

A Lesson from Spain Five Years Ago – The Sails Within

It's been almost five years since I went to Spain in October 2009. It seemed, looking back, like a crossroads for me. I was with my friend in Valencia one night during my trip, and I was speaking with someone she knew about my experience in Spain thus far. The woman said I should stay in Spain instead of going home. I could find work there and make a living. Then, on a separate occasion while I was still in Valencia, I was sending messages to a friend in the United States about Spain, and he said I should stay as well. He was certain I'd be fine there, taking the chance. Jobs in the U.S. were hard to find, and I was in a place I really liked, so the adventure and opportunity to live overseas sounded like a good idea to him. Yet in both instances I declined to stay because I said I needed to go home, although I don't remember giving a clear reason to the woman or my friend.

Underneath it all, I really decided not to stay in Spain because of fear I couldn't live in another country where I wasn't a native speaker of the language. I thought I had to go home to get a job, which at the time I thought was going to be in public relations. Even though I'd always wanted to live overseas, I was too afraid to live my dream because I thought I'd be unsuccessful. So, I'd leave Spain and go back home, only to work in retail for two years, and then I got another job in project management, in which I had no experience, but paid better. The honeymoon from my that job was short-lived, as it only seemed to serve my purpose of traveling anyway. I went to France twice, Brazil, Italy and Spain again. However, I wasn't entirely happy knowing I had to come back to a job I didn't like and wasn't really me. When we don't live the path of our dream, no matter what we do, we're never truly fulfilled.

All the years since Spain I learned a lot about my dream by straying away from it for so long. I learned I wasn't meant to live my life in a cubicle or writing work instructions using programs I'd never understand, and it was okay if my strengths were not the same as others. I learned that perhaps the reason a public relations career didn't work out was because it wasn't really what I wanted to do, nor would it allow me to live the life I'm meant to have. My entire life since I can remember, I loved to travel and would dream of living in other countries. I didn't have a career idea in my elementary years, but I knew I wouldn't work for anyone, and I'd be wealthy doing whatever I chose. I also always loved to write about my travels, including the nature, people and insights about myself. No matter what I did with my life, my love of writing and seeing the world beyond my home never changed. My love of nature only grew stronger, especially when it came to beaches. I was enticed by the idea of meeting people from another culture, especially if one of those people I'd possibly marry and share the rest of my life with. And I always learned something about myself; whether it was a character issue like self-esteem I had to overcome or realizing that a language barrier didn't mean a barrier in communication.

Life would've been quite different if I'd stayed in Spain, and who knows where I'd be today. Sometimes the choices we make and mazes we find ourselves wandering are so we can be right where we're supposed to be. So in sense all the past five years were supposed to happen so I could be brave enough to travel again without worry over a job or fear of failure and live my dream of writing great stories about the world I live. I know I'll go back to Spain and other countries I have yet to consider. That will never leave me. Except this time when I go back, I'm staying.