

Writing - Thought Piece

How to Define Your Family Adventure

Adventure is a funny word. It can mean different things to different people. What's it mean to you?

Dictionary.com defines adventure as:

1. An exciting or very unusual experience.
2. Participation in exciting undertakings or enterprises: the spirit of adventure.
3. A bold, usually risky undertaking; hazardous action of uncertain outcome.

What's adventure mean in today's world?

We've talked with people who've sailed around the world. Ridden bikes across continents. Moved to big cities. Built their own homes.

All adventures.

But...different.

What we've gotten curious about is this: what is it that allows one person to spend a year riding a bike, where another spends that year traveling by RV?

How do you choose your mode of adventure?

We think one answer is your *tolerance of inconvenience*.

Our consumer culture teaches us that an inconvenience is an unfulfilled need for a new product or smartphone app.

Don't like waiting for a cab? Track them in real time!

Don't like walking to a different room to check on the baby? Buy a baby monitoring camera and app!

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A new life will involve inconvenience. Smaller spaces. Unfamiliar places. Fewer clothes. Different food. Unknown people. Not knowing. How much inconvenience can you tolerate?

- Can you tolerate a small living space but not a strange bed every night?
- Can you tolerate new driving routes and grocery shopping but not using public showers?
- Can you tolerate living in borrowed spaces but can't tolerate being tied to public transit schedules?

Learning what inconveniences you, your spouse, and your family can tolerate lets you define the shape of your adventure.

MsBoyink is an admitted homebody (she will tell you this). She prefers to have her own chair, bed, and kitchen. She prefers her own shower over a public shower. She will do things outdoors, but isn't a "stay outside all day" kind of person.

She could tolerate living in a small space. It was OK if that space moved. Or wiggled. Shopping in unfamiliar grocery stores and doing laundry in laundromats were doable.

Me? I can deal with public showers and am more outside-oriented, but still need a reliable internet connection and a comfortable place to work. I'm not afraid of air travel - but at 6'3" find it uncomfortable.

We both have little tolerance for being on someone else's schedule. We like to do what we want when we want. And realistically? We're not obese but aren't natural athletes either.

Language was a big issue for us. We could envision ourselves moving into a small space and changing how we shopped, ate, did laundry, and got paid from clients.

Doing all of that and doing it in an unfamiliar culture where English wasn't the primary language was too inconvenient.

We combined our list of tolerances for being inconvenienced and shaped our adventure to suit.

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Turns out - we are not a good fit for backpack or suitcase-based travel.

Long term hiking, biking or motorcycling?

Yea, not so much.

We could, however, tolerate living in an RV while traveling the USA.

It'd be small but we'd have our space, our own beds and chairs, and we could move it when we wanted to. We could see new things, meet new people, and find adventure but still be in the comfort zone of our own culture and language.

RV-based travel became the shape of our family adventure.

For a while we (mostly I) thought we could live on a boat. We tried a houseboat for a week. It added enough stress and restrictions (inconveniences) that we decided we couldn't tolerate it.

At least...for now.

Your tolerances change. You get used to things. Comfortable.

We have over 6 years of RV travel under our belts. We have navigated mountains, big cities, and remote National Parks. But usually with the RV nestled into a campground or RV park with electric, water and sewer connections.

We've done the odd overnight Walmart stay but haven't done hardcore boondocking.

We're ready to poke at the edge of our comfort zone. We want to test our limits of tolerance for the inconvenience of not having hookups. If we can tolerate this inconvenience, we can camp in more remote, quiet and scenic places.

There's some prep work we can do. We can install solar panels and add batteries to increase our power reserves. We can research locations that are remote yet still accessible to a two-wheel-drive truck pulling a 34' trailer.

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But it's mainly a mental game. We have to be ready for inconvenience. We have to choose to see it as an adventure.

There's a quote that pops up in the travel/adventure crowd, often pasted over a scenic picture of mountains:

"An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered; an adventure is an inconvenience rightly considered."

G.K. Chesterton, On Running After Ones Hat, 1908

The context of that quote is that Chesterton was away from his hometown of London and during his absence the town had flooded. He speaks of an "almost savage envy" for having missed the event because he choose to "rightly consider" it as an adventure:

"The boat that brought the meat from the butcher's must have shot along those lanes of rippling silver with the strange smoothness of the gondola. The greengrocer who brought cabbages to the corner of the Latchmere Road must have leant upon the oar with the unearthly grace of the gondolier."

G.K. Chesterton, On Running After Ones Hat, 1908

Chesterton reminds us that it's ultimately our choice whether something is an inconvenience or an adventure. While the world may see you as a ridiculous romantic he prefers that over people who find inconveniences an "opportunity for grumbling".

We want to rightly consider some new inconveniences.

And who knows? Once extensive boondocking is rightly considered we'll poke at the boundaries again and see about jumping outside the USA.
