



Bucket List

' Joy is the serious business of heaven'
C.S. Lewis

Hot air ballooning is the stuff of childhood fairytales. It is also high up on my bucket list. Floating across the sky in a basket tied to a colorful balloon has an element of the ethereal. The flight was scheduled to take off at 5am from a game reserve in the KwaZulu Natal midlands. Our party of six enthusiastic travelers were compelled to make this a dawn mission. I get a call from Warwick the balloon pilot to say that he can see my car tail-lights in the distant and would like me to turn around and drive towards his waving flashlight. We soon found the flight crew and were welcomed with aromatic coffee, hot chocolate and country baked biscuits. We watched the ground team skillfully ignite the colossal and enchanting balloon. The basket at the end looked very comfortable and we were encouraged to climb in.

The lift-off was gentle as we glided over a large drinking hole and watched a hippo surface out of sheer curiosity. We began to take pleasure in the ascent. The pilot asked us to look for an opening in the clouds so that we could enter and enjoy a novel sunrise. Very soon we were 2000 feet above the ground and began to touch the transparency of the clouds. What a treat it was to have happy birthday sang to me from this transcendental location.



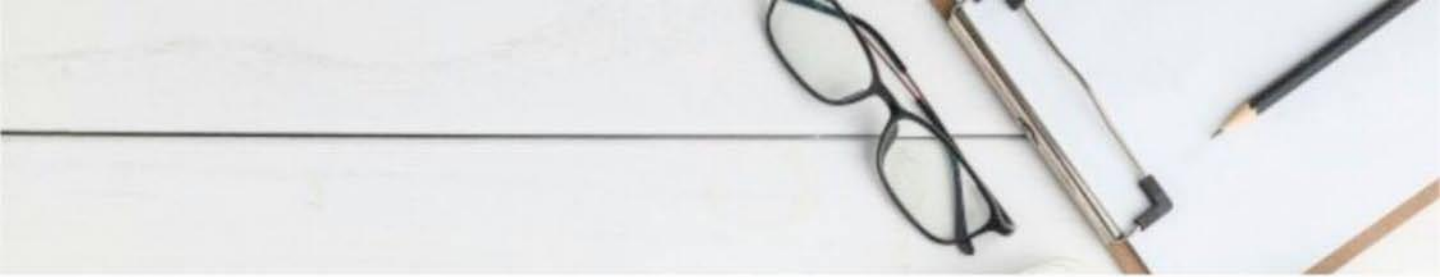


There were so many unforgettable lessons to learn from floating in the sky on the gentle arms of faith. The need for adventure beyond the threshold of fear brought new insights and understandings of the journeys we all must individually take in our lives. The one path that never escapes the human condition is the journey from emotional wilderness to emotional wellness. At some point, everyone is challenged in the area of their emotions at some point and this journey if wisely navigated brings new levels of strength.

Many journeys in the emotional wilderness begin with our tail-lights facing in the wrong direction. Emotional pain due to loss initially puts us in a place of disorientation. Early emotional pain frightens and all one can think of is limitations. In the embryonic stages of healing we are weakened both spiritually and physically as we cope with trauma. The human mind is so well designed that its survival defense mechanism of 'flight or fight' is instantly activated. One now has a fundamental choice to deal with what faces us or run away and escape from the unavoidable pain. Those who want to grow must move forward.

In the journey to wellness, one learns that even emotional pain has a boundary. There exists a door in which one is able to step into a different level of experience – an experience of connection between you and your creator. In this place you understand that pain is not your boundary and that you can float above it. Like an astronaut leaving the comfort of earth, he learns to enjoy the feeling of 'weightlessness' as he becomes immune to the pull of gravity. How healing to enjoy the feeling that our problems have become weightless and no longer susceptible to the pull of gravity.





How wonderful to float above suffering on the gentleness of a hand that is continuously guiding from above.

Reflection

- Are you on the journey from wilderness to wellness?
- Did you choose fight or flight?
- After grieving the loss, would you be willing to float above the pain?

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