

Julie Gaver

Professional Speaking & Corporate Training, LLC

November 2006

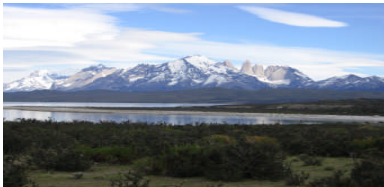
Theme: The Journey Within

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.”

Mark Twain

Travel vacations offer respite from the routine of daily life and challenge us to look at the world and ourselves with fresh perspective. I recently visited my eldest son, Craig, who is living and working in Puerto Natales, Chile. The 10 days away from classes, speeches, and the stress of running a growing business presented countless opportunities for self-reflection, analysis, and quiet contemplation.

In addition to enjoying the beauty of a country (and a continent) I knew very little about, I was reminded of several forgotten life lessons.



The secret to great business is loving your job!

Ricardo Varela is an artist, jeweler, and *salesman extraordinaire* who creates exquisite designs from lapis, a blue stone which is indigenous to the south of Chile. From the moment we entered his quaint, modest shop, we became the sole object of his undivided attention. As he passionately described the intricacies of his craft in great detail, I was spell bound! Here was a man who loved his job and what a gift to be served by someone who does! He wanted to know all about us and listened intently as if time was an infinite commodity. The fact that he spoke English was icing on the cake! I left some time later, laden with souvenirs, Christmas gifts and a secret vow to quietly intercept the MasterCard bill when it arrives next month! Life is short. If you don't love your job, it's time for a change!

We are not our age.

Several people I know (*including myself*) will be celebrating pivotal birthdays in the coming year. (*Pivotal is a polite way of saying that it ends with a zero!*) To pretend that this looming birthday has not caused me mild despair and countless hours in front of the mirror would be.....well.... *lying!* And then I met Mary Catherine

(*affectionately known by the locals as Kata*), one of the U.S. teacher volunteers in Puerto Natales. This 67 year old, silver-haired dynamo radiates enthusiasm, energy, a passion for learning, and is truly living her life authentically. At an age when many are checking into their retirement plans, Kata is still, undeniably, a fully engaged student of the world! I'll have what she's having!

Kindness is the universal language.

I was the humble and gracious recipient of so many random acts of kindness during my travels in spite of my physical, cultural, and language distinctiveness from the Chilean population.

While in Santiago, many locals initiated attempts to provide directions, decipher menus, provide security advice, and even educated my friend and me on the complexities of selecting the desired bottled water. *Agua, sin gas* (*water without carbonation!*). A man on the street engaged us in a rousing game of charades so that my friend would remove her gold necklace to prevent being a target for theft. A subway attendant conducted an impromptu class on money conversion and reading a map in Spanish. After each encounter, I felt encouraged that kindness still prevails in a world that appears to be filled with cynicism and distrust.

Make peace with the inevitable.

It's been said that "to be a parent is to accept the fact that your heart will forever walk around outside of your body." I'm finally at peace with the fact that my heart will travel the world. Safe travels, Craig. You make me proud.

Happy Holidays!

As we approach this season of Thanksgiving, I am reminded of the ways you have all richly blessed my life. Thank you for your continued support of my work, your encouragement, and for helping me to realize my dream. Happy holidays!

Julie

PO Box 51 Myersville, MD 21773
(301) 293-4195, Julie@juliegaver.com
www.juliegaver.com