

Style Wise  
Expressing Your Unique Self

# REVIVING

by Carlene Cross

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**It's not too late to climb back onto the Mystic Highway  
and grab the rope around the Universe.**

In his recent single, "Mystic Highway," John Fogerty reminisces about his life of travel and adventure: "*This old road has been my lifeline, my companion and my friend, like a rope around the Universe, ain't no beginning, ain't no end.*"

It's vintage Fogerty.

I love his music; his soulful voice resurrects those Creedence Clearwater Revival days when my future seemed filled with heart-pounding possibilities.

During summer afternoons on our isolated farm, I'd grab my transistor radio and run across the rolling grassland to stand and gaze at the distant granite peaks, where collapsing homesteads dotted the desolate horizon like ships wrecked on a vast shoal. Foxglove and camas brushed my bare legs, as my little radio searched the airwaves for a station powerful enough to cross the Rockies. Like a POW, I'd strain to hear informed voices from the outside world, roaming the dial past whisperings and hissings. Then, like magic to me, John Fogerty and CCR would break through, "Playing in a Traveling Band."

I imagined such a life, seeing faraway places — Woodstock and Radio City Music Hall, touring Europe, sipping wine in a Paris café. I vowed to live like Fogerty, exploring exotic places, taking risks and tackling adventures.

I set out to do that as a Bible col-

lege student in the '70s. Filled with religious zeal, I lived in France and smuggled bibles into Eastern Europe. As a single mother, I enrolled in college and then graduate school. But somewhere after 50, I became frightened. I stopped traveling, downhill skiing and dance lessons. Tucked away in my safety, the excitement that had always accompanied my life began to vanish. Lying in bed one Saturday morning, I wondered why I no longer felt that youthful passion. Suddenly, the words to Fogerty's "Mystic Highway" came to mind.

I realized that I had abandoned my journey around the Universe. I had lost my sense of adventure.

Quest changes us, whether exotic travel, a dance class, or even a difficult crossword puzzle. Tackling novel experiences increases our happiness, gives us a positive outlook, and boosts our artistic and scientific creativity. (Steel, Schmidt and Shultz, 2008)

Matt Walker, author of *Adventure in Everything*, explains, "When we embrace life as an adventure, we tap into a deep source of energy, love, creativity and generosity." (Walker, 2011)

Walker believes adventure usually involves planning something currently out of reach, something that demands problem solving and creativity, something that is

## Sources:

Kotter, John. (2012). *The Heart of Change*. Harvard Business Review Press, 1<sup>st</sup> edition.

Steel, Pierre; Schmidt, Joseph, and Shultz, Jonas. (2008). "Refining the relationship between personality and Subjective well-being." *Psychological Bulletin*, 134 (1), 138-161.

Walker, Matt. (2011). *Adventure in Everything: How the Five Elements of Adventure Create a Life of Authenticity*. California: Hay House.



# G *the* QUEST

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physical, and/or something that requires a different skill set than what we currently possess.

Traveling is one way to set the stage for this dopamine blast Walker describes. When we take a trip, our senses are heightened — we smell, hear and see things we wouldn't notice at home. We experience the excitement of finding a market and ordering food in a language we barely speak, hailing a cab, eating new cuisine. Inserting ourselves into a new culture expands our world view. Students who study abroad develop better learning skills and a lifelong connection to, and understanding of, the country they visited. (Kotter, 2012)

Even if we can't travel, adventure is right at our fingertips. New experiences boost our brain power and protect us from neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and dementia.

## **Here's How:**

**Learn something new.** Study a foreign language, learn sign language, practice a musical instrument, read a good book, learn to play chess or cards, or take up a new hobby.

**Practice memorization.** Start with something short, progressing to something more involved, such as the 50 U.S. state capitals.

**Enjoy strategy games, puzzles and riddles.** Brain teasers and strategy games provide a great mental workout and build your capacity to form and retain cognitive associations.

**Follow the road less traveled.** Take a new route, eat with your nondominant hand, rearrange your computer file system. Vary your habits regularly to create new brain pathways.

I've decided to climb back on the Mystic Highway.

I've started a *Procence Fund* for 2015 and signed up for dance class. I feel joy returning to my body as I turn up

Fogerty and practice my eight-count step across the living room floor. Next year, I'll be ready to tango in St. Tropez. ♦

