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**A Mindful Road Trip: The Perfect No-Goal Vacation**

**By Maya Talisman Frost**

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by: **Maya Talisman Frost**

It's the beginning of spring break, and we're heading south. That's all we know.

Our family is greatly anticipating what may be our last road trip for a long, long time. There's a lot of excitement in our house right now as we are shifting into a whole new phase for each of us.

My husband is launching a new business. I am writing a book. Our 17-year-old daughter is preparing for college in Nova Scotia in September. Our 16-year-old daughter is heading to Brazil for a year-long Rotary Exchange in July. Our 14-year-old daughter is playing a sport for the first time in her life. Our 13-year-old daughter is considering transferring to an arts magnet school in order to immerse herself in her passion—dance.

This is the end of an era. In a few months, we will never have all four of them living at home again. The next year will bring all kinds of changes, and we feel we need to grab this chance to hit the road together in our trusty, dusty minivan.

It's time for our favorite kind of vacation—the make-it-up-as-you-go meander through undiscovered (to us, anyway) territory. We'll get up really early, jump in the van, and just go. No reservations. No schedule. No destination in mind.

We love this no-goal travel. We learned years ago that the happiest times we spend together are those in which we are free to experience each moment as it comes without planning the next.

Back in 1998, we decided in one day to pack up the kids and take off to India and Nepal for three months. It's not as though we simply quit our jobs and left. That would have been far easier.

We had plenty of responsibilities—we owned two small retail businesses, an import/export company, an old commercial building with a leaky roof, and a house we had just finished remodeling.

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We felt restless and ready for adventure, and making the choice to go was instantaneous and unanimous.

We sold one business, liquidated another, put the third in a coma. We found someone to take care of the leaky roof, and another to stay in our house. We yanked the kids out of school and within six weeks of making our decision boarded a plane—six excited travelers carrying six small backpacks.

The girls were 7, 8, 10 and 11. People thought we were insane.

The first two months we spent in India visiting the former host families my husband had lived with during his own Rotary Exchange when he was 16. The third month we had reserved for Nepal. We planned to fly into Kathmandu and spend four weeks on our own. We had no agenda, no reservations, no contacts. We weren't the least bit concerned about it.

From the very first day, it was clear this was going to be a really special experience for our family. We found a clean, friendly hotel, the Red Planet, with a room big enough for six of us. It was \$15 a night. Our window faced the rear of a nightclub, and we giggled ourselves to sleep as Pink Floyd and Michael Jackson were blasted from the speakers outside. One of our daughters became quite adept at unclogging the toilet and bathtub drain.

We wandered the curving streets, marveling at the sights and sounds. Each meal was an adventure as we made it a point to invite single diners to join us. We met fascinating people of all ages from around the world.

Highlights include dashing into a tiny Italian restaurant during our first two hours in Kathmandu as we were caught in a torrential downpour—our first rain since leaving Oregon. A hilarious but fairly sleepless night sharing a tea house room with rats. Children, especially young boys, trailing us everywhere we trekked. Breakfast on our roof with a breathtaking view of the Annapurnas. Ducking to avoid spider webs dripping with dew while riding elephants in the early morning. Exploring richly scented temples. Spontaneous dancing in the streets.

We have never, ever laughed more than we did on that trip. I had to use an asthma inhaler—not for any allergies, but because I laughed so hard that I started wheezing! Every single day was full of absolute joy and discovery. It didn't matter in the slightest what we were doing. We were together, we were exploring, and we were having the time of our lives.

Granted, a road trip to southern Oregon isn't nearly as exotic. Still, what we learned in Nepal is the magic of being in the moment. Our kids discovered the power of being present and open to whatever the day may bring.

It's a priceless lesson we feel fortunate to have learned early. That trip was a gift that keeps on giving. It provided a shining example of true mindfulness for our growing daughters.

We're heading south. Our intention? To be together. To explore. And to laugh our heads off.

I'll bring my inhaler.

Maya Talisman Frost is a mind masseuse. Her work has inspired thinkers in over 80 countries. She serves up a satisfying blend of clarity, comfort and comic relief in her free weekly ezine, the Friday Mind Massage. To subscribe, visit

## **It's The Ride That Counts**

**By Selena Richardson**

Having goals is a good thing. It means that you're willing to take the first step to achieving those goals. When you write down your goals, articulate them on paper, that's the first step to achieving them.

But what about the second step, the third and the fourth and so on? If you persevere and keep focused you will eventually reach the goals that you set for yourself. But when you finally reach that goal, how will you feel about it?

Will it be a sense of accomplishment and pride? Or will it be more of 'yeah I finally got it done' and you're just happy that you've gotten it over with?

The route you take while pursuing your goal determines how you feel about it at the end. It's the ride that counts. Have you been on a road trip where everything that could go wrong did? How did you feel when you finally got to your destination? Pretty worn out, huh? Now what about a good road trip where everything went smoothly? You were probably still tired depending on how long the trip was but you were a bit happier when you got there.

See, it's how you get there that counts. If you're miserable during the entire trip, you're going to be miserable when you get to where you're going. I've had too many road trips where everyone in the car was cranky during the entire ride and as soon as we got to our last stop, the crankiness only continued on. Sure we were glad to get there but only because we were finally there and able to get out of the car. We were just glad the trip was over and still quite a bit cranky too.

But when the road trip is smooth and fun with no accidents or construction or any mishaps, not only are you happy during the ride but you're ecstatic when you get to your final stop. You're not as tired and worn out as you would have been if it were a bad trip.

It's the same thing with your goals. You're more appreciative of achieving your goals if you have fun with it while you're working on it. So enjoy the ride, have fun and there will be a lot more satisfaction when you reach your goals.

Selena Richardson believes in following your dreams and creating the life you want. To receive more articles like this and a free ebook, subscribe to Creative Possibilities by sending a blank email to

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