



# Where To, Captain?

Some days, I feel like I've been adrift at sea for years, just not sure where I'm supposed to be headed. Oh, there's happy adventures and learning adventures and new discoveries and things to leave behind along the way, but the old habit of feeling secure from having a plan and being settled in somewhere likes to make fun of me all the time. Some people admire my courage. Some just can't understand it, and some just think I'm crazy. The thing is, most people I know are headed to the same, planned destination and I seem to be going the other way. Good thing I'm way beyond giving much clout to what others think or expect of me anymore; one thing I know for sure is that I don't want to go where they're going. This knowing—this discontentment—allows the winds of change to take hold of my sails and start guiding me to a better, happier place.

Don't get me wrong, I love the sea and the limitless aspects of it. Oh, I know there's sharks, and believe me, I've encountered them, but as you tune into listening closer to your heart and soul, it becomes easier and easier to swim away from them before they get within your range. I keep feeling pulled to beach get-aways, and have come to love venturing off by myself. The quiet reflection time and re-centering is incredible, but I've come to love letting the outgoing side of myself out and meeting new and very different people everywhere I go, more and more. I may become addicted to it some?

I'm learning to trust not always having a plan, trusting the Universe will always provide. I really used every moment of my recent lone vacation to the Virgin Islands, where some days I just packed up my beach bag and navigated around the island on-the-fly, depending on whatever I felt like at the moment. My conservative, wise self already knew the lay of the land and all about how to spot legitimate public transportation, and I had learned who I could trust among the locals. By the way, the islands had more respectful, kind people than I've ever come across anywhere else—it's just their way of life. The only rudeness I saw was in other tourists, some from my region of the country!

I must have a little mermaid in me, I'm certain. I spent most of my days snorkeling, totally enamored by the gorgeous world, hidden just below the surface. So many beautiful and curious things I've never seen before. I had to remind myself that I needed to breathe through the tube several times and to pay attention to where I was swimming to, as I followed a colorful school of small fish. Even the baby shark was sweet—I just wanted to talk to it! All this, despite my lifelong fear of drowning and so I always used to be claustrophobic underwater; that seems to be disappearing!

Still, once in a while I just wonder when I'm going to figure out where it is I'm headed? Have I overdone enjoying the present moments and am I focusing too much on the other souls I meet in those moments, where I've "lost touch with reality" as they say? But I know better now. . . the new view I have now IS the true reality and the rest is an illusion; and so while that "lost" feeling doesn't bother me, my "trained" human side can't help but go there, some times.

The one thing I truly miss when I'm out playing somewhere else in the world is my grandson, my Captain. As soon as he could talk, we have been playing Captain and Matey (before he could pronounce it, I was "Hey May-be!") We have a favorite playground he calls the Pirate Ship Playground, because we use one of the structures as our ship. We find sticks for swords, but his Mom and I pick up pirate trinkets whenever we travel somewhere by the sea. He was thrilled with the monkey-pirate shirt I just brought him back from the islands! :) And recently, that brave little man trusted me to sit on my paddleboard and float in the lake a little while, smiling ear-to-ear as I told him, "See, this is your ship!"

I realized later that day that he and I are best buds because we understand each other so well. We really have a ton in common. We both know that life is all about the souls you meet and doing your best to follow the loving desires of your heart. We both know that the possibilities and opportunities are limitless; that only our own fears stop anything from coming. We both are a little unsure as to whether we have all the control we want to have over things. He's at the

mercy of whatever adult is taking care of him, at the moment, and I'm at the mercy of 50 years of thinking life has to be a certain way, chained to what I THINK are my responsibilities and capabilities. Deep down, we both know there is NOTHING we can't do. Deep down, we both know only WE ARE THE BOSS of our own peace and happiness, yet when things get jagged, we get frustrated and forget, sometimes.

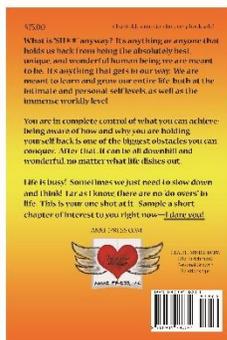
As I'm writing this, I could jump off the moon, into the stars (those are favorites of ours, too) because I was a little concerned after I returned from this last vacation, realizing that even the most beautiful paradise hadn't coaxed me out of the writing slump I've been in. It's true that all you have to do is one thing that brings you soul-deep joy and you'll find yourself again. All it took was my first Grandma Day with my grandson after returning home to help me see things clearly again, and BOOM! Here's the article.

I'm reminding myself that sometimes it just takes a while to get to where our soul really wants to go, and thankfully, because I don't feel quite ready for the enormity of whatever lies ahead. What is time, anyway? Perhaps I need to learn a little more trust and patience and ponder a little more who I am. Alongside my grandson, we're learning to walk on a swaying ship with grace and pick ourselves up when we get tossed around as we discover new things every day, and decide where we want to go to next. In recent years, I realize that thinking I knew who I was all these years was not even close; there's a whole, much larger side to myself when I stop looking at myself from just my mind and start using the vision of the heart and soul. It's incredible! I don't really know all the depths of who I am yet, any more than my grandson has this life all figured out yet! We both want to be the best, biggest, brightest version of ourselves that we can be, and I think we're helping each other along that path. It's a little overwhelming when you realize that you can absolutely go, be, and do ANYTHING you want in life and you really want to make it GOOD! So grateful to have my little buddy to navigate with; there's an incredible amount of comfort knowing someone is there beside you!

Scary as it is some days, I won't turn back. The new discoveries are too amazing, even to someone that feels they had it all and had it all figured out; there's just always so much more we can't see or understand until we take that chance to venture into new territories. I should be getting used to the exciting and uncharted adventures, as they come up every time you even start to allow it, in the least little bit. My real journey started at just before 40 years old, frustrated with

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life, when I was finally ready to believe there had to be more to it than all the human accomplishments and "failures" I had been through. That's when the writing started to come, and boy, did that bring some incredible things, along with the unexpected general acceptance of this new part of me—not what you'd think—but heart and soul discoveries for me personally. And it hasn't stopped. I don't want it to stop. I've had a little taste of how peaceful and crazy-good life can be, and I'll never go back to mediocre. As I've said before, we're not here to live SO-SO and to be a SO-SO being. We are here to experience a mind-blowing life of bliss. If we're not living that way, we are holding something back and we will not be truly content. I beg you, for the sake of the whole world, join me on the adventures . . . you'll never look back. ~Mary Anne

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