

*How to*  
Climb  
Everest

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## INTRODUCTION

# My Everest World

Even after so many years, the view from the summit is still out of this world: vast, jagged mountains everywhere, columns of cloud bubbling high into the atmosphere and to the north the vast, brown plateau of Tibet. Some of the highest mountains in the world are all around: Lhotse, close by on the other side of the South Col.<sup>1</sup> Makalu to the south-east. Further east, the world's third-highest peak, Kangchenjunga. And they're all below me. The climbers I'm guiding are overjoyed: so many years of dreaming and training towards this moment and now it's come true. Seeing their reaction is absolutely the best part of my job, even better than the spectacular landscape around me.

What I can't see from the summit is my home village of Thame, but I know it's not far: twenty miles or so. When I was a boy, my brother Lhakpa and I would bunk off school and scramble up the little mountain behind the village, called Sunder Peak. We pretended we were like the men we knew who went climbing with the foreigners. So many famous Sherpas have come from Thame. Tenzing Norgay<sup>2</sup> lived there and our heroes Ang Rita and Apa, both record-holders in their time, were born there. They helped make the Sherpa people famous around the world and we wanted to be like them. Now I am in my fiftieth year and celebrating my twenty-fourth ascent of the world's highest mountain: a world record. It's the second time I've climbed Everest in a week. Middle age is not so bad.

We didn't want to climb for the sake of it, my brother and I. We didn't have that luxury. Our house in Thame was one big room that we shared with our parents and six sisters. When the British came to climb Everest almost seventy years ago, with Tenzing Norgay in charge of the Sherpas,