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**Christopher Columbus**

**By Mike McDougall**

Christopher Columbus was born in 1451 and died in May 1506. He was a famous explorer and trader whose most significant voyage was crossing the Atlantic Ocean and landing in the Americas on October 12, 1492 .

Although his actual nationality is a question of debate, this most famous voyage was done sailing under the flag of Castilian Spain. Columbus is the man most often believed as to having 'discovered' America , although there is evidence that other explorers had made the crossing before him. It was after Columbus ' crossing that marked the start of the Spanish and Portuguese colonisation of South America .

Like many of the educated people of the period, Columbus believed that the earth was spherical in shape. He argued that he would be able to reach the Far East plotting a westward course. His main opposition to his notions was not that others believed the earth to be flat, but that nobody knew if it was possible to sail around the world without running out of food or running into windless areas.

Columbus ' early career started in 1474, nearly 20 years before reaching America . He spent a year on a Genoese backed ship bound for the island of Khios , in the Aegean Sea and it was while he was there, he began to recruit sailors of his own.

Two years later, Columbus embarked on his first foray into the Atlantic Ocean , which, sadly ended off the Cape of St. Vincent in Portugal , when his fleet came under attack from French Privateers, who burned his ship and Columbus was forced to swim six miles back to shore.

After this, he settled in Lisbon , in Portugal , which had become a hive of maritime activity with ships setting sail to destinations across Europe and Africa . Columbus worked for some time with his brother as a draftsman, but soon returned to the sea, joining a Portuguese fleet bound for Iceland , Ireland and also West Africa .

There are two sides to Columbus - some view him as a man who, through his explorations, encouraged a Western expansion. Others, however, see him as being responsible for the deaths of

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many indigenous people, through the European exploitation of the continent and the West Indian slave trade.

One of Columbus' conditions with the Spanish monarchs before his voyages was that he claimed governorship of the new territories. Columbus was an excellent navigator, but his administrative skills were poor and he was soon stripped of his governorship in 1500.

Christopher Columbus was always a very religious man, and he would often give 'the conversion of non-believers' as one of the reasons for his explorations. In later life Columbus grew even more religious and took to wearing a Franciscan habit. He would claim to hear divine voices and even lobbied for a new crusade to capture Jerusalem .

Christopher Columbus died in Valladolid on May 20, 1506 . He was quite a rich man thanks to all the gold he had gathered in his earlier years.

After his death, his body underwent excarnation - where the skin is removed so only bone is left. He was first interred in Valladolid and was then moved to a monastery in Seville . At the behest of his son, Columbus' remains were then moved to Santa Domingo. When the French took over 200 years later, he was moved to Havana , and then in 1898 after Cuba's independence, they were finally moved to the cathedral in Seville .

Mike McDougall has been commissioned by Babylon Idiomias to write a number of articles about Spanish culture. Babylon Idiomias is a Spanish language institute with schools in Spain [Barcelona, Madrid, Sevilla, Valencia], Argentina [Buenos Aires] and Costa Rica. Visit

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### **Christopher Columbus: What do You Think of That?**

**By Julie Jordan Scott**

#### **Christopher Columbus: What do You Think of That? by Julie Jordan Scott**

Yesterday was warm and sunny.

My children and I enjoyed frolicking in the swimming pool, each of us adding pink to our cheeks and smiles to our faces.

What a surprise to wake up this morning to a cold wind blowing and the appearance of thick rain clouds.

To many parts of the country, this is not odd at all. In Bakersfield,

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where we experience two seasons: very hot and fog, having two completely different weather experiences within a span of 24 hours is highly unusual. In shifting, we can get a bit off kilter.

A very practical example is this: if our intention for today was to wear the same wardrobe as yesterday, we would be awfully uncomfortable today! Instead, we have to think and respond differently. As we started our day today, I asked Katherine if she wanted to wear the short sleeved top and short skirt we put out the night before, or would she prefer I put some cold weather clothes out instead.

She chose the cold weather clothes and we saved the spring clothes for when the weather shifts back to warm.

We were not rigid to the choice we made last night. In the new weather context, it simply did not make sense.

As we reach out and discover discover different realms with different ways of being, it is most satisfying to navigate a bit differently.

Henry David Thoreau made this comment: "Be a Columbus to new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels of thought."

School children throughout the United States and Canada will tell you that Christopher Columbus discovered America when he was searching for a faster, more efficient route to the riches of India. They will also tell you he meant to prove that the Earth was not flat, that it was round.

Others will tell you that Columbus was the first of many to begin the downfall of a civilization.

Still others will say Columbus was a navigator of extreme skill, a passionate seeker of God's will and a Commander of men who assisted in ending an invasion of Spain even as he was not a Spaniard.

No matter what your opinion or thoughts are on who Christopher Columbus was as a person, there are some remarkable facts to learn from his life.

1. The relentless pursuit of his dream with a willingness to approach it from different perspectives is what brought him remarkable success. He had asked many to partner in his dream: in fact, when Ferdinand and Isabella agreed, it was not the first time he made his request. He was powered by a spiritual quest that would not be stilled.

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2. He continued to hone his craft as he pursued his dream. He did not stay still in his skills. Instead, he continued to march forward growing and tweaking and marveling as he mastered navigation, leadership and dreaming as large and wide as possible.

3. Once he made his initial voyage, he returned to his place of discovery and branched out. His original intention was NOT to discover a new continent, AND he did not make his discovery wrong! Instead, he returned and looked for the lesson there. I have yet to call Columbus a "failure" though if one were to look at his original "goal" and the "outcome realized" the failure label might be appropriate. This is a great example of finding "other" right answers or right ways.

4. When life throws curve balls, embrace them. Learn from them. Expect anything and refocus accordingly instead of retreating and deciding the straight way is the only way. This is a fact throughout Columbus' life and beyond. It is still a mystery as to where his remains are for eternity. Some say they are in the Caribbean and some say Spain. And does it really matter? No. What matters is the impact of the life as it is lived.

5. Listen to the quiet voice within. Spend time in contemplation. Columbus spent time in a Franciscan monastery. With his flowing red tresses and statueque form, I am sure he looked the part in his religious garb. More importantly, he did not only LOOK the part, he LIVED the part. His discoveries were not based solely in ego. His discoveries were fueled by the Spiritual. Did the path devolve later on? Perhaps. Perhaps not. The lesson remains the same: listen and act upon the messages you hear.

Henry David Thoreau reminded his generation to open to new channels of ' thought as Columbus did. Today, continue this path and also open yourself to new possibilities in passion. We can learn from the lessons of the man sometimes called "The Navigator". As we maneuver our ever brightening life, may we relentlessly pursue our dream. May we continue to hone our craft. May we never make ourselves or others

around us wrong, may we embrace life's curve balls and may we make it a practice to listen to the quiet voice within.

Julie Jordan Scott is a Success Coach, Writer, Speaker, Radio Host and Mom Extraordinaire who inspires people worldwide to live more passionate lives through her personal and group coaching, teleclasses, seminars and free ezines. Subscribe to DailyPassionActivator now via email: <mailto:DailyPassionActivator-subscribe@Yahoogroups.com> or via web <http://www.5passions.com/subpage.html>



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