

A scenic landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the left, creating a bright sunburst effect with rays of light extending across the sky and over a valley. The valley is filled with green vegetation, including trees and cacti. In the background, there are several jagged mountain peaks silhouetted against the orange and purple sky.

ADVENTURE
Calls

Sharon Canfield Dorsey

Road Tripping

IN THE COVID-19 ERA

Hi. I'm Sharon.

I am a poet and author of four children's books, a memoir, two books of poetry, and a travel book. I am also a Mary Kay Sales Director of forty years.

I grew up in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia, a coal miner's daughter. You can read about those early experiences in my memoir, *Daughter of the Mountains*.

I married my high school sweetheart at nineteen. Seventeen years and two children later, the marriage ended, leaving me with a son, Steven, 9, and a daughter, Shannon, 4, to raise alone.



Writing has always helped me cope with life's challenges. As a single parent, I poured my joys and frustrations into journals that became poetry books, *Tapestry*; and *Walk with Me*. Children's stories became picture books, *Revolt of the Teacups*; *Buddy and Ballerina Save the Library*; and *Buddy the Bookworm Rescues the Doomed Books*.

I met my soulmate/husband #2 on a blind date. For twenty years, we camped and hiked our way through the U. S., Canada, and British Columbia. Don was a photographer so we collaborated on travel stories and I published a travel memoir, *Road Trip*, chronicling our adventures.

A mysterious encounter with hermit crabs on a trip to the British Virgin Islands became a children's book, *Herman the Hermit Crab and the Mystery of the Big, Black, Shiny Thing*, dedicated to my three grandchildren.

Words tell the tales of where we've been but can also carry us to the places we'd like to go next. Words are my tools as I visualize each new chapter of my life and expectantly, turn the next page



We are all tired of looking at the insides of our refrigerators and maybe, just a little tired of looking at the same humans, day after day. If you have kids, it's a given the natives are restless!

In this little book, I hope to give you some ways of escaping both your domain AND the COVID-19 virus.

Come along and explore with me!



Solution 1 - Day Trips

A trip to a county or state park. Pack sandwiches in your backpack, get out your hiking shoes, carry some mosquito repellent, wear/carry your mask (depending on the activity on the trail). Keep track of the birds you see and have a little prize for the “restless native” who spots the most. It could start a whole new interest in bird watching.

Check out the botanical gardens in your area. Mine includes zip-lining and obstacle courses. I find week days are less crowded and early mornings cooler and more comfortable. Don't forget to carry water. Take photos of plant and moss specimens to identify later.

Is there a ferry close by that might carry you to an area you don't always frequent? The ferry ride itself is fun for kids. Be sure to carry bread crumbs to feed the sea gulls. Do some research to find family-friendly restaurants with outdoor seating on the other side or pack a picnic lunch.

Research outdoor museums/experiences within a day's drive. I was surprised at the variety – farm museums showcasing day-in-the-life of an earlier time; a “learn about llamas” experience, including feeding, petting and a gift shop complete with caps and sweaters made from their wool; a “day at the orchard” offering where you can pick your own apples, strawberries, blueberries, depending on the season. The list goes on...



TIPS FOR DAY TRIPPING:

1. Don't hike alone, especially in unfamiliar territory. Take a friend. If you insist on going alone, tell someone where you're going.
2. When hiking, carry plenty of water, food, and a charged phone.
3. If your day trip includes children, leave their devices at home, no matter how much they kick and scream. Carry easy-to-eat snacks, drinks and extra masks, in case one gets misplaced.
4. Always carry a small First Aid Kit in the car or, if you're hiking, in your backpack. Scratches, skinned knees are inevitable.
5. Tell the kids ahead of time, "We're going to make a book when we get home, with stories and drawings of our trip, so be watching for fun things to write or draw later."

Be sure to follow through the next day. By the end of summer, they can have a series of travel books of their own.





Fill your life
with adventures,
not things.

FINNISH PROVERB

Solution #2: Overnight or weekend trips

We're all a little suspicious of hotels or bed and breakfasts these days. More and more families are turning or returning to camping as a get-away solution. Small tents can be inexpensive, easy to put up on a campsite and compact to carry in the car. I suggest trying it out in the backyard first. Put up your tent, pile in with kids and sleeping bags and see what happens.

Some of my fondest childhood memories are our family camping trips...sitting outside under the stars at night, learning the constellations by gazing up at the actual constellations, instead of looking at them in a book; toasting marshmallows over the campfire; waking up to the aroma of bacon sizzling in the skillet...treats for the senses that build forever family memories.





TIPS FOR OVERNIGHT/WEEK-END CAMPING TRIPS

1. Begin your adventures at a park nearby to avoid a long car trip.
2. Plan meals that are simple to cook and easy/safe to store in an ice chest – sandwich fixings, fruit, hot dogs you can cook over the campfire. If you invest in a small camp stove, you increase your choices.
3. Choose a park with bathrooms and showers. Carry shower shoes for everyone and spray down the shower with a disinfecting product before stepping in. Also, spray the toilets and sinks. Too much trouble? Small price to pay for a healthy family!
4. Remember that First Aid Kit from your day trips? Be sure to take it, along with those extra masks, just in case.



Solution #3: On-the-road vacation trips

Camping is fun for a day or two but if you're itching for a longer get away, travel trailers or motor homes are your best bet. First, decide where you want to go and how long you want to be on the road. If you want to go to one place and stay there for your vacation and you have a vehicle that can pull a trailer, that's a good choice. You can park it, leave it, and go out for day adventures.

If "gypsying" is your dream, then a small motor home is a better choice. In my book, Road Trip, I share some of the joys and adventures of the open road – of just going where the road takes you, staying as long as you want in one place, then moving on to the next surprise around the bend.

I don't suggest going out and buying a motor home. Rent one, take it out for a short trip and see how you feel about driving it, sleeping in it, etc. If it feels like a fit, rent it again and take a longer trip. Only then, consider that big purchase.





THE ADVANTAGES OF MOTOR HOME TRAVEL

The advantages to traveling in a motor home are many, especially today, with so many safety issues to consider.

1. You can clean and disinfect it yourself – know it's safe.
2. You can unpack once and have everything you need easily available.
3. You can carry your own food, cook in your own kitchen and eat at your own table.
4. You have your own bathroom, no worries about someone else's germs left behind.
5. You have most of the conveniences of home – television, if you want it; complete kitchen, though a bit miniaturized; a comfortable bed; plus, any view you choose.
6. Gas is relatively inexpensive at the moment. Rental fees plus gas can be less expensive than a hotel room and eating out every day. You also eliminate the headaches of reservations and having to be in a certain place at a certain time.
7. You can have a different view of the stars every night and a new adventure ahead every morning.



MORE ADVICE FOR THE NOVICE TRAVELER

1. Pack your RV light. Just because there are closets doesn't mean you have to fill them. Remember, you will need room for the treasures you find along the way.
2. If you are active duty or retired military, there are lots of campgrounds, RV parks, hotels, etc. especially for you and your family. Do your research and take advantage of them.
3. There are designated wilderness areas all across the country that allow free camping. They do not have power hook-ups and some have size limitations for RV's. That's why a smaller vehicle is a good choice, to have the flexibility. Some scenic roads also have size limitations.
4. State and National Parks are your friends – beautiful scenery, nice people and cheaper fees than privately operated camping areas.
5. Most campgrounds and RV parks have laundry facilities and small grocery stores for your convenience, although, it never seemed fair to me, that you still have to do laundry on vacation.
6. Carry all medications you will need AND a good First Aid Kit for those unexpected scratches and upset stomachs.
7. Stay in touch with family or friends. Someone should know where you are, especially if you're wilderness camping.



8. Keep a journal. You think you will remember everything you saw and did but you won't, so write it down.

9. Learn everything you can about your destination before you get there. Your research will save you time and money plus reward you with intriguing, little-known sites to explore.

10. Don't be reluctant to travel with children. They are little sponges who will soak up images and experiences. It will be so much easier for them to fall in love with our beautiful country when they've visited its mountains, rivers and deserts. What they love, they will preserve. Preservation of and respect for our land is an important lesson we must teach the next generation. It is, undoubtedly, the most valuable legacy we can leave.



SHARON'S GUIDE TO

Lessons Learned

on the road

PATRIOTISM IS ALIVE!

I learned the Pennsylvania Dutch and Amish farm families around Lancaster Co., Pa., know how to celebrate Independence Day. Small flags wave in neat rows across their lawns. Red, white and blue bunting decorates their porches and advertises their patriotism. They gather together for ice cream socials and picnics, and their children know the true meaning of this most important holiday.



CORN, CORN, EVERYWHERE...

The cornfields of Kansas look very much like those of Iowa and Nebraska. But South Dakota rewards the weary traveler with shining fields of golden sunflowers, stretching for miles into the horizon.

RV PARKS AND ART GALLERIES...

RV parks are as varied as the vehicles parked there. Our overnight homes ranged from lush parks to concrete pads. My favorite was a small, quiet campground in Grants Pass, Oregon. It was an outdoor art gallery, with whimsical sculptures and wood carvings, all crafted and shared with much pride by the owner.



ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL -- NOT ALWAYS...

Sadly, many Native Americans on the Sioux, Crow and Navaho reservations still exist in squalor and poverty.

Rusting car bodies litter the parched yards of small, square-box houses in need of paint. Faded laundry bakes on sagging lines in the boiling sun. Jobs are difficult to find and young people leave school too soon. Drug and alcohol addiction are commonplace. A lucky few escape to college. Some return to the reservation to help the hopeless.



LIVELY GHOST TOWNS...

As we wandered through Wyoming, I discovered that sage-brush can be as boring as Kansas cornfields. But here, the names of the cities kept my imagination awake and working overtime - Sundance, Buffalo, Billings and Bighorn evoked images of Indian battles and Gold Rush towns.

WHAT IF???



In Montana, I was surprised to learn that eleven Indian tribes live on reservations in this state-the Crow, Blackfeet, Flathead, Northern Cheyenne, Assiniboine, Sioux, Gros Ventre, Chippewa, Cree, Salish, and Kootenai.

One has to wonder how different our crowded, polluted land would be today if these eco-conscious people had been allowed to remain on their own lands, caring for them and about them.

PRICELESS TRIVIA...

Kansas and Missouri filled my journal with trivia jewels.

...The Barbed Wire Museum in LaCrosse, Kansas, features more than 500 different types of the prickly stuff. Who knew??

...Only Rome, Italy has more fountains than Kansas City, Missouri. It also claims the dubious honor of having built America's first shopping center.

...If you're having a less than wonderful family vacation and want to lose the kids for a while, the corn maze in Buhler, Kansas is the place to go. They do, however, insist that you collect them before dark.



PARADISE FOUND...

On the Oregon coast, I delighted in deserted beaches, reminding me of something important I'd forgotten in my busy life at home. Solitude is good for the soul. Forever etched in my memory is a sunset, so breathtakingly beautiful, I thought, "If I were to die here, in this place, in this perfect moment," it would be OK. Everyone should have a moment like that.



WHY ARE WE CUTTING OLD GROWTH TREES?

The towering redwoods in Northern California taught me a valuable lesson in humility. How insignificant our life span, compared to the 2000+ life span of the great trees. What stories they could tell and how sad so few remain. The mountains above the coast have been devastated by loggers. That's a lesson I wish I hadn't learned.

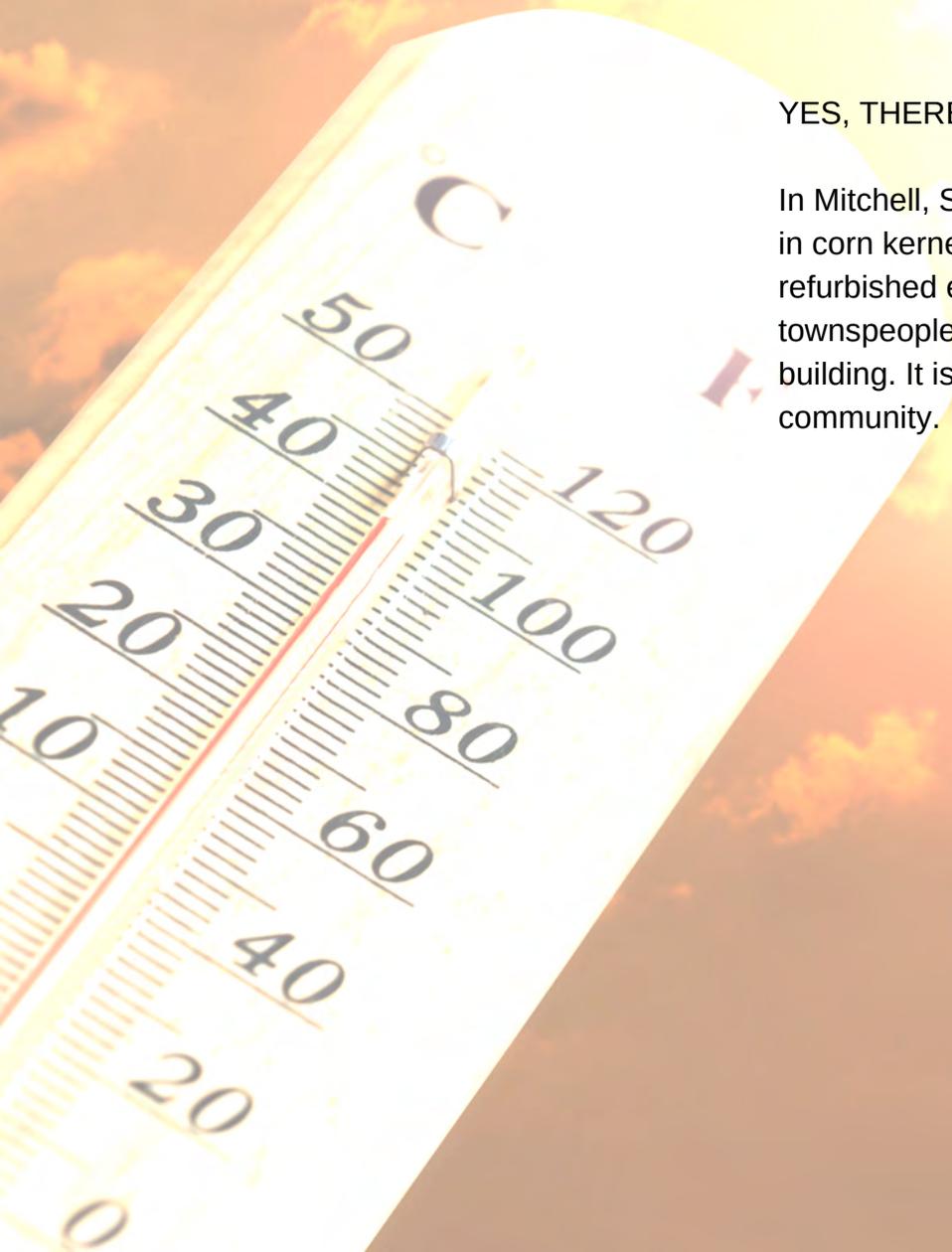


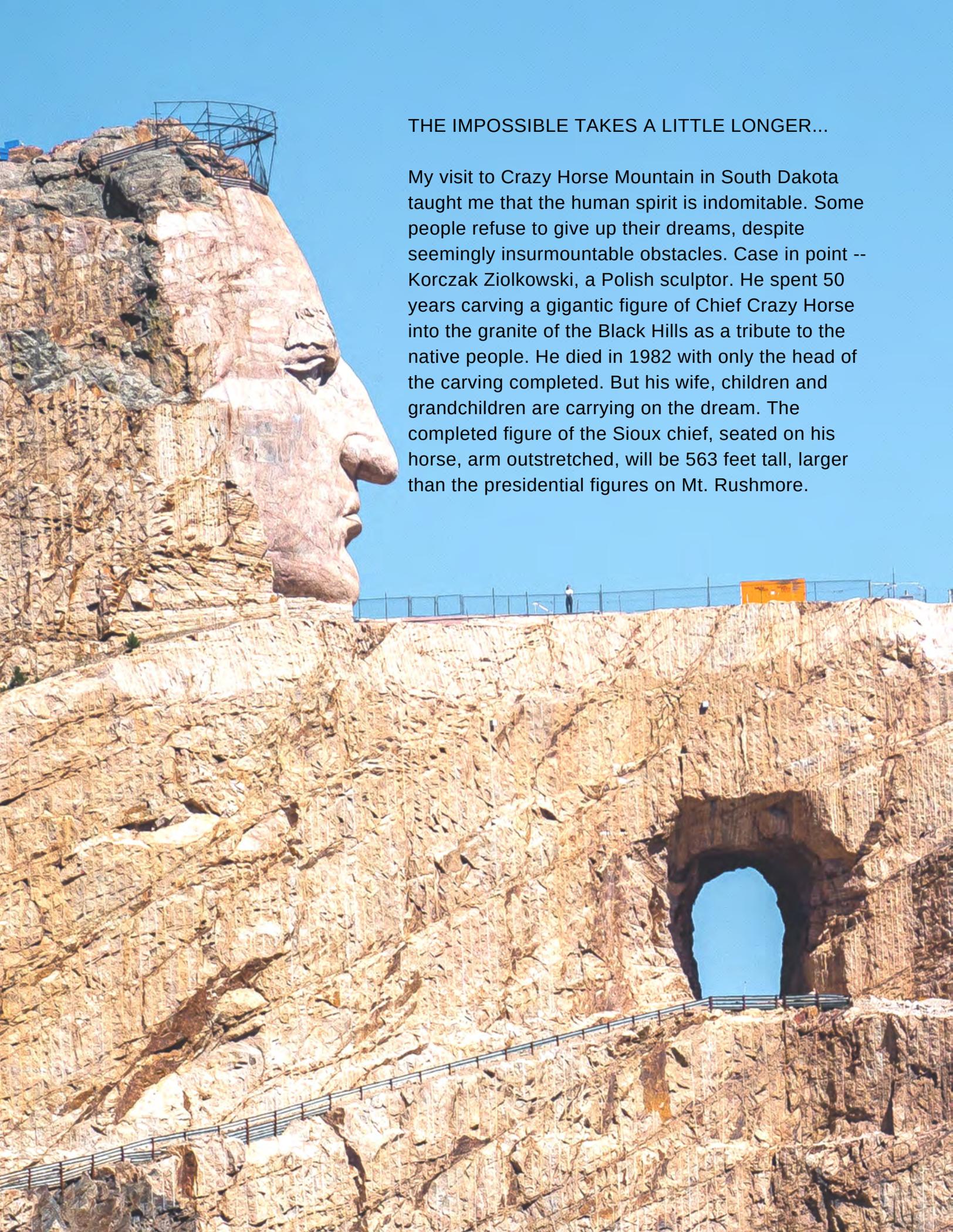
IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE WEATHER, JUST WAIT...

I learned to appreciate 55 degrees in Washington and Oregon after 105 degrees in Iowa and Nebraska. I even learned to like cold showers in unheated bathhouses inhabited by tiny lizards. Well, almost.

YES, THERE REALLY IS A CORN PALACE...

In Mitchell, S. D., there is a magnificent palace covered in corn kernels and multi-hued corn husks. It is refurbished every year with a new design. The townspeople work for weeks to create this remarkable building. It is an expression of pride in their farming community.





THE IMPOSSIBLE TAKES A LITTLE LONGER...

My visit to Crazy Horse Mountain in South Dakota taught me that the human spirit is indomitable. Some people refuse to give up their dreams, despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Case in point -- Korczak Ziolkowski, a Polish sculptor. He spent 50 years carving a gigantic figure of Chief Crazy Horse into the granite of the Black Hills as a tribute to the native people. He died in 1982 with only the head of the carving completed. But his wife, children and grandchildren are carrying on the dream. The completed figure of the Sioux chief, seated on his horse, arm outstretched, will be 563 feet tall, larger than the presidential figures on Mt. Rushmore.

CHART YOUR PATH

Planning Worksheets



MAKE A LIST OF THE POSSIBLE DAY TRIPS IN YOUR AREA. Use the worksheets and checklists to determine possibilities for day trips in your area.

MAKE A LIST OF THE OVERNIGHT/WEEK-END POSSIBILITIES. Use the worksheets and checklists to determine possibilities for day trips in your area. Take into consideration the following:

ON-THE-ROAD VACATION TRIPS

Where have you always wanted to go?

How long can you be away?

How much \$\$\$\$ do you have to spend?

Tent Camping? Pros and cons.

Trailer or motor home? Size? Pros and cons.

Borrow, rent, or purchase?

What to pack?

Clothing, Food, snacks, drinks, Medicine,

First Aid Kit

Books, games, CD's, DVD's, devices

Journal for each person

REMINDER: Tell someone where you're going. Check in daily with that person.



Where to Go Day Trips

Distance, Cost and Equipment

Trip One (First Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment needed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trip Two (Second Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment needed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trip Three (Third Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment needed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put an X next to the trips that are appropriate for children (if applicable)



Where to Go Day Trips

Distance, Cost and Equipment

Trip Four (Fourth Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment needed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trip Five (Fifth Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment needed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trip Six (Sixth Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment needed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put an X next to the trips that are appropriate for children (if applicable)



Where to Go Overnight/Weekend Trips

Distance, Cost and Equipment

Trip One (First Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)

Cost (Admission Fees, Food, Hotel, etc.)

Equipment (Buy, borrow, or rent trailer, tent, motorhome)

Trip Two (Second Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)

Cost (Admission Fees, Food, Hotel, etc.)

Equipment (Buy, borrow, or rent trailer, tent, motorhome)

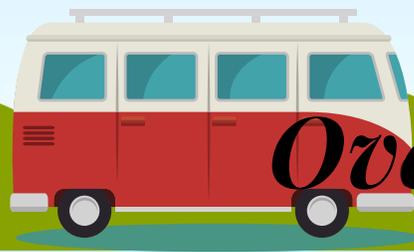
Trip Three (Third Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)

Cost (Admission Fees, Food, Hotel, etc.)

Equipment (Buy, borrow, or rent trailer, tent, motorhome)

Put an X next to the trips that are appropriate for children (if applicable)



Where to Go Overnight/Weekend Trips

Distance, Cost and Equipment

Trip Four (Fourth Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, Hotel, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment (Buy, borrow, or rent trailer, tent, motorhome)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trip Five (Fifth Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, Hotel, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment (Buy, borrow, or rent trailer, tent, motorhome)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trip Six (Sixth Choice) _____

Distance (Round Trip)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost (Admission Fees, Food, Hotel, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment (Buy, borrow, or rent trailer, tent, motorhome)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put an X next to the trips that are appropriate for children (if applicable)

Where to Go On-The-Road Vacation Trips



Where have you always wanted to go?

How long can you be away?

How much \$\$\$ do you have to spend?

Lodging

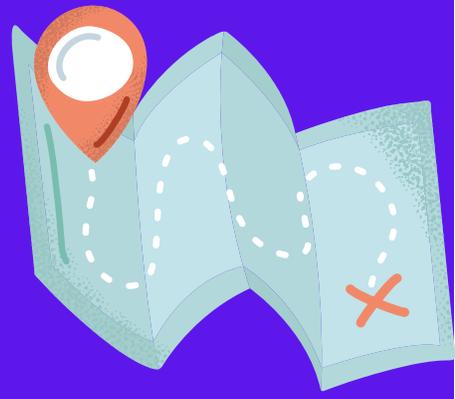
Tent Camping

Pros:

Cons:



Where to Go On-The-Road Vacation Trips



Lodging

Trailer or Motorhome

Pros:

Cons:

Borrow? _____ Cost? _____ Size Available: _____

Rent? _____ Cost? _____ Size Available: _____

Purchase _____ Cost? _____ Size Available: _____

Other Considerations

Gas: _____ Trailer Park Fees: _____

Other: _____

Where to Go On-The-Road Vacation Trips



What to Pack

Clothing

Books, games, CD's, DVD's,
devices

Food, Snacks, Drinks

Medicine, First Aid Kit

List of phone numbers for family, credit card companies, insurance companies (in case of accident, theft, loss)

Journal for each person. This is a great way to remember the places and things you liked about the trip, but also to keep a list of things you might want to do differently next time.)

Suggestion: Think about assigning chores to each family members so the burden of packing and maintenance during the trip does not fall on just one person. Make it a true **family** experience.



Thank You...

I met my soulmate late in life. He was retired and I wanted to be. We packed our gypsy bags and never looked back. Together, we discovered the joys of the open road...of sleeping under the stars...climbing mountains just because they're there...of always being curious about what's around the next bend. We took the roads less traveled and it did make all the difference.

Time gives and time takes away. I encourage you to trade time for experiences – wade in crystal clear streams...see a full moon riding high over the painted desert...watch whales play in a deserted black sand beach...explore the glorious Southwest and walk in the footprints of our indigenous ancestors. Adventure awaits you around every curve of the road.

Visit my website at www.SharonCanfieldDorsey to keep updated on my books, travels, blogs and giveaways.

*Warmly,
Sharon*

