

Wednesday, 7 April 2010

Goodbye Mendocino: There is no Try only Do



After almost four months living amongst the Redwood trees in my gorgeous cottage, I'm leaving the town of Fort Bragg and Mendocino County. For good. This wonderful, picturesque, spiritual, hard-to-get-to place - next to the Pacific Ocean - has helped me relax into myself, meet new people, write, find a new lust and focus for life and begin to heal a lot of emotional scars I left behind in the UK.

It's been a new step in my life involving many road trips, adventures, building fantastic and lasting friendships, and the opportunity to discover that a career in the film industry is, it seems, beckoning.

It's been a dream of mine to go to Hollywood and try to "make it" as a screenwriter or a director or a producer (or all three!), since I was a little boy. And as of this moment, I'm going to go make that dream into a reality. I'm on my way to LA.

I'll be volunteering at the international locations manager Expo event in Santa Monica next week, which will be great fun. Especially as I'll no doubt meet the British Contigent there (whilst I'm representing Mendocino).

I realise there's often a sharp edge of cynicism from people when you tell them: "I'm going to go find fame and fortune in the bright lights of the city!". It sounds slightly vague, vacuous and other suitable words beginning with 'v' (which is why I'd only use the "fame and fortune" phrase ironically with tongue firmly in cheek).

I'm no fool. I know I'll have to take things people tell me in Los Angeles with the proverbial pinch of salt. But I feel safe in the knowledge that, having been a journalist for many years, I can sniff both bullshit and knobhead behaviour from roughly half a mile away.

I go to LA with an open-mind and no preconceptions. What other way would there be to approach such a sprawling, potentially overwhelming city? Yes, I have a rough plan of how to achieve my goals, but that's about all. And I know that many people try, and fail, to make a successful career in the film industry. But as Yoda from *Star Wars* once said: "There is no try, only do."

So, if I don't go *do* my dream - at least have a go at the kind of work that would make my heart happy - I would be wasting my time in America, and wasting my life too. Slightly dramatic, but kind of true. And if you've always hankered to do a certain thing, but you've buried it inside a deep, dark cupboard in your mind (behind the clutter of daily business such as doing the dishes, paying bills, painting your garage wall and eating junk food), then why not sit for a while and contemplate what that thing was?

Let it bubble up in your mind and give it some space to grow for five minutes. Do you still like the idea? Is it something that keeps popping up every now and then; does it bother you that you wish you had done it? If so, what's stopping you doing it? Dishes, bills, D.I.Y....

Or is it because you think you might not be very good at it? That you might fail at it?

I'm here to tell you, from my experience so far this year (and with all overly romantic American Dream stuff aside), that you won't fail. Who cares if it doesn't quite go the way you planned? Don't make a big thing of it. No one else will. What *would* be a failure is if you left that thought/dream you've always wanted to do just stay as a thought/dream. Then, when you reach 87-years-old and you're dribbling down your jacket, being fed mushy baby food, smell of piss and can't walk anymore, and you realise that special thought/dream was the one thing you *should* have done in your life. What will you think then?

See you in a week or so. Happy dream making.