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**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
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**Oh My God A Girl!**

**By Debbie Jacobs**

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Word Count: 810

Oh My God A Girl!

"OH MY GOD A GIRL!!" This was the cry I was met with when I arrived to meet our group for a 5 day canoe trip down New Zealand's Wanganui River. "Are you sure you know what you're doing?!" a wary fellow in his 50's exclaimed. I assured him that since I knew a heck of a lot more than he did it was in his best interest to stick with me. The rest of the group, a collection of 10 men and women from New Zealand, looked on with some amusement and guarded concern. This fellow had voiced what many of them had inwardly felt when they discovered that their guides were `girls'. Some had assumed that Sue, a nursing student in her mid twenties, and I, a `Yank' only a bit older, were the greeting committee. I suspect many hoped at best we were the cooks and at worst that we were driving the bus. Discovering that they were heading out for an adventure under the guidance and protection of two young women was not what they had imagined when signing on for the 80 kilometer paddle through one of New Zealand's newest river parks.

This immediate shock upon discovering that they are trusting their lives and limbs to a `girl' is something I have become used to when meeting groups of clients for the first time. Working as a white water raft guide in the United States I have seen the covert glances as the names of guides are called out for each group of paddlers:

"The Taylor party, your guide will be Rich."

"The McKenna party your guide will be Kevin."

"The Kelly party, your guide will be Debbie." You can almost hear the collective gulp.

The men in the United States are rarely so blunt as to come right out and ask me if I know what I'm doing, but they are not alone in their concern. The women often share their uncertainty as to whether they can put their faith in a female guide. It doesn't take long before I'm asked, "So... how long have you been doing this?" To which my standard response is to look at my watch and reply "Oh, since about 8 this morning," hoping a bit of levity will calm people's nerves.

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Sometimes knowing that I've been guiding for 10 years helps allay fears, in other cases it's not until we have made it down the last rapid, loaded the boats and are safely ensconced back on the bus (which I may also drive, prompting someone to worry aloud about `women drivers') that my crew sighs with the relief of having survived not only the river, but me.

Leadership styles vary from person to person. It is difficult and perhaps dangerous to generalize the variations according to gender, but the fact remains that men continue to be central figures of authority in most of our lives. While many of us have strong female role models, the heroes of young Americans are typically male sports figures and action film stars. There are fewer `scripts' for women assuming leadership positions commonly held by men.

Fortunately my experience has been that it is not employers and co-workers who are resistant to seeing women in leadership roles. Quality tour and guiding companies know that good judgment, experience and attitude play a greater role in hiring a leader than does gender. Instead it is the clients, the men and women who arrive nervous and excited to experience an adventure, whether it's on a rock, in the mountains or on a river, who have envisioned a strong, fearless leader who does not have breasts.

I led my first trip for a group of women 20 years ago. Today I organize and lead trips for women over 40. Along with being great fun, these exclusive groups allow women the unique opportunity to see other women in positions of power and control, to witness a group of women working out problems and dealing with the host of challenges encountered on a river trip or while traveling abroad.

By supporting each other and being open to seeing women in leadership roles women help each other to succeed and achieve more than they thought possible. As more and more women become visible in outdoor recreation and leadership I suspect the day isn't too far off when we're met with the exclamation "OH GREAT, A WOMAN!" As for the fellow on the canoe trip in New Zealand; I had to rescue him and his canoe after he flipped in the first rapid, but it wasn't until I barbecued a perfect medium rare steak that he was truly impressed. Go figure.

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Debbie Jacobs, founder and president of Explorations in Travel, <http://www.exploretravel.com>, organizes outdoor and cultural adventures for women over 40 and arranges individual volunteer placements in Latin America, the South Pacific and Nepal. She lives in southern Vermont with too many dogs. She can be contacted at [explore@sover.net](mailto:explore@sover.net).

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**Religion .....There it is**

**By Dony Peter**

**Religion .....There it is by Dony Peter**

let me tell you something

1. God does not exist.
2. Allah does not exist.
3. Jesus does not exist.
4. Shiva does not exist.

almost 90% of the people reading this blog would not mind my first sentence, just dismissing me as an atheist,

However, #2 for Muslims, #3 for Christians, # 4 for Hindus would definitely anger these respective people, and i'm sure they would fight me tooth and nail to prove their point. Well I'm not here to debate the existence of god, just the existence of our ignorance.

Why aren't we as much angered when somebody talks about just "God" , than when somebody talks about my God. It seems that these people do accept then that there is a God, and there is my God. It also proves that 'my God' is not the real God , atleast for me because I'm not angered or incensed or even bothered when somebody says that "God does not exist".

And while I'm bothered when somebody drags "My God" into a controversy, i am a little worried for the the plain "God" who doesn't have any takers.

It also reveals that we want to ascribe to our religious beliefs in a way more than the religion itself dictates. I do feel that most of the time the culprit is not "God" who by the way was never clear about his real identity and thus created the plethora of confusion among us, but rather our very own religious egos.

The author is a person looking at the world through a different sense of vision. more are [canwe.blogspot.com](http://canwe.blogspot.com)

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