



Only Pack What You Can Carry: My Path to Inner Strength, Confidence, and True Self-Knowledge

Janice Holly Booth

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Magnetically written by former CEO of a North Carolina Girl Scout Council and award winning CEO for the Western New York chapter of a national arts-in-education organization, this uniquely engaging travel journal describes four keys to unlocking personal and spiritual fulfillment: solitude, introspection, courage, and commitment. Through a series of compelling travel essays and deeply thoughtful memoirs, Janice Booth draws readers into each adventure—ranging from a solo hike through Northern California to galloping across the fields of Ireland to a short stint with the Circus Arts learning the flying trapeze—and shares her secrets to a fuller life through traveling alone. Step by step, she demonstrates why leaving everything—and everyone—behind for a few days (or more!) is the best path to inner strength, confidence, and true self-knowledge.

Only Pack What You Can Carry: My Path to Inner Strength, Confidence, and True Self-Knowledge Details

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Donna says

A bit to extreme for me. I don't agree that you need to push to such extremes to prove you are courageous. There are many everyday adventures that take a lot of courage. The first 100 pages too long and so was the ending 'epilogue'.

Marianna says

If Booth had stuck to memoir this would have been a five-star book. She has led an interesting and adventure filled life. The self-help parts came off as a little preachy. Her premise of getting people out of their comfort zone is a great one, but at the end I felt like the only way to gain inner strength, confidence and true self-knowledge was to go throw myself off a mountain, high wire platform or out of an airplane! One, I can't afford to do any of those things, and, two, every single one of them is so far out of my comfort zone as to be in another stratosphere! My point being: I enjoyed reading about the experiences she had and the insights she gained through them...those insights just needed to stay personal. She didn't need to tell me what I was supposed to get from her insight.

Tamela Rich says

Janice is so insightful and honest. Great wisdom from a traveler and student of life.

Alli Brook says

I LOVE this book! On a 5-star rating system, I give it a 10! For the first time in my life, I finished a book and started re-reading it again. It's packed with humor, authenticity, inspiration and excitement - just like life should be! Janice's writing voice reads like a best friend wonderfully lost in a long and deeply fulfilling conversation. Her life stories are encouraging me to honor my vulnerability, be real, and turn fear of regret into motivation.

Ide says

Every woman going through a mid-life crisis should read this book.

Bobbi says

Dead-on with her description of solitude and clarity of mind (though not extremely useful when one has small children), the idea of doing what you fear is great for jump starting those who are too cautious in life and feel they're missing out on life. Intimate, fireside tone. Definitely worth reading.

Toni says

I really enjoyed this book. I won it through first-reads - the book giveaway. We follow the author on her personal journeys - hiking, canyoneering, dog sledding, etc and along the way we are shown ways to be courageous and introspective.

Joe Flood says

Janice Holly Booth is an adventurista who has followed her own path through life. An independent spirit, she's not one to let other people tell her what to do. Whether it's a dangerous adventure in the wilderness or managing a nonprofit organization, she's had the courage to stick to her guns. This would be a great book for young women, encouraging them to do more than they ever thought possible.

Alisa Kester says

Even though I continued on for a few more chapters (finally giving up due to excessive and extreme preachiness), she really lost me on page 48.

You see, earlier she'd barely managed to survive a couple of nearly fatal incidences (one a horse-riding accident, one a bout with disease) by willing herself to stay alive because "this was not how she wanted to die". Then she travels to Costa Rica, where she ends up riding a half-wild crazed horse through ocean surf while wearing a swimsuit and dangling a sarong behind her with one hand. This was to capture the perfect photograph for an advertising campaign. She's terrified she's going to fall, she's in physical pain, and she can't get the horse into the desired gallop, because she knows if she does, she might actually be killed.

And then she realizes: dying to capture an advertising campaign's photo is a "worthy exit", somehow completely unlike dying in her previous horse-related accident, or dying of a disease. Upon which realization, she loses all fear and opens herself up to the experience.

Whatever.

Janet Beach says

I found this book very inspiring. I found myself jotting down these hikes and adventures she had embarked

out on. It filled me with excitement for all natures beauty and grandeur I have left to see. She is resilient and a survivor. Someone who won't let her collective experiences (bad and good) prevent her from being happy and ultimately living the life that is fulfilling for her. I want that. And to know age is no limit makes me even more hopeful for what time can tell. Life is constantly changing; change is the only constant.

Erin says

I was ultimately disappointed in this book. I started out really enjoying the author's story; I loved that she had been a plucky little girl who loved horses and adventure, and that she was looking to reconnect with that part of herself as a grown woman. She has an interesting life story. But she lost me when she strayed away from her own insights and experiences to give background on famous historical figures, from John Muir to Mother Teresa. Those parts felt like filler to me, as did the exercises at the end of each section. She also spent too much time on some adventures and not enough on others, and she wasn't clear about chronology. At one point in the book she has an epiphany – after losing her job – that she wants to take time off to travel the world. I was excited to read about that journey, but she never wrote of it again. I found that hugely disappointing. I love reading about people who leave it all behind to explore the world, so I felt seriously let down that she didn't share that experience, if it even ever happened. I guess we'll never know. There was also less actual travel in this book than I had assumed, considering it's a National Geographic book. Most of her trips are within the U.S.

Catie says

This book was chosen as a book club read with my friend Carrie. I have kind of a closet addiction to self help/improvement books, and since this dealt with traveling, which is one of my great loves, I thought that this sounded like an intriguing book. It was okay. This book was definitely a quick read...partly because I found myself skimming over parts of the book. I found the personal stories and narrative of the author captivating and left with wanting more. I got sucked into her personal experiences in the slot canyons of Utah, and dog sledding in Minnesota. But, when it came to the sections where she talked about the importance of and how to obtain the strength and courage to obtain the chapter themes of her book: Courage, Solitude, Introspection & Commitment I found myself losing interest and skimming. I would have marked this book with a higher rating if it was based more on her memoir of personal travels, etc. Ms. Booth seems to have led a very interesting and exciting life, and I would have liked to read more about these adventures.

Leigh says

A nice reminder to enjoy solitude, introspective thinking, and do things often that scare you. Courage is a muscle and should be used regularly to actually build strength so that when fear shows up, you can use your courage to push through to the other side. Another reason to make sure to do things by yourself, sit in your own silence and get to that place where you can really be honest with yourself and think about the big questions in life. I really enjoyed this book!

Tj says

Engaging, stimulating, and thought provoking. This book is for everyone who desires to live life fully. Not a packing list, but four essentials to carry with you through life's journey. A great gift for everyone in your life -- young and old -- who are finding their way. I don't plan on traveling alone, but I will use these four tools to find clarity in my life whenever I need to.

Kristin Laura says

I was really excited when I won this book, because I enjoy travelling and reading about travel, and I have traveled alone (something possessed me to up and move to Finland for 6 months when I was 21). However, as I read the book, I began to realize the book was more of the self-help genre than adventure/travel. This was a surprise considering the book is published by National Geographic.

The first chapter is Baggage; this is not to be confused with Luggage. There were no tips on how to pack; instead, Ms. Booth shares her personal and emotional baggage, and boy does she have a wealth of that. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), I could not relate to her sad life experiences. The next chapter was Courage, and here is what I was looking for...a story of adventure. Ms. Booth's telling of her rappel into the slot canyons of Utah was very compelling, yet still tinged with a bit of negativity (the poor woman is just a magnet for dislikable characters).

The remaining chapters Solitude, Introspection and Commitment continued on with the theme of finding yourself and changing your life interspersed with a few travel adventures (dog sledding and trapeze school). There are even exercises at the end of each chapter to help you practice the concepts Ms. Booth has presented. I also learned some interesting facts about John Muir, Mother Teresa, Everett Ruess, and Terry Fox.

I thoroughly enjoyed the travel writing, but the rest of the book was too self-centered and preachy for my liking.
