

SEPTEMBER 2010

JOURNAL

By Anita Evans – Evolving Spirit

Vilcabamba Loja – Ecuador

Source: www.seekvilcabamba.com

WISDOM

I am a person.

When I go meet my friends and I play with them it is just like a story to me.

I remember when I was a baby, dad giving me a bath, the blue bath, I remember the colours.

It is a story in my head, my mind.

What I think in my head are stories

Everything is a story

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This is profound. Dwell on this for a moment (or longer would be better) “everything is a story’.

What are the stories in your head????????????? (maybe they’d make a good book)

This is from a 6 year old. She already knows that everything in her mind is a story only in her mind, her story. She also knows that what she experiences every day in the now is also just a story. We, all have stories in our minds, they are just our stories. Everything in our now is just a story. Our stories of what happened or what we think happened or what didn’t happen. Our stories of beliefs, right and wrong, the world they are our individual stories. But they are that and nothing more – STORIES.

MEAT

If you are a vegetarian, vegan, raw foodie you may want to skip this segment of this journal. If you are a meat eater who wants to become vegan, vegetarian or raw foodie this segment of this journal may well inspire you too. If you are a meat eater and intend on buying and eating meat in Ecuador this segment is worth reading before you take a bite.

AND, for my avoid readers I do eat meat. I don't eat a hell of a lot of it but I do eat it and when I can my priority is for organic. I am aware of vibration levels and their lowering caused by meat eating. I am aware of cruelty to animals and the hormones that are released into an animal when it is killed etc etc etc. I am also aware that plants feel pain just as much as an animal (this has been more than scientifically proven). I am also aware that all carnivore animals on this planet vibrate at a higher level than most humans. I am aware and have made for now an aware choice to keep meat in my diet. Like may have made an aware choice to exclude meat from your diet or to eat raw etc. As, with all things this may change in the future, I don't know, neither do you. I give thanks and gratitude to all things I eat.

Pierre came home from the local markets in Vilca today (Sunday). The local market is held every Sunday at the front of the bus terminal. Also at the terminal is the local meat market. In his hands Pierre held two bags one with fruit and veges and the other with some meat. About a 700gram sold hunk of meat. He was very proud of his purchase. I'm not taking the mickie here, we all are at least once in our life (for most of us a lot more) very proud of some accomplishment, not matter what its size, only to find out it was an actual disaster.

He had asked the 'butcher'. Side track here for a moment again. These guys are NOT butchers but they are butchers. That is to say they have no idea how to carve up a beast into succulent portions of meat like eye fillet, t-bones, leg roasts etc etc. With respect to the animal. However, they do how to butcher up a beast into hunks that are uneatable with no respect to the animal.

Anyway, he had asked the butcher for a good size piece of fillet unsliced. See, he fancied a Sunday roast. He said the guy went and got it from the back of his meat cubicle and held it up to him all proud. Let's face it, in hindsight the guy saw him coming a mile away and to this day is probably recanting the purchase to this over beer with his mates and enjoying a jolly good laugh!

So we cooked up half of it. Bugger, using our oven it has two setting red hot an off! So it was done our traditional way in the pan.

The bag of veges was washed and prepared steam greens accompanied by a good Belgium mashed potatoes. One hour later our gourmet meal was on the table. 1 minute later so was the sledge hammer and chain saw!

That meat was as tough as old boots, no scarp that, leather, or better leather boots. Go chew on your leather handbag if you don't have one borrow one and then you will get the jest of our roast. We weren't even able to cut it without using a sharp carving knife. I did one small piece, no I'm out. And enjoyed the veges. Emily was so proud she soldiered on chewing and chewing and chewing and chewing her way through 5 small pieces. I then spent 5 minutes flossing it out from between her teeth. My heart went to Pierre the disappointment on his face. After 3 bits he gave up.

As for the cat after 5 bits he gave up chewing it too!!

Anyway, I discussed the purchase the next day with our cleaner and showed her the remaining half. I could see the grin rise and spread across her face. 'dura' tough, hard 'pierna' leg meat. Only good for stewing or casserole so I opted for the casserole. I decided to tango with our oven. See the oven (gas) is no thermostat control, it has 3 setting high, medium and low. I have an oven thermometer which I hang it in (from NZ haven't seen them for sale here yet) so I get a good idea of the temperature inside. So, on she went and in went my beautifully prepared casserole. Bugger within 15 minutes the oven was at 280 degrees callus so I turned her down to low to find out 15 minutes later that low = off. After much restarts of the oven to try and control the temperature and smoke in the kitchen, no house as the casserole boiled over due the high heat in the oven I declared that the meat had been cooked more than enough. If it was going to be edible then it was now or never. So onto the plates it went with potatoes and steamed veges.

Fortunately I did enough veges with the meat that we were able to enough a vege casserole with potatoes and steamed broccoli. See, she was still as tough as leather. The cat was meowing as he was hungry, so I gave some to the cat who walked away!!!!!! Didn't even try it this time, I wonder if he will ever forgive me? He has avoided me all day.

So it sits in a bag in the fridge for our cleaner to take back home tomorrow and give to her dog. Now if the dog doesn't eat it.....

So, my experience to date with meat in Ecuador is, there is bugger all decent meat. **There is desperate call for a real butcher here.** If not to do butchery then to teach it. I was raised in New Zealand the meat producing capital of the world. Our meat wins prizes everywhere. Even our tough mutton is like eye fillet to what you will get at most butchers in Ecuador. Meat is advertised on the TV every day in NZ the slogan meat = IRON!

Most kiwis eat meat at least twice every day in some form or the other. The first thing I did when I got back to NZ on a recent trip was to eat an eye fillet. The last thing I did before I left NZ to come home (yes, family and friends back in NZ I now call Ecuador home) was have an eye fillet steak. Not a biggie, no my meat size portion is a fraction of what it was. Note: if you are vegan\vegetarian and plan on visiting NZ be warned meat is advertised everywhere there and is a main component of the diet.

Since moving here I have leaned more and more to becoming a vegetarian. When I eat meat here, if I can get a good bit I'll eat some, I eat a lot less than in my past life.

Continuing on the subject of meat, want to fast track your shift to becoming a vegetarian visit your local meat market in Ecuador. Generally it is right next the fish market and the chicken market. If the smell of these 3 meats, raw, combined, hanging up, not in fridges, in a hot climate doesn't do the trick I'm not sure what will.

Restaurants seem to get OK cuts of meat. I've found one variety at Supermaxi that doesn't pull your teeth out of your gums when you eat it. But nothing to date that comes close to any form of steak from NZ.

One restaurant here in Vilca serves really good organic, yes folks organic pork. Local pork of Vilca. Now I generally don't eat pork no idea why. Maybe because we had a awesome pet pig in NZ. But this pork is good! So I'm sticking to that once in a while with some trout from Shanta's or the trout restaurant and occasionally organic chicken if I can get my hands on it.

BUREAUCRACY

You may find dealing with Ecuadorian bureaucracy driving you nuts at time. Well, I had to ring New Zealand, the government department known as ACC (accident compensation corporation). I won't go into the reasons why or what this department does. Anyone from NZ knows who they are and are probably cringing as they read this at the thought of having to ring them. Anyway, I got through fine enough as I rung at 8.30am on the dot. I asked to be put through to the extension I wanted. I had been told via ACC online support to ask for this extension. I then spent the next 10 minutes with the girl at the call centre identifying myself, my full name, address, phone numbers, date of birth etc etc etc. It took a multitude of attempts for her to find me in the system. Finally, after she was happy and knew every remote detail of my details I got put through to the extension number I wanted and within 2 minutes my call was finished and the matter resolved. So for a 2 minute call it took me 10 minutes to get past the guard at the phone door. Talk about bureaucracy.

I think we kid ourselves sometimes when we come to a foreign country that home is so much better. When in truth, the reality is it is a lot worse. At home you are not trusted you have to identify yourself in a multitude of ways. You are treated often with suspicion first until proven otherwise.

Your chances of talking to a human one the other end of the phone are getting remoter and remoter. Must companies, even the small ones, have voice recognition software answering their phones for them. I guess VRS doesn't ask for a pay rise or annual leave. At least here in Ecuador there are still humans doing the majority of the work and once you get the language going it only gets easier.

A CUSTOM OF DEATH

You will notice at the cemeteries in Ecuador a concrete structure of little cubicles. It is obvious that it is in these holes that the remains of dead loved ones go. I figured they must do cremation and I also knew then do burials. However, the burial area of the cemeteries is small. So I was kind of left wondering how they fit all the coffins in.

Then just the other day the answer was delivered via our accountant. See, she couldn't see us until after 5pm. When we saw her she explained why. See, had spent the day at the cemetery as it was time to move her mother because she didn't need so much room. *Time to move her mother..... I thought to myself. Not like she's in a rest home?* This stumped me for a few minutes while she explained what she meant.

See, her mum had been dead 20 years now. And a tradition here (though not practiced by every family) is after a period of time (which is decided by the family) the family gather at the cemetery around the loved ones grave and the coffin is exhumed and opened in front of the family. They all grieve as they remember their loved one again.

The accountant commented on the good order her mother's gown was still in and that all that remained were the bones. .The family members, if they wish, can take a bone with them. This is a big event in the cycle of death here within a family. Family of our accountant had flown in from other towns around Ecuador for this event.

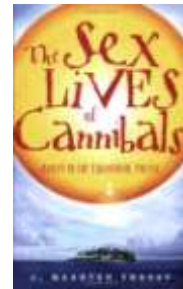
The bones and clothing are removed from the coffin and placed in a smaller box and this box placed in one of the concrete cubicles. Other families may choose to cremate which means the ashes are placed in a box and into a cubicle straight away.

I do not know what happened with the coffin or whether the site her mother was buried on is used for another person at a later date. I would have to presume it is given the small size of cemeteries here. However, I still have a lot to learn about this subject here.

EAT WHAT DAD EATS

As a kid I remember eating anything dad ate. If dad ate it and loved it then I ate it and loved it. This covered such items as pickled onions and blue vein cheese. Both items I wouldn't touch now.

Today I made juice. A delicious, refreshing juice that I love here. The juice itself once blended and strained from the pulp and ground seeds is bitter so a little honey or brown sugar is required to take the edge off. So I prepared some and Pierre and Emily strained it. Pierre decided to eat the ground up seeds as, as with me and my dad, Emily followed 'yum' she said 'can I have more' so they both had another bit each. They didn't eat the lot, I guess two spoonfuls was enough for them to wise up. As for me, well I did my stint as a kid eating what dad ate I don't need to follow it up with blindly eating what my husband eats.



THE SEX LIFE OF CANNIBALS

The Sex life of Cannibals is a BRILLANT book written by J Marten Troost.

It's a travel book and covers the time he and his wife spent on an atoll in the South Pacific. Now I don't like travel books as a rule but this one broke my rule! If you find yourself in Ecuador and struggling to adjust to life here and finding you miss the organisation and comforts of home and find yourself having trouble looking for much longer at the rubbish and skinny animals then you should read this book.

It makes the transformation to Ecuador a walk in the park.

If you are coming here you should read this book. It will help you to keep perspective. If you ever think Ecuador is bad go live on an atoll for a year and then re-asses things. 😊

This book is funny and sad. As someone born and breed on an Island in the South Pacific I found his chapters about what America and France have done to island there very disturbing.

In school I took history and we studied WWII and other wars but we never looked into what had happened in our own back yard (apart from a small segment on the British Colonisation of New Zealand) I found this also disturbing as learning about what has been going on in the South Pacific would have had far more meaning and relevance and been far more interesting (given it is relatively recent history and still going on, which is really disturbing) then studying an historical event that happened on the other side of the planet.

I thought about writing some extracts from the book. But there is no point as I'd have to copy nearly the entire book. To get the feel of their journey and to appreciate what

they went through and to get the depth of the humour you will just have to read the book.

To the author, I thank him for a brilliant piece of writing.

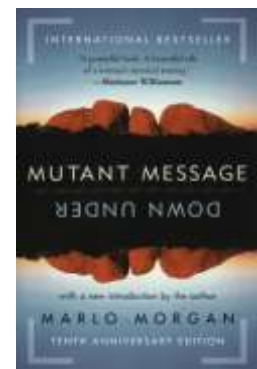
THE MOUNTAIN WILL SORT OUT THE MEN FROM THE BOYS

Here in the Andes the mountains are great teachers like the outback in Australia they sort out the men from the boys.

In other words they test your inner strength (as well as your physical and mental strength). It takes the strength of a mountain to climb one every day, day in day out for years as you do your work on the mountain. Pierre has this strength and so inline within Aboriginal tradition we are changing his name to Mountain Man. Because he does have the strength and endurance of the mountain he climbs every day.

For Emily the name the name that best reflects her in this part of her life is Earth Angel. This name would no doubt reflect a lot of children at the age of 6.

For me the name came very clearly to me the other day Evolving Spirit. For the evolution that is taking place internally within me is happening every day on levels I cannot consciously comprehend, but I am aware of them.



MUTANT MESSAGE DOWN UNDER

Mutant Message Down Under is another BRILLANT book by author Marlo Morgan. ISBN-13 978-1-85538-484-2 \ 10 1-85538-484-1

This is another travel book that has come our way. Yet again this book broke my general dislike of travels books. Through a chain of events Marlo finds herself going walkabout with Real People in the Australian outback. This book is for those people who want to know the true meaning of it all. It holds some great wisdoms and views of the bigger picture as well as being a fun and amazing read.

I have included some extracts from the book

...when you are sitting in a circle it is very important that you observe the other members of the group, most especially the person sitting directly opposite you. That person is a spirit reflection of yourself. The things you see in that individual that you admire are qualities within yourself that you wish to make more dominant. The actions, appearances, and behaviour that you do not like are things about yourself that need working on. You cannot recognise what you deem to be good or bad in others unless you yourself have the same strengths and weakness at some level of your being. Only the degree of self-discipline and self-expression differ. ... the only way a person ever truly changes anything about himself is by his own decision, and that everyone has the ability to change anything he wants to about his personality. There is no limit to what you can release and what you can acquire. ...the only true influence you have on anyone else is by your own life, how you act, what you do.

Everyone dreams I was told. Not everyone cares to remember their dreams or learn the information from them, but everyone does dream. "Dreams are the shadow of reality: ... Everything that exists, that happens here, is also available in the dream world. All answers are there. ...there is ancestor dreaming when thought created the world; there is out-of-body dreaming such as deep meditation, there is sleep dreaming, and so on. Mutants know only one way to enter the dream state and that is sleep, but the Real People are aware of dream consciousness while awake.

I learned I could live more than one life in a lifetime and that I had already experienced the closing of a door. I learned that a time had come where I could no longer stay with the people, the location, the values and beliefs I held. For my own soul growth I had gently closed a door and entered a new place, a new life that was equal to a step up a spiritual rung on a ladder. And most important, I did not have to do anything with the information. If I simply lived the principles that appeared to be truth for me, I would touch the lives of those I was destined to touch. The doors would be opened.

Perhaps the future of the world would be in better hands if we forgot about discovering something new and concentrated on recovering the past.

I could continue quoting extracts from this book for pages as there are so many simple and clear wisdoms in her writings. It is best you go out and get a copy yourself and read it. ☺

