

# BACK TO NORMALITY

*“Quit your job, buy a ticket, get a tan, fall in love, never return.”*

ANONYMOUS

A friend of a friend of a friend is from South America but fell in love and moved to a colder country some 20 years ago. This fellow has been a student at the world-famous Vincente Amigo vid Cervantes Institute in Seville. We talk about flamenco guitar and these proteges are drilled even harder than those scary looking guitar playing kids of North Korea. He applied for a job as a guitar tutor in the local musical school in his new home country. Denied.

He himself thought it was a little bit disheartening especially since had been used in performing in front of thousands of people in the major cities of most European countries. He brushed off the defeat and gave the local musical school a call and saw if he could get some explanation. Phone called. “Music School” “Hello I just have a quick question. I applied for this little job as a guitar teacher and I was just wondering a little why I was not picked”. The other side of the phone was a bit quiet before answering. “Well we have this rule that you must have attended the local music school program and this flamenco guitar is like something we have not heard of and you said that you had attended the Cervantes Institute. We believe Cervantes has to do with weather mills and Sancho Panza. We also play children’s songs here. Are you sure you are able to play the exciting: ‘If you are happy and you know it, clap your hands’ or this other funny song called ‘Baa Baa Black Sheep?’”

Now it was quiet on the other side of the phone. We can call this fellow Javier Mendoza. We can call him that since that is simply his name. “Well I would imagine if I can play quadruple handed chords blindfolded by the South-East Korean master the great Fukh Yu or the North-Siberian genius So Doff, then I am sure to knock out some kids songs in a backward village where your sister is your wife”. These two worlds did not click. Think they are still looking for someone able to play Baa Baa Black Sheep or perhaps they have chosen to play Beach boys Baa baa baa baa baa baran.

Anyhow. Our friend set up his own guitar school and extraordinarily successful in his own right. Sometimes things simply do not connect. It is more like disconnect and that is common when you want to go from being a guide and back to normality again. It can be a tough journey. When these people referred to as expats [people that have lived abroad and then move back] are interviewed then they more than often state that the hard time is to move back to their own countries and get the show going again. No one really understands what they have been part of or really what they in a sense are capable of. Potential employers might be hesitant to give them a chance simply because they have a hard time taking in what the expat has been a part of and what they really know.

It is much like that in tour guiding. Toy with the thought that you have done 6 years running Safari operations followed by a handful of years on the cruise ships around the world and then settling down another half-decade on some Greek island. When you are happy and content you think about going back to where you came from and establish normality - whatever that means. Scenario could be "You have applied for this job as sales and administrative duties but what experience do you have. You have not been in your own hometown the past 15 years" "Well between years X and Y, I oversaw dealing with all vendor-relations and guide hiring from Cairo to Cape of Good Hopes for this particular company and then we had sales targets that I smashed with 400 %". Well that might be true, but you have not filed A7/G [14] % papers have you and this selling of exciting adventure well it is not like selling door-handles is it?" "No not when you put it like that".

They just do not understand what you bring to the table and it is an uncertainty and if you have been away for a longer time then that natural web of connections might have faded away into nothingness. We all heard as we grow up to travel the world and do things and get yourself some amazing experiences and then you will for sure get a great job when you decide to get one. With that foundation of knowledge and wisdom you can waltz right in and get what you are looking for. Sometimes nothing can be further from the truth. If the one hiring you is a former guide, then it might be some understanding but the likelihood of that happening might be slim or second to none.

To make this transition a bit easier it might be crucial to be open for other

possibilities and perhaps rethink the whole concept of work and play. Keeping your network alive and vivid is a great help. Choose wisely the ones you want to hang with and socialize and work with. Cut the monkeys and those who suck the living daylight out of you. Energy-thieves we throw to the lions right away. It is important to keep that famous or infamous network of good people alive and breathing. You'd be surprised what old guides get up to and it is a qualified guess that some of them have a drive and focus above the rest. Remember that it is always better and more exciting to be a Yes man or woman. If an offer comes your way, then make a qualified decision then say Yes and after that figure out how the hell to get the show on the road. If you keep up with your mates and those good solid people, then you might get offers as below and remember the words: To get heard you need to make some noise.

*"Hey mate. Been long time since we set up that ice-cream stand in Capri and had those ski-seasons in the Alps. Saw you reached out for new adventures. My sister is starting a niche-traveling business and she requested you to help for 4 months as she gets things on the go. You know her and I think you guys would be a perfect tag team. Money is good too".*

*"Gosh it's been ages since we got together. I bet you are still that same funny and energetic person. Listen up: I just got a deal to develop a pre-program for aid-workers going to Peru. I know you know the country like the back of your hand. They will all have two-week crash courses prior to being sent. Would love to have you as my wingman. Maverick and Goose all over again. Starts in 2 months".*

*"Glad to hear your voice again. You can sell sand to the Arabs and ice to the intuits. We have a 6-month project to sell in a new venue and area just south do Cape Town. With your experience I am sure we will hit the jackpot".*

*"Buddy we just secured a teaching job with a few of the junior colleges. It is an on-line tutor and focuses on cultural difference and the French language as well as how it is to live abroad. Wonderful gig. Let us give it a go".*

*"Sharpen your pen and mind. We will have the opportunity of writing an educational brochure and then hit the road for marketing. It sounds promising and I send your details a bit later today. It also included traveling to the Greek archipelago since the company is an all-inclusive luxury sail vacation".*

During the time you guide it might just be a good idea from time to time to think about if you have any kind of super-passion beside being an agent in the world of tourism. If you have that then go ahead and learn a bit more. Being a real estate broker can be studied on-line and if you like to fix cars then get on that case. Hang with people that are good at what they do. Perhaps you like to get gigs as an underwater photographer or plan further down the line to it is marketing and copy-writing. If you are a big cake eater, then why not bake them instead and make yourself a name in that field. Teacher positions or educational posts are fields that we guides sometimes end up in. Broaden your horizon when trying to figure out your next move. Unless you are OK sitting and filing A7/G [14] % papers.

Good luck and remember the words of Candide: We must cultivate our garden.

Good luck.

