

# Book of Dreams



How to Change the World on Your Journey Through Life



Edited by Michael McCarthy

# Introduction



Over the many years of travel I have experienced and enjoyed around the planet, I've passed the point where I will agree to "go anywhere, do anything" just for the sake of new explorations. After so many trips, travel just for the sake of travel is no longer enjoyable. These days I prefer to do something "meaningful." Pre-planned, researched, thought out and rewarding. For instance, I just travelled to the Caribbean to report on a sailing regatta, but my real reason was to visit a resort that was training and hiring impoverished youth from the local village, with a future goal of opening a tourism academy to create jobs for young people. That's interesting. Doing my research, I have discovered there are many resorts around the world these days that are encouraging guests to bring school supplies, medicine, computers, cameras, books and their professional skills to donate to the community where the resorts do business. For want of a better term, I call this "transformative travel" because it brings changes the community and the traveller as well. Certainly you get to enjoy the sunshine, beach, and service that the resort provides, but for many experienced travellers who "been there, done that" and want to make a difference, this is a new form of travel that's much more gratifying.

In the end, the person most transformed is the traveller. The gift of a computer to an impoverished school, for example, can make a huge difference to all concerned. I've experienced visits to prisons, clinics, hospitals, schools, town dumps, orphanages, old folks homes, wildlife refuges and people's homes, bringing whatever gifts I could that were appropriate and responsible. Its exciting.

Those who travel with conscious awareness, intent on making the world a better place than they found it, have a different perspective than the casual fun seeker. Why not intentionally plan to interact with the people you meet? If you are travelling in the developing world, why not choose to help the less fortunate you are bound to meet? There are choices to be made, ethical choices. Who to help? Why? Better yet, how?

Even with very little money it is possible to make a real difference in the community you visit. All that is necessary is to create and maintain a certain state of mind, the kind of consciousness that allows you to see the world for what it really is. Then to perform deliberate (not random) acts of kindness, and then follow the doors that always open. Like Alice in Wonderland, down that curious path lies mystery. As a writer, that's where I find my best stories.

The stories in this book are told by my friends and fellow professional travel writers, photographers, tour organizers, group leaders and others who I have met on my travels around the world. Recently I hosted a radio show where I interviewed dozens of other writers about the projects they had adopted, the causes and charities they assisted, the projects they publicized, the people and groups they assisted with fundraising. I was amazed at the accomplishments many people had successfully realized.

Other stories in this book are from my own collection, people whom I have met and profiled in newspaper and magazine stories. Take, for instance, the story of the amazing Bernie Krisher. A retired American journalist (former bureau chief for Newsweek in Asia), Bernie decided that the United States had done serious damage to the country of Cambodia, essentially by illegally dropping bombs on that country during the Vietnamese war. To this day bombs are still exploding in that poor country, creating a society of one-legged beggars. Bernie decided to help rebuild Cambodia, first by building schools. I've lost track of how many schools Bernie has built for the poorest of the poor, but it is at least several hundred.

If I built one school I would be a happy camper, but I am a writer and not an engineer so I will stick to what I do best and simply share the stories of the people I have met and the good work they do on this journey we call life. It's not an endless road, but there are so many different paths one can wander along the way, and much good work to be done. Please feel free to contact me with your own story, and I'll be happy to share it with others.

The book will be sold online through my website, and promoted by all the contributors to their own readers and through social media. Contributors will receive any funding for their own projects that can be sent to the email address they have provided. Please refer to the Writers Guidelines for details for your submission. I look forward to hearing from you.

# Biography of Authors

## Michael McCarthy



*Michael McCarthy has been traveling all his life, starting with hitchhiking as a teenager and hopping freight trains like his childhood hero Jack Kerouac. These days he is more likely to be found at airports on his way to resorts or adventures in Asia, Oceania, the Caribbean or anywhere in North or South America. He is the author of two novels and several outdoors books. Michael previously worked as a radio news reporter and editor, a freelance features writer for newspapers and magazines, and a writer of travel literature. His travel short stories have appeared in several anthologies and dozens of newspapers.*

*Michael's philosophy is simple: "All of life is a journey. You don't need to be on an airplane to Botswana to enjoy an adventure. It's all a state of mind." His real interest is not tourism, but "making the world a better place."*

*Michael was given the Ethics in Action Award by Canadian Businesses for Social Responsibility for his work employing street-involved people across Canada and bringing the issue of homelessness to national attention. He is a volunteer with the Write to Read Project brings libraries, books and computers to remote aboriginal communities across British Columbia.*

# Sample Chapter 1

## *Saving sea turtles becomes a mission to save the planet*



When I ventured to the Great Barrier Reef off the north eastern shore of Australia, I fell in love with the region, the sea creatures, the divers and the lifestyle. What a place to live and work! Then I met Christian Miller at the Sea Turtle Recovery Centre on Fitzroy Island near Cairns, and I understood what true passion is all about. We need to save this planet from destruction. For Christian, that starts with saving the sea turtle.

“I worked as a dive instructor most of my life,” says Christian, using an amazing \$15,000 underwater camera as we speak to follow a sick Hawksbill around its pool. “I got into it for my extreme passion for the underwater world. I worked on environmental projects around the world for years, but always coming back to Australia. I wanted to be actively involved in marine conservation. My biggest passion is sharks, but it is very hard to get the general public to like sharks. I was thinking the sea turtle is almost like the perfect tool to educate people.”

Sea Turtles are affected by anything humans do. Dredging the ocean floors, over-fishing, getting caught in ghost nets or fishing lines, getting hit by boats, nesting sites reduced by land developments, ocean debris. Humans are killing a lot of sea turtles. We are also destroying the oceans. If the oceans die, people die.

“The Turtle Rehab project started in 2010,” he says, zooming in on his subject. “Just before Cyclone Yasi there were 7 turtle nests along the Fitzroy beaches. Jenny Gilbert (co founder) and I were able to save 21 turtles from one nest, and then we built the new centre.”

What makes Christian Miller unique is his skill with a camera. Ever since he was a boy he was an artist, and won major European art awards as a teenager. In 2002 his mother bought him a digital underwater camera for his birthday and now he rarely dives without one.

“I was lucky to shoot in some remote locations, such as the Amazon. My experience got me to be part of National Geographic and BBC productions and several research expeditions. Then I started studio photography and in the last two years I realised that my artistic roots had to merge with my photographic skills. Now I want to create art that can help saving marine life.”

There are several large pools at the Centre, and in each one a couple of turtles slowly swim while they rest and recover. Some have lost flippers to boat propellers, some have swallowed plastic debris that fouls much of the world’s oceans today, mistaking it for their favourite food, jellyfish. When they are well, each one will be released.

“Here, at the Rehab Centre at Fitzroy,” he says quietly, “people can get up close to them. They are cute and everybody loves them, children love them. When we release a turtle back to the wild, we have a large audience and hopefully this inspires a lot of people to take care for our oceans, and eventually save more than turtles. I strongly believe that if we can involve youth, finding ways to get them closer to and feel passionate about nature again, we can make a difference in the long run.”

If you are passionate about Sea Turtles or the marine environment log on to [www.saveourseaturtles.com.au](http://www.saveourseaturtles.com.au) and click on one of the Paypal donate buttons. It’s an all-voluntary organisation, so all of the money is used directly to help animals. If you are passionate about saving the planet, do as Christian has done and start your own project. The world will thank you for it.

Please contact:



# Sample Chapter 2

## *This is NOT a Tourist Destination*

It's not every day that I get to go shopping for mascara. So, there we were in the outdoor shopping bazaar of downtown Kathmandu, just south of the Thamel tourist district with its cafes, hostels and bars. Shova and Gyatri from Setunepal were my guides. We were on a mission. Let's get all the women from the local prison released on probation!

Have you ever noticed, no matter where you go in the world, there is always a beauty parlour or a shop where women can get their nails polished? In other words, there is always a job waiting for a beautician, if that person has the tools or training to service their clientele. It was my idea that we might create a lot of jobs in Kathmandu, a city of 3 million people, if we trained many of the women from the prison to learn cosmetology

In Nepal, I learned, many of the women held in prison were there for crimes of ignorance or poverty. They might not know how to read, they might have run away from an abusive relationship, they might have stolen some money to feed themselves or their children. With no way to support themselves, they may end up staying in jail for many years because there is no safe place to release them, no jobs for them to do. Setu, which means "bridge" in Hindi, is a non-profit society that had been set up by local citizens to provide a halfway house for the women from the Kathmandu prison. While in the prison, they have time to learn a trade, which is why we started the beautician project.

Our first step was to meet the warden and tell him of our clever plan. His office looked like a room from a derelict skid row hotel, poorly furnished and testimony to the abject poverty that afflicts Nepal, the 11th poorest country in the world. Prison authorities in Nepal have little money for food or even medical supplies, never mind such frivolous costs as providing courses in beauty tips for 30 wayward women. The warden was less than pleased to meet me. In all honesty, he was not friendly at all. Through my translator Shova, he expressed his opinion forcefully. "This is NOT a tourist attraction," he said. "We do not encourage journalists. Do NOT come back here ever again."

If they are to gain access to important figures, forbidden zones or back of beyond destinations, adventurous travellers or travel writers need to understand the underlying elements of geography, politics and diplomacy. I had a few cards saved up my sleeve for such an occasion as this. Through my translator, I patiently explained that having 30 fewer mouths to feed would lessen the burden on his (non-existent) budget, that I would personally supply all the components of the project such as beauty kits, and maybe we could even have a graduation ceremony with framed certificates at the end. A ceremony for which he would get all the credit, of course.

It was the last suggestion that caught his attention. When it comes to working with politicians and bureaucrats, receiving credit is always a key item, especially when somebody else does all the work and pays the freight and the bureaucrat gets all the credit. Besides, having foreigners pay for the cost of social work is always a good idea, one that can be shared to some acclaim with fellow bureaucrats in other government departments. Who might wish to emulate the idea.

So, with Shova and Gayla doing all the shopping and me doing all the paying, we wandered around the tiny stalls of the Kathmandu bazaar, buying some lipstick here, some mascara there, eye shadow over here. The sight of a giant foreigner lugging around bags of women's cosmetics raised a few eyebrows, but I was in my glory. How often will I get to do something like this ever again, I wondered?

Given there were only 30 women signed up for the beautician course, I suggested to the warden and the Setu staff that we buy soap for all the other 150 female prisoners so there would be no untoward jealousy. That proved to be a clever idea, so we bought 200 bars of soap, which I paid for by weight and not volume. This required a lot of weighing and boxing up, much to the amusement of the store owners who seldom sold soap to tourists. They might be locked up in a dirty medieval prison, I thought, but these will be very clean prisoners. The entire project cost me a few hundred U.S. dollars, a day's pay at home but a pass to freedom for 30 Nepali women.

The graduation ceremony in the prison was a big success, and the warden made a speech and received a lot of applause. I sat in the corner quietly making no fuss, because journalists are seldom appreciated in foreign prisons, especially tall hairy male journalists with a fetish for women's cosmetics.

# Sample Chapter 3

## *Ending girls slavery in Nepal as easy as saving coffee money*

Let's see. How many different types of travel are there? Why, there's the regular tourism that we all enjoy, plus eco-travel, spiritual travel, green travel, adventure travel, and the list could go on forever. Let's add a new genre; women's travel.

Marybeth Bond (<http://gutsytraveler.com>) has been travelling the world for many years, starting in her youth as a single woman travelling solo. She learned how to stay safe and enjoy life on the road and not be afraid. Her book *Gutsy Women Travel* went on to be a bestseller. Since then Marybeth has visited over 100 countries and written many more books to help women travellers. Thanks in part to writers like Marybeth, women's travel is the fast-growing segment in the travel business today.

On an interview I did with Marybeth, I discovered her own way of "giving back." Her chosen project is the Nepali Youth Foundation. On her first of several trips to Nepal, Marybeth encountered true poverty. One of her sherpas confessed that his life's dream was to go to college, so she and her trekking friends decided to help him do so. She then made it her goal to help similarly highly motivated people on her trips. That's how she met Olga Murray.

Olga had also been to Nepal to enjoy that country's beauty, mountains and people. However, she was horrified to discover that many young girls there were being sold into slavery, sometimes to sexual slavery, by parents too poor to raise them. Olga founded the Nepali Youth Foundation to stop this sickening practice. Did I mention that Olga was 66 when she did so, and retired? It's never too old to get started.

To date, the Indentured Daughters Program (IDP) has saved 11,000 young Nepali girls from being sold and has made dramatic difference in that country's culture. Who supports it? Women and men in the western world who are lucky or determined enough to have travelled the world and understand how easy it can be to "make a difference." Marybeth, for instance, holds cocktail parties in her own home and asks for donations to NYF. Some of her friends vow to save their daily coffee money and donate that. Every penny counts, Marybeth says.

For only \$100, NYF gives each Nepali family a piglet or goat as compensation for their daughter's missing wages and enables the girl to go to school. They also provide leadership training to build the girls' confidence and empower them to be self-sufficient. Many formerly enslaved girls have formed cooperatives to create new income generation projects.

Furthermore, formerly bonded servants have established an NGO to support other rescued girls and end the horrific tradition of enslaving girls in Nepal. The vast majority of the enslaved girls in Nepal are now free and NYF expects to eradicate the bonding custom entirely within a couple of years. Those interested in supporting the Nepali Youth Foundation can easily do so online. Check it out and make a difference yourself.

<http://www.nepalyouthfoundation.org>

<http://www.nepalyouthfoundation.org/programs/indentured-daughters-program/>

# Writer's Guidelines

Book Title: The Book of Dreams  
Sub-title: How to make the world a better place on your journey through life.  
Editor: Michael McCarthy  
www.transformative-travel.com  
e: newscribe@shaw.ca

Word count: 500 - 2,000 words

Photos: 1- 4 images, high resolution, colour, suitable for print. Minimum size 1024 by 768 pixels. Prefer 1920 by 1080 pixels. Please write a one-sentence caption for each photo.

Deadline: ASAP. To be published before Christmas 2018, to serve as a gift item to be purchased by your fans and sent to friends, and to serve as a fundraising and publicity device for the project you are assisting.

Style: First person narrative, telling a story. Journalism or a short story format.

Content: All of life is a journey. How have you made the world a better place on your journey through life? What established cause, charity or project have you selected to assist or promote? Did you start your own project? If so, what is it? Why did you do so? When did you start or join this initiative? Who is involved? How does it work? (See sample stories.)

# Writer's Guidelines

Details: All contributing writers and photographer will have their names posted on the front cover of the book as co-authors. All authors and photographers will have their names included in any and all publicity releases.

Please include a short bio, and a bio photo. A bio photo is not needed if you appear in the submitted photos. Please include any contact information you want included (website URL, email address, etc).

Please indicate at the end of the story what type of donation you are requesting, whether financial or in-kind (cameras, computers, etc) and how that donation can be made or delivered. Please indicate if this project is registered as a non-profit society.



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Anticipation. Experience. Memories.