

## Tuesday, 23 February 2010

### Dream Life or Temporary Pretend Life? Discuss.



I've been living in northern California for two months now. It's been a big step to leave my friends and family, my worldly goods, my country, and my old life as I knew it to begin something fresh, new, challenging. And, so, the question is: has it been worth it?

Unquestionably, yes, so far. I've had more experiences and met more lovely, intriguing, friendly, helpful and welcoming people in the past eight weeks than I have in the last few years. My mind feels stretched - admittedly sometimes a little too much - but this is a good thing; I feel far more open, excited and curious about the world than I did in 2009.

Ripping myself from the safety net of 'Blighty' has been tough and I've had many moments standing in the shower, pausing in a store, crying in the woods and looking out at the Pacific Ocean where I've thought: *what the hell am I doing here?* But those moments pass relatively quickly as I tell myself I'm here to enjoy my life, to create, to talk to people, to do a job and to go back to England a much more fulfilled, healthier individual than the one that left.

If I go back, of course.

Hmm, yes. I think I will go back but, right now, I'm trying to decide whether the life I'm living is my "dream life" - one where I'm in another country that I love, where I'm taking road trips, writing, having fun, never settling in one place, seeing amazing countryside, reading and meeting people. A life where I don't answer to anyone, yet am free to pursue the work and writing I love; a life where I'm not in a committed relationship anymore and where I can keep my emotions to myself to stay a lot stronger than I have been in the past.

But is this me? Or a temporary version of a life I think I want?

Does anyone ever really know the answer to this question?

As well as being a "free spirit", I also love living in a place for a long time where I can get to know people (actually make real friends rather than passing acquaintances) and get to know an area well too. I know that, being in a loving, long-term relationship, I can do all the things I've mentioned above with the added bonus of having someone to share it with and be supported by (and for me to support them too, of course).

Surely it's possible to have all these things at the same time, right (or, if not at the same time, then swap between them throughout your life)? Excitement, travel, adventure, creativity, love. If you find the right person to share your life with - someone who understands, nurtures you and gives you space too - then you can also be who you want to be.

So, as I head off for a two-week trip to LA for film meetings in Hollywood and a short break in Las Vegas, I feel quite adrift and a little confused in the world.

I'm in the process of deciding whether this America trip is a temporary, magnificent, colourful bubble that I've created for myself - one that's going to burst at some point - or is it a new wonderful life I've made that will just keep getting better?

I'd like to think the latter. But, then again, I'm probably thinking *too much*; having a rough plan at the same time as being adrift does seem to be working fine right now. Perhaps I'll just go with it and, as my visa runs out in June, it just means I have four months to come up with an amazing screenplay idea so that Warner Bros. Studios offer me a job in LA., I change my visa status and stay here in Dreamsville, CA.

If I don't manage it, I'll go home and work out what to do next instead.

Stay safe and happy, whatever part of your journey you're trying to figure out. Wink.