



Smartwool 



F O R W A R D

FILMMAKERS GO TO SCHOOL



ABOUT THE FILM

Forward

Palmer Morse | US 2024 | 16 min | Grades 9-12 | VIRTUAL VISIT ONLY

In this short documentary, while navigating a myriad of life challenges, Anjelica turned to the outdoors to improve her mental health only to discover a noticeable lack of other plus-size women of color on trail. By posting a simple flyer looking for more women to hike with, Anjelica created a community she never could have imagined.

“You have to be the one taking that space so you can save that space. Not everything you do that you love is going to be easy. It’s challenging, but it’s worth it. More Representation. Space for us all. Dream Bigger. Keep learning. Keep moving forward. If you’re somewhere and there’s not someone that looks like you, sometimes you just have to take on that big responsibility and you have to be the person that is representing. Sometimes you have to be the one that takes that first step so others can join you.”

IMPACT

What does it take to create a space where you truly feel like you belong? Palmer’s documentary film, *Forward*, explores the transformative power of belonging and the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces where none existed before. Through Anjelica’s journey, the film highlights how personal healing can lead to collective empowerment—and how small acts of courage can spark connection with others. This film is an insight into how everyone has the power to redefine who belongs in certain spaces and to build community through authenticity and intention.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Palmer (he/him) is a multi-disciplinary award-winning filmmaker who focuses on using the devices at hand in our visual and media culture that can drive our society to make change. As a Director, Producer, DP, and Editor, his work has been shown in National Geographic, PBS, New York Times, Outside Magazine and in film festivals around the world garnering awards and high praise. A Swiss Army knife of knowledge and skills, you’ll often hear him planning his next shoot as often as you’ll find him on set holding a camera or sitting in the editing room. Interested in stories of humans, our planet, and the interactions of the two, Palmer often works with organizations, non-profits, and brands in honing in on their mission in a visual format.



VIEWING GUIDE: REACHING FOR THE SUMMIT

How to Use this Thinking Routine:

The film you are about to watch is about identity and impact, responsibility and representation. We all have summits to climb, some visible and physical, some emotional and personal. Use the notecatcher to note what you notice in each of the focus areas while tracking the journey, both literally and metaphorically.

The Climber Who is the subject of the documentary? What is their background? What are they trying to achieve?	
The Risk What physical, social, or emotional risks are they taking?	
The Dream What drives them? How do they define success?	
Representation Who do they represent or inspire? How do they acknowledge this?	
Obstacles What barriers stand in their way? How do they overcome them?	
The Summit Moment Is there a defining moment in the film? What does it symbolize?	
Creating Space How does their journey create space for others? Who might follow?	
Reflecting from the Peak What does this story teach about dreaming big or taking responsibility, for yourself or others?	

THIS FILM, MY STORY

PERSONAL CONNECTION JOURNAL

How to Use this Thinking Routine:

This activity asks students to reflect on how the film intersected with their own lives, values, beliefs, challenges, or questions. The purpose is to shift the focus from analyzing the film to understanding themselves through it. They write a short journal entry to explore that connection, followed by a brief message to the filmmaker.

Partner Prompts: Choose one or more prompts to write about in a quick journal-style reflection.

- *This film reminded me of a moment in my life when . . .*
- *The character or situation made me think differently about . . .*
- *I used to believe . . . but now I'm thinking . . .*
- *This story helped me put something I've seen or felt before into words . . .*

Message to the Filmmaker: In 2-3 sentences, write a note to the filmmaker.

- Thank you for telling this story because . . .
- If you knew my story, you'd understand why . . .

Optional Wrap-Up: Invite students to voluntarily share a line from their journal entry or message to the filmmaker with the whole class.