

Part 5: Group Bonding/Sickness

As time went on I began to build more of a connection with the group and our identity. Overall I think we were a quieter group of old souls who wanted to be out in the world and experience new ventures. We definitely bonded in our own way, even if we weren't talking all the time. I liked how we respected each other's space when necessary and enjoyed talking about the trip and our experiences so far. It was unique hearing the perspectives of my friend and another Bella who had been on Roman Holiday, versus myself and the other



Bella who were new to this type of trip. While we were all on the same trip, it seemed like we were having different experiences. The newer Bella and I were more about seeing different things and getting to know Rome, while my friend and the other Bella were about enjoying the city for a second time more leisurely.

It seems in every travel group, everyone has a different reason for coming, whether it's the food, site-seeing, people or just getting away. I could appreciate traveling with a group like this where every person seemed to come from a different place in life. Yet at the end of the day, we all wanted to be happy and feel like our money was well spent. There were a number of times I expressed to the group my conflicting intentions of the trip and where I was coming from, and it was good to know people understood my issue. In some cases, my fellow Bellas had been there before, which made me feel better

about my situation and that I could get through it.



The one lingering issue that never seemed to improve was my physical health. I had extreme swelling in my legs from the walking and probably from a change in diet and hydration. Even as my tension with Rome was getting better, physically I felt like I was getting worse. My legs, eyes and throat were sore during most of the trip. I took aspirin and propped my legs up for the swelling, and I had natural herbs to help with my cough and throat, but the issues kept coming back. At one point I

decided to stay at the condo instead of going with the group for shopping so I could rest my legs. Eventually, I found myself in tears because I was so upset over being sick and swollen. I was doing

A Different Holiday Part 5 – The Sails Within

everything I could do to make myself better, but I also realized I had to accept my appearance no matter how I looked. I admit I was wondering how people would perceive me with my legs being as swollen as they were which mentally bothered me.

Situations like this make us realize how vain and stuck on appearance we can get. In many ways, I think being sick was symbolic of how disconnected I felt from Rome. However, everything comes down to the choices we make, even a choice in attitude. There were times I would literally pray to keep myself open and attract good things regardless of my physical health. I honestly think being sick and not physically in my best shape made me more accepting of myself. When I decided I still looked beautiful even if I could barely fit in my shoes, it was an accomplishment. If we can be confident even when we look what we consider to be our worst, that's the best confidence we can have.