



## *“The Wisdom of Uncertainty”*

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*“Don’t worry about tomorrow, as today is the tomorrow, you were worried about yesterday”*

- Dale Carnegie

Framed on my desk, I stared at this quote for many years, more a muse than anything else, until the day I found out, I was being made redundant.

Far from being amusing, I considered the absurdity of not worrying about what happens next, when all I could see in front of me was uncertainty, fueled by the knowledge, I was no longer wanted, or worst still, surplus to requirements! A used battery, simply being thrown away.

This sense of being spent, followed me for several weeks, as I dealt with the reality, of daytime TV, pyjamas becoming some kind of indoor 'utility wear', and Cornflakes, being OK - at three o'clock in the afternoon!

Facing up to depression, however it finds its way into your life, was something I was a stranger to. So, owning up to that fact and the state of paralysis it brought with it, was not only new to me, it also came with moments of sheer terror.

So, imagine my surprise, six weeks on from "Cornflakes Gate", the universe would conspire, to have me standing on the edge of a boat, in the middle of the Caribbean ocean, about to take a giant stride, into the deep blue unknown! The previous six weeks, having concluded my PADI open water diver indoor training. Sun, sea, and sand having been deemed a better alternative to daytime TV, as a means of figuring out what I was going to do next.

The irony was not lost on me; I went from being unsure about my future career and finding another job, to being worried about my immediate survival.

Having no other reference point for what I was now attempting, I was faced with a startling reality check! I had no other choice than to simply trust myself, or otherwise, let the enormity and level of uncertainty I was experiencing, consume my very being.

This led to my second discovery, whilst staring into the abyss of the deepest blue I had ever seen, I was in fact on my own thirty feet below the surface! Being the first to descend after entering the sea and make my way down the anchor chain as instructed. My dive party of three (a father and his eldest son of eighteen and youngest daughter of twelve) were in some form of difficulty a few feet into their descent. Whether through the sheer panic that makes itself known or the complexity of convincing your mind, this is still a good idea, stuck they were, hanging onto the anchor chain as the, best idea they could come up with.

The minutes ticked by for each one noted by the increasing feelings of uncertainty, I felt hard to contain. It what seemed like an eternity, as all my doubts and fears of the last couple of months, was reflected back at me with each breath. A glassy blue and green reflection from the seemingly unending abyss, now my only companion and witness to my plight.

It was with great relief when I would feel the shadow of the dive master looming above me, before then noticing the blond hair of the twelve-year-old he was with, the only other dive student that made it down. The two other members of her family, now safely back on the boat. It was also then made clear to me, that I was now to look after her, as the only two student divers alongside the divemaster.

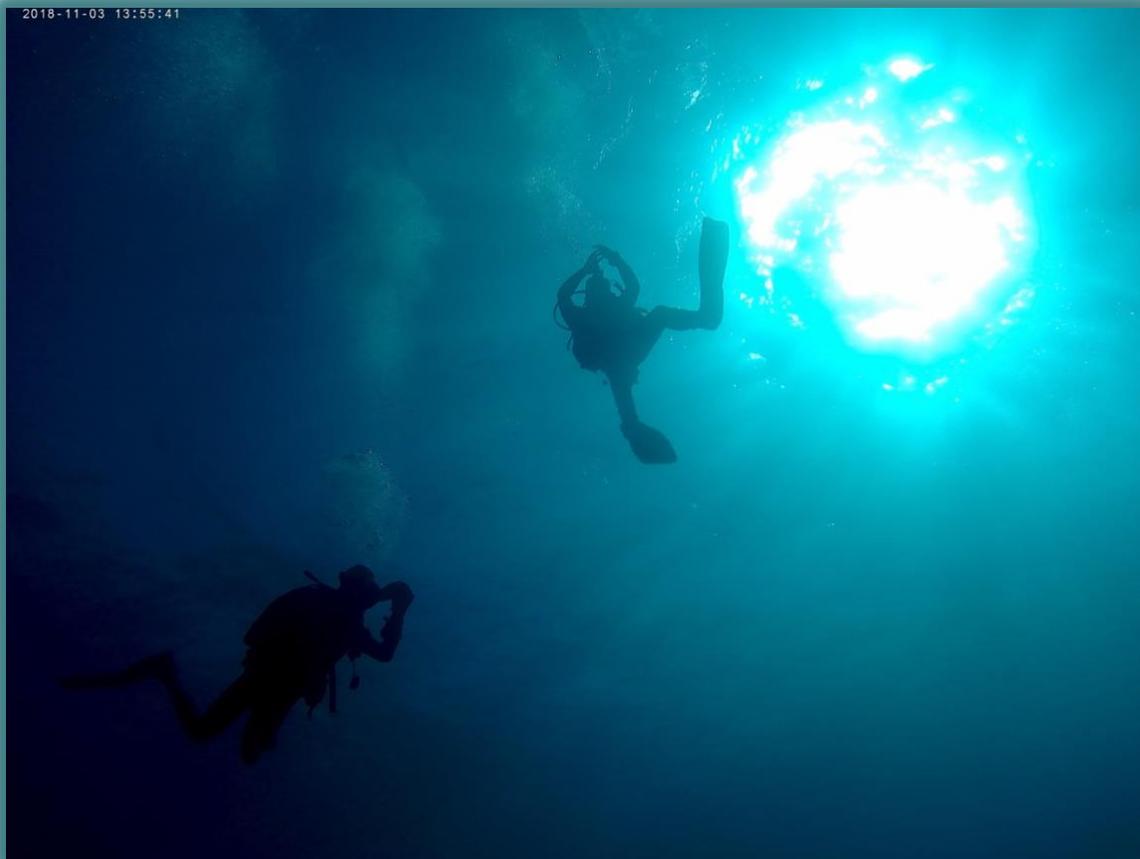
My state of unease far from being alleviated by the fact I was no longer alone, felt like an additional weight, labeled 'responsibility', which I had no way of communicating or understanding, other than feeling its presence. It was at that moment of deepest uncertainty, I felt a young hand take mine and gently attract my attention, in order to ask me, in sign language, was I ok? To which I gave, the universal horizontal hand gesture, moving from side to side, to indicate, I was far from ok, (having not yet learned the sign for, HELL NO!!). A few moments later, I would feel again the sensation of my young companion, this time, ever so gently, rubbing her little hand over mine, in an attempt to comfort my disquiet. Wow, if ever there was a moment of profound clarity, it was this one. Instead of my internal machinations of uncertainty and doubt on the past, I was dragged into the present, by a twelve-year-old!

Her view of the world, pointing out a field of colour teeming with fishes of all shapes and sizes and stripes, spots and mercurial habits, the beauty of where we were through the eyes of a child.

When I now exhaled, I not only let go of the air in my lungs but with it, the doubt, fear and anxiety, I had bottled up since being let go from my job. It was in that moment, I also let go of the past and became present within my own skin and understood, I was alive and well, not defined by what I do for a living, but what I do with the rest of the life I live.

And far from worrying about tomorrow, I was filled with gratitude for being alive that day, in that moment of serenity.

I never saw the young girl after that dive, yet some plus thirteen years on from our meeting, the memory of her has been with me every dive since, and the wisdom contained within that period likewise.



Trust thyself', 'focus' on what you can influence, and above all else, appreciate the life one lives, is underpinned by the 'choices we make' on a consistent basis. Regardless of context or circumstance, there is an untapped reservoir of power within each of us, rooted in the eyes of our younger selves, able to support those choices. Yet, the courage to use that power can reside in our willingness to simply just let go and be present to the here and now.

**End of Insight**

