop](#).

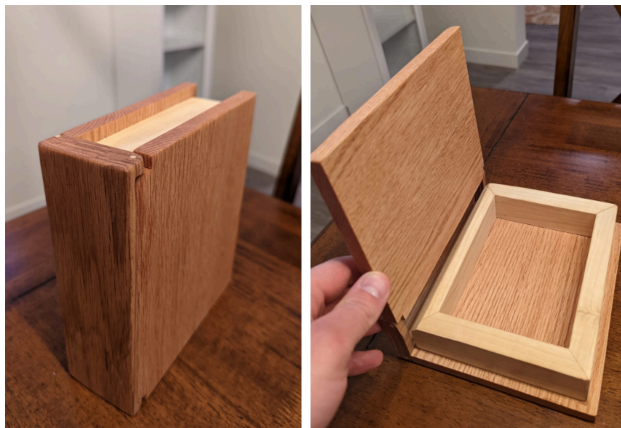


Charming chest

The hardware, the stain color...I love everything about Mathew's coffee table chest!

Sophisticated shop drawers

This is so impressive. After building my own parts cabinet, I'm gonna guess John is ready to make a project...any project...that doesn't involve drawers!



Beautiful book box

Tim went deep into the WWMM archives to make this book box for his wife for their fifth (wood) wedding anniversary. (I still have mine sitting on my dresser!) Great job on the dowel hinges. I remember those being a bit finicky to get right!

Thanks for reading,

- Steve

P.S. If you are new this month, you can read last month's issue of Notes From the Shop [here](#).

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