

# Sailing Down the Moonbeam

## Book Group Participation

Mary enjoys comparing experiences with her readers, and is happy to join in your discussion. If she cannot be with you in person, she can join the discussion by speakerphone, Skype, or Google Plus. To arrange to have Mary participate in your book group discussion, [click here](#).

## Discussion Questions

- (1) What factors did Mary consider as she decided to put a successful career on hold? What other factors might she have considered? Have you ever seriously considered dropping out of your own career/life? What factors did you consider?
- (2) Although Mary and Tom were experienced sailors, they had several mishaps due to a failure to communicate. How much of this was due to being in such close quarters? What other factors contributed? What would be the challenges to you of living in such close quarters with your spouse or significant other?
- (3) The decision to go sailing meant giving up virtually all of their social and physical support systems? What are the critical support systems in your own life? What adjustments would you have to make if you did not have those support systems?
- (4) Mary had to deal with different cultures and traditions (e.g., bargaining, *manãna*, unfamiliar foods, etc.). Which of these would be the easiest for you to adjust to? Which would be the hardest?
- (5) Mary initially struggled with having to put most of her possessions into storage, but ultimately came to appreciate the benefits of “living small.” What experiences contributed to that change of view? How has your life experience influenced your sense of the importance of physical possessions — stuff— to your quality of life?
- (6) The highpoint of Mary’s journey came during the months crossing the Pacific. What factors contributed to the success of this part of the journey? What role do these factors play in your own life?
- (7) Mary notes repeatedly that the most critical elements of their life — the weather, the currents, or the location of submerged containers — were completely out of their control. In this sense, sailing serves as a metaphor for a world in which control is an illusion. Do you agree that control is an illusion? How does this metaphor apply to your own life?
- (8) One conclusion of the memoir is that life at sea is safer than life on dry land? Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
- (9) By the end of the memoir, Mary believes that leaving her successful life in New York— stepping outside her comfort zone— was the right thing to have done? Do you agree? Why or why not?