

A Devotion from the Ocean

Last summer, my wife and I ~~decided to take~~took a ~~beach~~relaxing vacation ~~and ended up going to~~ Myrtle Beach. ~~Immediately after, South Carolina. As soon as~~ we walked into our hotel room, I ~~started to hear~~heard the ~~beautiful ocean's calming~~ sound of the Ocean. I rushed outside ~~on to~~ our balcony and was greeted with the smell of salty water and a breathtaking view of the Atlantic. Fortunately, it was close to sunset, so ~~my first view was the~~ I was welcomed with a clear sky and beautiful sun rays painting over the different shades of blue water ~~and a clear sky~~. I couldn't wait till the morning, so I ~~can~~could rush to the beach and find the spot with the best view to lay down my towel, coffee, and book. ~~I loved spending time by the beach and going in and out of the water. On this trip, I got had~~ the opportunity to catch up on ~~reading~~ a couple of books and listen to good music. It was ~~a the perfect good~~ time to reflect on my life journey ~~so far~~, ~~disconnect~~disengage from the noise (~~aka of~~ my phone), evaluate the progress on my current goals, and work on alignments ~~toward~~toward my future goals.

As I spent more time by the ocean, I started to reflect on the life lessons the Ocean was ~~trying to teach~~whispering to me ~~so~~. ~~So, I stopped reading "put down my book, "Discover Your True North" by Bill George, and started listening to listen to "what I call "Devotions from the Ocean" brought to me by the Atlantic. The Atlantic gave me Ocean. I learned some powerful life lessons from the Atlantic Ocean, and I want I'd like to share them with you and allow them to so that they can be fire-starters to catalysts for your self-discovery and self-reflection.~~

Here are the ten lessons I have learned from the Ocean:

1) Ocean 360° yView

~~As I stood~~Standing in the Ocean ~~and with~~ the soft feeling of sand under my feet ~~of the sand~~, I ~~made a~~turned 360° ~~turn~~ and asked myself, "Which direction should I be focusing on?" I realized there was value in ~~each every~~ angle, but ultimately there is only one to keep the focus on.

- a. a. Behind me – There was the beach, safety, comfort zone, the beginning of the journey, the familiar, and where I should not ~~be focusing~~. The beach is your foundation, but it can't be a destination.
- b. Beside me – I saw people. Lots of people. Different skin colors, sizes, and cultures. My awareness grew as I realized ~~I am that I'm~~ not alone, ~~yet there is room for and we can~~ all ~~of us to~~ exist and embrace who we are our unique selves. You don't need to be a copycat or ride on others' waves just because that's what people want you to do. Follow your passion ~~and~~ you are already an irreplicable star.
- c. In front of me – That's where I found my true North, the endless blue Ocean to be discovered, and a future with a wide-open invite invitation. ~~I learned~~It is impossible to explore the Ocean ~~can't be explored while by~~ looking ~~backwards backward~~. Trust me, if you ~~kept keep~~ your focus on the beach, you will get hit by one of those ~~Ocean~~-waves that'll turn your body upside down, and you only have yourself to blame. The Ocean will ~~keep reminding~~continue to remind you till you turn around and look forward so you can see the waves coming, plan to jump, and ride the wave.

2) Ocean waves don't behave

If you have spent time in the oOcean, then you know the house rules. You know, the rule where the oOcean doesn't like when you give it your back. The oOcean will send some waves your way to knock you off your feet ~~to~~ remind you to turn around and be respectful. If you study oOcean waves and their oOrigin, you will realize that some waves are caused by wind, ~~wind-driven waves, ranging and they range~~ from small waves to ~~what they are called r~~Rogue wWaves or mMonster wWaves. ~~Earthquakes cause another type of wave~~Another type of waves is ~~caused by earthquakes~~, and they are called Tsunamis. ~~As I spent~~During my time in the oOcean, I wondered ~~if whether~~ the oOcean was trying to teach me something using with its wild and ruthless waves.

~~Same goes for~~In the same way, life, ~~it~~ can ~~be calm~~ sometimes be calm, but it can also be cruel, wild, and ruthless when it ~~is trying tries~~ to teach us ~~lessons a lesson~~ with ~~long~~ lasting effects. ~~Maybe Perhaps~~ the oOcean was trying to teach me a lesson about how ~~I face adversitiesto deal with adversity~~ and know recognize that ~~a big part of defining my identity takes place through~~ seasons of hardships ~~help define one's identity~~. Or ~~maybe the Ocean, perhaps it~~ was ~~testing trying to test~~ my persistence perseverance. Am I going to maintain my position in hard times or give up?

3) There is a reason for your season

If you haven't experienced the shock of plunging into the cold, salty water of the oOcean, then you are missing out. Okay, I am kidding; ~~it, it~~ is not fun, ~~n~~Not fun at all. One morning, I was in the water enjoying the beautiful sun, rays, the soft sand underneath, and the different shades of blue oOcean water. Then, out of the blue (literally not figuratively), a huge wave slammed into me, throwing my feet up and my arms wide open. ~~I couldn't feel the~~The soft sand ~~underbeneath~~ me ~~anymore~~had disappeared, and I felt as if I was thrown into deep water and ~~might not be able to~~couldn't touch the ground bottom anymore. Did I mention I don't know how to swim? So yeah... add that to the mix, and you might get a glimpse of how I felt during the whole process ordeal that that felt like a very long time (~~i~~In reality, it was only a few seconds). ~~The~~After the wave passed ~~and then~~, my feet touched the ground bottom again. I realized I ~~haven't hadn't~~ moved much deeper from my spot (where my feet ~~can could~~ touch the bottom ground). ~~B~~but the wave ~~has had~~ temporarily knocked me off my balance and made me think it ~~is was~~ over and I ~~won't wouldn't~~ have a chance or hope to stand right back up.

Sometimes we go through an unexpected season of life that challenge challenges our limitations and ~~knock knocks~~ us off balance. A season of pain, struggle, worry, fear, and trials. Sometimes we lose hope in thinking this seems unending. ~~My encouragement for~~I want to encourage you ~~today is that~~ there is hope, and whatever season you are in, it will pass. ~~I have gone through~~During some ~~tough of the most challenging~~ seasons ~~where of my life~~, I struggled to see beyond my ~~pain and suffering and pain~~. But I have learned that ~~by confronting when I face~~ my limitations, limits and fears, and ~~allowing to put~~allow myself ~~out there and into to be~~ uncomfortable ~~situations~~, I ~~was able to~~ grow and develop. So, stand strong, my friend, waves come to pass, they don't come to stay.

4) You won't grow if you remain in the status quo

I asked myself, “~~What~~ if I stay~~ed~~ close to shore and ~~never-don't challenge~~~~challenged~~ myself to go deeper”? I mean, I have access to a lot of services when I am at the shore. The resort ~~we were staying in~~ can deliver all kinds of drinks. I bet I ~~can~~could get Amazon to deliver packages under my umbrella and DoorDash ~~can~~to bring me a hot and fresh-cooked meal. I realized if I stay as is, status quo, I will never grow. I need to go deeper and challenge my limitations and allow myself to grow. But wait! I don't know how to swim, sail a boat, or fish, nor ~~that~~do I have ~~any of~~ the necessary equipment ~~I need~~ to do seany of these things.

-I realized the value of practicing and becoming a learner. Do you know the famous saying “~~p~~Practice makes perfection”? Wrong. It doesn't. Practice makes improvement, and you can always become better than your best. But all this doesn't take place in the shallow, only in the deep. The bible ~~mentioned~~mentions it in Luke 5:4 when Jesus ~~asked~~asks Peter to ~~put out into the deep water and~~ let ~~down~~ the nets down in deep waters. They caught a large number of fish, ~~where and~~ their nets began to break, ~~and the boats started to sink~~sinking the boats. Only in the deep ~~was where~~did the disciples ~~experienced~~witness Jesus walking on water. Only in the deep, did the disciples ~~experienced the calmness~~experience calm in the storm. Only in the deep can you ~~can~~ learn when to swim and when to tread, when to fight and when to flow. Finally, you only in the deep can you only can learn ~~how~~ to trust and hold onto God in the deep.

5) 5) You might be good at hearing, but are you listening?

Have you ever had someone ~~accusing~~accuse you of not listening ~~while~~to them when you are confident you heard ~~every word~~everything they said? Sounds confusing, right? ~~Well, there~~There is a big difference between listening and hearing. Before I tell you how I know that, let me share ~~with you~~ the official definition of both. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, they define hearing as “The process, function, or power of perceiving sound; specifically: the special sense by which noises and tones are received as stimuli.”. While they define listening as “to pay attention to sound; to hear something with thoughtful attention, ~~and~~ and to give consideration.”

Why am I sharing this with you? ~~Well, it is because when~~When I was ~~hanging out~~ in the ocean, ~~there were~~ heard lots many of different voices and sounds. However, I ~~have~~quickly learned quickly that I needed to ~~listen~~ carefully listen for the lifeguard's whistle. I learned the value of ~~a the sound of a lifeguard's whistle sound when it comes from a lifeguard~~. Once I paid attention to the sound, I gave it more consideration ~~over than~~ other sounds, ~~and it allowed~~inged me to evaluate ~~where I am standing in the my placement in the~~ ocean and ~~make sure I am~~ moremy awareness of my surroundings. My question to you is, do you take the time to evaluate the voices you listen to in your life?

6) 6) The ocean at night is not a delight

The ocean at night sounds mean, aggressive, and scary. I don't know why. At night, when I walked ~~in the evening~~ by the same spot I ~~stayed by~~posted up in the morning, it felt like the beginning of a scary movie. What changed? The absence of light, maybe. I didn't like it. However, I realized I had to go through the night to enjoy the sunshine the next day. It was a season. It ~~will~~would end. I had to weather the season of the night to enjoy the morning sunshine. It reminded me of God's promise in Psalms 30:5 “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.” Are you going through a season where it seems dark, ~~a~~a season where your

marriage, job, friendship, or finances ~~was~~were at some point doing great, but something happened ~~ed, and suddenly, those and that~~ same ~~place things~~ became cold, dark, and scary? My friend, I want to invite you to start believing this is only a season and sunshine will come in the morning. So, sStand sStrong, pray firmly, and allow God to walk with you during this season and deliver you to the morning.

7) No hHealing without hHurting

~~Only~~Experiencing healing can happen only when you ~~are~~have been wounded and hurt ~~that you can experience healing and go through the healing process~~. One morning, I was staying close to the ~~beach shore~~, and suddenly an aggressive wave ambushed me, ~~and shoving~~ing me into the ~~shore where all the~~ soft and gentle shells ~~were~~ (yYes, I am being sarcastic, they were rough and sharp). I had cuts on my hand and arm, ~~then blood started~~ gushing with blood down my arm...dramatic music -(yYes, I am being dramatic; it wasn't that much blood). ~~I am thankful~~Thankfully, I am married to the best nurse in the world, ~~so she who~~ nursed me (when I say nursed, she told me ~~those my cuts were~~ are barely wounds and I ~~am was~~ overreacting). That evening, I was sitting on the patio and kept looking at my cuts and saw how they ~~are were~~ healing. I ~~was left with~~ got a couple of small scars that reminded me of this near-death experience. Okay, I will be serious now... Sometimes we must go through some pain in order to heal. During the healing, we may have to face situations, people, or memories that sting. But it is a part of the process and necessary to ~~heal~~ permanently heal.

8) If you think walking on concrete is hard, try sSand!

My wife and I love seafood and ~~we realized~~wanted to try the best seafood restaurant in Myrtle Beach, ~~which was only was~~ 6 minutes away ~~according to~~by Uber. However, my wife wanted to enjoy the sunset view, so she asked if we could walk there instead. ~~I used~~According to Google Maps ~~and realized~~, it would take us 45 minutes to ~~get walk there by walking~~, so I ~~figured that decided it~~ would be a romantic walk and agreed so I agreed. However, I did not ~~consider take into account~~ that we ~~will would~~ be walking on soft sand, and I didn't know it would take longer, and be a more difficult, and ~~a~~ not-needed leg workout. We started walking on the sand, and the view was amazing. If you can't picture the view, let me see if I can help you paint the picture. We experienced the vibrant colors of the sun expanding over the horizon and painted the ocean as it ~~was~~ descending lower and lower while sending the sky to sleep. It took us 90 minutes to get to the restaurant, and that was, ~~without and we did not making~~ any stops. ~~We~~Although we were sweating profusely, almost our legs were numb ~~legs~~, and we were breathless ~~but~~, we made it. Do you sometimes feel like your 6 minutes Uber ride to your destination has turned into a 90-minute obstacle course? ~~Sometimes it is~~You may be better off walking a longer distance to ~~take the sand route to reach~~ your destination ~~with stronger legs and more gaining~~ life ~~experiences~~experience than being Ubered by someone else while you are you're distracted on your phone scrolling through Facebook. Life experiences are not told; ~~they, they~~ are taught. Now let me finish the story, we arrived at so we get to the restaurant, and the receptionist told us they ~~are were~~ fully booked for the night and ~~can't couldn't~~ take any more walk-ins. ~~so we stood there and~~ We were bummed with this news and even might have had ashed a couple of salty tears ~~coming down our faces~~. So, we crossed the street to a bar and grabbed some delicious bar food, and then Ubered back to the room. Focus on the progress. Little by little becomes a lot.

9) Shoaling and sSchooling, and keep improving

One day while I ~~am~~was in the water, I saw a few schools of fish swimming around me, ~~and it which got me~~led me to think about the power of shoaling and schooling. Let me define both words for you. If a group of fish stays together, it is called shoaling. If they start swimming in the same direction, it is called schooling. ~~This made me think about I~~connected this concept to the value and power of being integrated into a healthy community of family and friends. Pay attention; ~~I~~I said “healthy” and not just being integrated ~~into~~in ~~any~~any community of family and friends. A strong support system requires a careful pick and evaluation of its members. ~~Make sure you~~It is essential to take the time ~~and~~to evaluate the people around you that you consider ~~to be~~family and friends because your school will serve you in two ~~significant~~major parts ~~aspects~~of your life.

- a. They move with you through troubled waters as protection. Have you heard about the “Predator Confusion Effect”? It was proposed by a couple of guys, ~~called~~called Milinski and Heller, in 1978 and ~~basically their theory~~is based on the idea that it is difficult for predators to target individual preys when they are moving in groups because it is a sensory overload of the predator’s visual channel.
- b. They move with you through calm waters as companions.

Find a good school and start swimming!

~~10)~~ **10) Hey Ocean, I made my sacrifice, and it better suffice**

~~The Ocean~~It is known to be~~said that~~ the ~~home of~~ocean contains more ~~historie~~historical artifacts than ~~in~~all of the ~~world's~~world's museums combined. I figured my trip would not be complete without adding one more piece to this ~~o~~Ocean’s collection of artifacts. My wedding ring. Yes...I lost my wedding ring, and it is sitting somewhere ~~at~~in the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. You’re welcome, ~~o~~Ocean! Here is the story: I was trying to be goofy and scare my wife by swinging my arms so rapidly to cause a water splash. While I was doing that, I started to feel my wedding ring slip off my finger. It happened so quickly; I couldn’t reach with my other hand to catch it.

-I froze. I decided if I ~~don't~~didn't move, then I ~~have~~had a ~~higher~~greater chance ~~to know where it was of finding it~~. I asked my wife to dive and try to find it around my feet. After a few failed attempts, she jumped out of the water, raising her arms in joy, and I saw the ring in her hand!! Just kidding, I wish. We didn’t find it, and I looked around me and had no clue which spot to search. Waves kept coming, and I got ~~sadder~~more sad and ~~more~~more desperate to find it. I prayed and asked God for a miracle and ~~hoped~~was hoping to find it by the shore or miraculously step on it under-water. After a couple of hours, we decided to stop looking for it and ~~decided it is time to~~move on. Change is inevitable, and life doesn’t stop moving. What about you? Are you trying to move ~~one~~from something you lost that was so precious to you ~~that you lost~~? Maybe it is a relationship with a partner, a parent, a friend, a job, or a pet. Here are some tips I use that worked for me, and I hope you find them helpful:

- a. Feel the pain – The faster you face your pain and how you feel, the quicker you start to move past it.
- b. Healthy Distractions – Start to invest time into healthy distractions you know you enjoy and do not wait to have the desire to do it. Decide to do it. That can be reading books, hiking, painting, or even binge-watching Game of Thrones.
- c. Give yourself permission – Either to talk about it or to forgive.

- d. Time with healthy Family and Friends – Remember #10 – Shoaling and sSchooling when we talked about the value of a healthy community. Remember, your school will move with you through troubled waters as protection and through calm waters as companions
- e. Forgive – Either yourself or the other person. It will set you free and not them.
- f. Accept it and be hHonest – If you are not okay, then accept it. Don't pretend to be strong. Time will pass, and you will heal and be okay.
- g. Time – You can't force time ~~nor than you can~~ control the rate of your progress. You need to focus on the next right thing to do. Then the right thing after that and so on. As time passes, you will heal, and whatever happened won't go away, but you will get stronger to deal with the memory of it.

Finally, a beautiful and famous blue tang called Dory taught us a valuable lesson about moving on when she said, “Just keep swimming, just keep swimming.”

Now, how about you?

How is your life going right now? Are you sailing smoothly~~smooth~~ in calm water? Or are you going through ~~some~~a wild, cruel, and ruthless season? Do you feel confident about the ground beneath you? Or are you being attacked from all angles pulling earth beneath your feet? Is life trying to teach you something? ~~Share them with~~Let me know in the comments section or by messaging me. I'd love to hear from you.

I have enjoyed my time by the ~~Ocean~~ocean and am thankful for all the lessons it has taught me. I hope you enjoyed reading this post and found it beneficial to you or someone you love. Before we go separate ways, make sure to share this post and subscribe so I can connect with you and notify you of future content. Bye for now!