

The Artists Journey

1. Your book is set along the Camino de Santiago. What is the Camino?

The Camino de Santiago is a Medieval Pilgrimage route that stretches 500 miles across northern Spain to the Cathedral where St. James is buried. People famous and humble have been walking it for over one thousand years. It is vitally alive, and today people from around the globe walk it, but only 2% of those people are from all of the Americas.

2. Was this a religious pilgrimage, and do you have to be Catholic?

The exciting thing about the Camino is that people walk it for a wide variety of reasons ranging from deeply Catholic or religious reasons to a “just for the fun of it” type of adventure. There are no restrictions on who can walk it or how far one has to travel, which enables everyone to experience their own individual journey both physically and spiritually, while still bonding with others traveling the same road.

3. Are you Catholic, and what part did religion play in your decision to undertake this Pilgrimage?

It is funny you should ask that, because when I told one of my friends what I was doing she was very puzzled, saying, “But you are not even a religious person!” I am not a Catholic nor do I attend any church, but I am a very spiritual person. Religion was virtually no part in my decision to go, but once immersed in the Camino, no one was more surprised than I was at how great a role spirituality and reflection played in our journey.

4. Why did you decide to undertake a 500 mile trek on foot?

Like many baby boomers, I found myself at a crossroads in my life. My family was raised, and my parents are healthy, so I had a great window of opportunity. I wanted to go on an epic adventure that would challenge me physically, mentally and spiritually. I did not want to be one of those people who waits too long and never gets to live their dream. So I just bought my boots and plane ticket before I thought about it so much that I chickened out!

5. How does THE ARTIST’S JOURNEY differ from other travel adventure books for women?

The characters in this book, Tannis and I, are not super athletes, linguistically gifted or rich and famous. We are normal women just like so many others out there, but we lept into the unknown together. In this book you can travel along with us each day as we make mistakes, laugh at ourselves, meet new people and discover our strengths. Who would not want to know how to metamorphasize into a Goddess?

6. What do you hope that the reader will learn from the story?

Do not let anyone, including yourself, make you feel less than you are. The lessons of the Camino were many: Don’t stop before you reach your goal, no matter how far or how difficult it seems. It is not ever easy and you will encounter obstacles that you never imagined. Step over them or around them and keep going. You can achieve what ever you set your mind to. There are

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wonderful and caring people everywhere to help you if you will let them. Miracles happen every day if you open your eyes and see them.

7. Why did you write this book?

The best thing that I have done in my life is to be a friend. My proudest moments revolve around helping people to believe in themselves, particularly women. Sometimes all it takes to focus your energy in a new direction is someone to believe you are capable, when you can no longer believe in yourself. I wanted to share that message.

8. Your book contains a lot of drawings. Why is this important?

When I began to consider publishing a book about my journey, my drawings were as important as the writing. I walked the Way of St. James seeing all 550 miles through an artist's eye. Visually, we artists notice things that others do not: long shadows falling across a courtyard wall, the rhythm of windmills cresting the hilltops, clouds moving dramatically across the vault of heaven, the glint of sunshine on a stream. When interpreted as drawings or paintings, these images capture the feeling or essence of the place. They are frequently much more evocative than a photograph and more powerful than words. It is important to me to share this imagery with others and transport them along the way with me.

8. Who is the audience for this book?

Anyone who dreams of a change in their life, or just wants to vicariously join an adventure, would enjoy this book. It is a book that challenges you to stretch yourself and expand your horizons, while giving permission to also be gentle with yourself. I think it is particularly relevant to women, but men will also enjoy it.

9. How would you sum up your message?

You can accomplish anything you set your sights on if you believe in yourself and set challenging yet realistic goals.

10. What part of your message are you most passionate about?

If you do not have a dream, your dreams will never come true. Dare to dream of things outside of your comfort zone, then set off with a smile and do them!

11. Is there anything in the media right now that ties into your message?

Right now our economy is severely depressed and many people are finding themselves with less. Many of us are also at a crossroads in our lives. On the Camino we learned that want and need are two vastly different things. We took joy in the simple things and felt immensely grateful for everything we received, however humble. It was one of the most compelling experiences of my life. Since then not a day passes that I do not think of a positive thing that I learned along the way, and it enables me to view my life forever differently. This is my story. Many times friends have said, "I wish I could see the world through your eyes." Well, now they can.

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