

THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

by Lara Potgieter

WHEN A FRIEND FIRST RECOMMENDED *THE JOURNEY* TO ME, I THANKED HER POLITELY BUT INTERNALLY SHRUGGED IT OFF AS YET ANOTHER NEW-AGE HEALING MODALITY THAT I REALLY DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME OR RESOURCES TO EXPLORE. I FELT AS IF I HAD DONE ENOUGH PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT TO LAST ME SEVERAL LIFETIMES, AND WASN'T IN THE MOOD FOR EXPLORING ANOTHER BRANCH OF THE FIELD.



DID YOU KNOW?

Brandon Bays created *The Journey* after managing to find healing from a tumour without drugs or surgery. While hers was an exceptional case, over 200 000 people in 54 cities have improved various aspects of their lives using *The Journey* processes.

Two days later, my Editor asked if I had been in touch with any *Journey* practitioners for our directory. She wasn't aware of the conversation I had had about the work over the weekend, and I found it a cute co-incidence. The following weekend, while working at a holistic fair, I met the custodians of *The Journey* in South Africa, and they invited me to attend their upcoming *Intensive Seminar* and *Abundance Retreat* two weeks later.

I had to start wondering whether there weren't perhaps some larger forces at play. *The Journey* has been around since before I was born, and yet I had never heard of it until - within the space of a week - I was guided to the work no fewer than three times. I took the hint and packed my bags for the journey to *The Journey*.

The seminar was held at Bodhi Khaya – an idyllic retreat at the foot of the Witkransberg in the Overberg. I was so taken by the natural splendour of the place that I almost didn't care how the workshop itself would play out.

While I had already started thinking of ways I could bunk sessions to walk the fynbos trail or meditate at the dam, I couldn't have been more wrong in my assumption that I could get away with a half-assed commitment to the process.

I tried to experience the introductory session as an 'outsider' – a journalist who didn't have any of her own emotional work to do but who was going to observe – no doubt with a smidgen of condescension – how others sought to navigate theirs. As if sensing my smugness, the admittedly charismatic facilitator, Lydia, surprised me by asking me to be the live demonstration for the first process. I couldn't really say no, so I joined her on the couch in front of the group, closed my eyes and surrendered to the sound of her voice.

Let's just say what followed could not have been very pretty.

Lydia quickly and skillfully sent my critical egoic mind on a vacation and lifted the lid on a whole host of cellular memories that I hadn't been brave enough to face for a very long time. As they say – the issues are in our tissues, and the body doesn't lie. Although she guided me quite gently in, the emotions, people, places and beliefs came in fast and furious.

Even at the height of my vulnerability, I was surprised by just how compassionate Lydia really was. She helped me process down through the layers of each emotion as it arose, until I finally found myself in a space of sweet nothingness that I felt I could have inhabited forever.



**THE JOURNEY IS A
POWERFUL, STEP-BY-STEP
MEANS TO FIND
DIRECT ACCESS TO THE
SOUL, THE INFINITE
INTELLIGENCE
THAT IS WITHIN US ALL.**



This was followed by a powerful envisioned 'emptying out' and forgiveness process, a wonderfully comforting conversation with the peace that had made itself known in the space of nothingness beneath all the dramas, an exciting future integration and, finally, a heartfelt letter to self that appears to have written itself.

When I did finally open my eyes, I didn't even care that a hall full of strangers had just seen me spill my guts all over the floor. I had had a taste of freedom.

The rest of the *Intensive Seminar* was infused with a sense of grace that made each process as powerful as the last. A slightly less intense but equally enlightening exercise was the Physical Journey. Contrary to popular expectation, this did not involve hiking the fynbos trail. Rather, we were guided to uncover emotions, memories and people that could have been presenting through discomforts in different parts of our bodies, and to observe how the physical being changed after its messages had finally truly been heard. Although my disbelieving mind reared its little know-it-all head at various stages throughout the process, I heeded the facilitators' advice to stay vulnerable to the process, and was duly rewarded by the wisdom of my body and – dare I say – soul.

Although it was daunting to allow myself to access my most feared emotions, *The Journey* played a big part in teaching me to move fluidly through them without attaching to the story I had become accustomed to telling myself about each one.

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While I thought I had cleared out all the cellular cobwebs by the end of the *Intensive Seminar*, the *Abundance Retreat* I stayed on to attend over the weekend took things to the next level by helping me to uncover the patterns and underlying beliefs I was playing out in all aspects of abundance – from manifesting and growing it to letting it go. The Abundance processes were similar to the Intensive exercises, except that they took things a step further by incorporating powerful belief elicitations and sweep-outs. It's little wonder we all left Bodhi Khaya that Sunday feeling wholly hopeful and new.

I suddenly couldn't get enough of *The Journey*, and found myself at the beautiful Blue Bay Lodge in Saldanha for yet another *Journey* experience the following weekend.

I'd never considered Saldanha much of a destination before, but Blue Bay Lodge really surprised me. Walking into the lobby area and seeing the seemingly endless expanse of ocean through the stretching glass doors was a treat in itself. The lodge was a fitting place to delve into the depths of the inner world, as everything about it was conducive to a sense of freedom in both time and space.

Aptly titled *Out of the Blue*, this *Journey* weekend was for those of us struggling with what we had come to call depression.

The overarching theme was similar to that of the last seminars in that we were continually reminded of the value of being true to and observing each emotion as it arose without judging or attaching to it (or berating ourselves for experiencing it in the first place). We examined the ways in which 'depression' makes everything seem personal, pervasive and permanent, and how it can arise from something as simple as a negative story attached to a recurring emotion, which in turn becomes a default mood and eventually a state of being. We delved into all the exacerbating factors – including unsupportive lifestyle habits, strategy overload, a lack of purpose and gaps in life expectations – and got real about the unhealthy coping mechanisms to which we had each resorted in response.

The processes were similar to those on the *Intensive* and *Abundance* retreats, but the focus this time was very clearly on dropping the stories and surrendering to the raw emotions beneath them instead. The most powerful part of the seminar for me involved squarely facing all the stories I'd bought into over the years, as well as taking a very honest look at the secondary gains I had been enjoying as a result of being 'depressed'. I found the belief change, NLP and reframe exercises of great value and left feeling newly empowered once again.

I haven't even touched on Brandon Bays – the globally renowned founder of *The Journey*, because hers is a story that, while truly remarkable, is also widely accessible. What I really wanted to convey here was a deeply personal account of my own introduction to Brandon's work, and the powerful impact it had on my life. Nothing I had read about *The Journey* before experiencing it for myself could have prepared me for what was to come.

I couldn't recommend attending a *Journey* seminar more highly. That is, if you're ready to commit to a very deep and authentic form of liberation. I mention this as a disclaimer, because truth requires courage. As Brandon asserts, "The peace you seek is at the centre of your most feared emotion."



For more information or to book your space at an upcoming Journey seminar in South Africa, visit www.thejourneysa.co.za or contact Lydia at infos@thejourneysa.co.za. To keep abreast of Journey retreats log onto www.holistica.co.za.



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