

DIANA
NYAD

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Full Moon in Key West

Published August 22, 2013



Full moon over Key West tonight.

My lifelong “soul mate”, dearheart Candace, in her inimitable, poetic way, writes me today to say four full moons cast their light in our skies between the Solstice of June 2013 and the Equinox of September 2013.



This renders tonight’s Full Moon a “Blue Moon”Candace adds, with a touch of magical thinking, that my Cuba Swim may become reality: “So if there’s ever been time for ‘once in a blue moon’.....this could be it!”



Thank you, Candace....for always whispering the right words, at the right time, past the moon and to my ears!!

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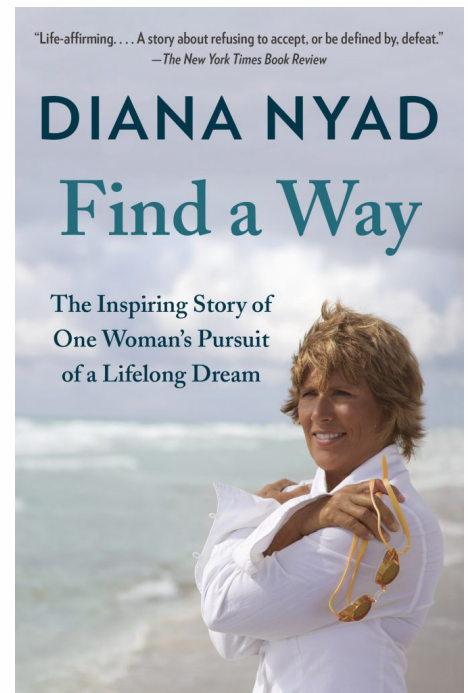
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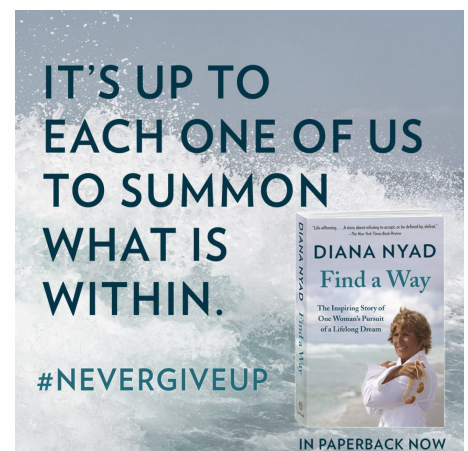
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Thank You Secret

Published August 20, 2013

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We the public are no doubt skeptical about the sincerity of the relationship between a brand sponsor and an athlete. The athlete wears the logo, gets financial compensation, and the brand gets exposure...and hopefully a boost in sales. We have no idea if the athlete truly believes in the brand, except perhaps in cases where the athlete literally uses that product in competition, as in a particular tennis racquet.



My fiercely loyal sponsor for the Cuba Swim, four years running now, never a hesitation, is [Secret](#). The brand president, Jason Palasz, never leans on me to promote them, to tout their product. He constantly writes me notes, saying how inspired and proud they are to be behind such a fearless person, such a bold quest. **#FearlessNyad**

Their marketing executives make sure we have our Team shirts and give us nothing but heartfelt support.



These are human beings, the Secret folks, who want their children to witness our **Xtream Dream** and want similar inspiration for their own lives. Sure, let's not kid

ourselves, they want to sell product...lots of it...but they are absolutely sincere about the purpose of their Fearless marketing campaign.

Secret stands for something....living a valiant life.

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9 Dec 2021

are sincere in their backing of my living such a life.

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Let me ask you.....what companies/brands can you think of who stand by an athlete, even when they don't win, time after time after time. I have not yet succeeded in the Cuba crossing. Yet Secret stands there right by my side, proud of my and my Team's dauntless commitment, champions of our unwavering resolution....and still believes the our moment to reach that other shore will be ours.



Thank you, Secret. My appreciation of your support equals your high regard for this Xtreme Dream of mine.



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The Intense Focus of Pickles

Published August 16, 2013



The Pickles has put on this year's Xtreme Dream shirt and assures me she is intently focused on bringing the winds around to the South.....or calming the seas altogether.... thanks Pickles, for your positive retriever vibes!!!

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Dreaming Large in Xtreme Dream Gear

Published August 16, 2013



You bolster our Team's spirits when you purchase [Xtreme Dream Gear](#) (and send us images of yourselves, proudly sporting the shirts and hats).

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9 Dec 2021

Against all odds, we still believe we're going at long last to make it all the way across from Cuba to Florida.

More than this particular Expedition, though, is our belief that a life of Dreaming Large is a life of meaning and fulfillment. We post YOUR Dreams on our site. We want you to wear your Xtreme Dream gear, not only in support of us and our Quests, but with the bold statement on YOUR part that you are striving, you are inspired, you are chasing your very own Xtreme Dreams.

AND....this year we give a percentage of our proceeds to the victims of Hurricane Sandy, to culminate in a unique swimming event we're holding in NYC on the anniversary of that storm, this October....check out this video for more info and follow us via Twitter [@diananyad](#) and Like us on [Facebook](#) as we get ready to go to Havana....and then as we swim in the middle of New York City Oct 8-10. **ONWARD, my friends... ONWARD!!**

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◀ 09 ▶
2020 2021 2022
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Life A-Z

Published August 14, 2013

Kitsch art...not usually my thing but this piece, clever, titled LIFE A-Z, hits truth all the way down LIFE values, each one, I could personally live by.

What do you think?



LIFE A-Z

ART

BALANCE

CHOICES

DREAMS

EDUCATOIN

FREEDOM

GOALS

HEALTH

IDEALS

JOY

KNOWLEDGE

LOVE

MUSIC

NATURE

OPEN

PLAY

QUALITY

RESPECT

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9 Dec 2021

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09



2020

2021

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Week 8, Optimism Begins

Published August 14, 2013



So the other day I posted a blog titled "[Infinitude](#)", sprung from a photograph and a Pablo Neruda poem on the wall in the cottage where I'm staying in Key West.

The gist of the blog was the profound reverence for both our Universe and our human condition that wells up when immersed in the sea for these long, long hours.

But deep emotions exist in layers. Along with the high's that touch my very soul about this unique journey of preparing for the epic Swim from Cuba, there are doubts and anxieties and fears.

Today marks the end of my 7th week here in Key West. I was ready to go, at the physical and mental peak, the day I arrived. The first 5 weeks, I was strong, happy, confident, ready, imagining and excited about every inch of the effort. Who knows? Maybe I was naive to think I could

maintain that emotional adrenaline for such an extended period. Week 6 I started to lose the edge. And this week, while I was muttering

surface positive mantras, my inner core was struggling with upheaval.

1 capture
9 Dec 2021

NOV DEC JAN
◀ 09 ▶
2020 2021 2022
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It all came to a climax last night. 2am I awoke in a panic. Then came a flood of tears. Wrote and read and walked the streets until daylight. How could I let myself, she of iron will, go down with the terror of "what if's"? What if we never get our weather window? This is the end of the journey. I am not coming back in 2014. What if....my beautiful Dream is crushed?

Bonnie called: *"I've told you this all through the years. It's a waste of time and emotion to worry about what might...or might not....come to pass. The winds will switch in our favor. Believe it. And stop worrying about it."*

My navigator and great friend John Bartlett called: *"The real adversary here is the potentially debilitating waiting game. Take it head on, kick its ass. Don't let anything diminish you from being 100%. Growl and stay focused."*

And then, I went to visit the actual artist who created the Neruda "Infinitude" piece, who had contacted me after seeing the blog. Her name is **Kim Narenkivicius**. And, as often happens to us at desperate junctures of emotional vulnerability, sitting with Kim and her studio full of inspiring art was exactly what I needed on this day.

For instance, she told me the story of her spending all of 2010, from Jan 1 to Dec 31, hiking the famous pilgrimage trail in Spain, called the Camino de Santiago. She made Nature art along the way, such as this Rilke quote she left on a tree.

"Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final."



As you can imagine, I was like putty in Kim's hands today. Another of her pieces, this framed honeycomb, quotes a Spanish poet, Antonio Machado:



*"Last night as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—*

that I had a beehive

[1 capture](#)

9 Dec 2021

*And the golden bees
were making white combs
and sweet honey
from my old failures."*

So it is not that Week 7's despondence crescendoes today. **It's that Week 8's optimism begins.** One of the life lessons I was determined to come from this Xtreme Dream Cuba Swim is to not waste any of my limited, treasured time on either regrets of the past or meaningless what if's of the future.

Today my close friends, and one artist "stranger", have helped me rekindle the strength that comes with doing what's absolutely right for body, mind and soul in this moment, with absolute faith that the Dream on the horizon will come true.

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Unfavorable Winds

Published August 12, 2013



The winds continue in unfavorable direction and strength for us here in Key West....yet we still find daily reasons to be grateful for the friendship bonds of our crew here and the privilege of training in this topical paradise.



Yesterday, had the company of dolphins, curious and playing close by for nine straight hours....along with a cartoonish Cormorant who

bobbed all around me and we have now nicknamed

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Out In The Ocean..."We Taste Infinitude"

Published August 9, 2013



This Cuba Swim plays on a myriad of levels. No getting around the pure athletic endeavor. Swimmers of all ilk trying since 1950, including yours truly.

For me, it's a life-affirming quest, reminding me to reach for the stars, to tap one's finest potential, regardless the outcome.

But the sea itself, the backdrop, the center stage of the quest, is metaphor unto itself.

The vastness, the mystery, the power. To be immersed in the liquid of our Earth, in some ways trained and strong enough to glide along its surface for more than 100 long, long miles....and yet so small and insignificant under the pulling moon and tides, large predator sharks lurking within view below, the deadliest of all sea creatures, the Box Jellyfish, swarming en masse each ebony night.

The brain can't function normally, after the continuous hours of duress. Hallucinations take you far, far away and the unconscious surfaces, as if

dreaming while still wide awake, still automatically stroking.

This is not road cycling. Nor mountain climbing. Nor space travel. It is immersion in the ocean. There is a life force that imbues the spirit. The imagination is taken back through all the evolution of mankind, back to when we were all swimmers, not land beasts.



I am fortunate this summer to be beneficiary of yet another Key West generous individual. I am staying in my friend Wendy's lovely cottage, appointed with interesting art and graced with gentle light. When it rains, I read on the porch. And each time I enter the cottage, I am stilled by a photograph. Here it is. A grainy black and white image of a man, contemplating the sea and its horizon. Etched into the handsome wood of the photograph is a line from Pablo Neruda's "Ode to Salt".

"I know you won't believe me, but it sings. Salt sings...dust of the Sea in you the tongue receives a kiss from Ocean night...in it, we taste infinitude."

Yes, that's it. Even going back to the 1970's when I last spent all these hours communing with the ocean, I have never been able to express the deep emotion I feel out there, way out there, when sensory deprivation reduces clarity, when the metronome of the hundreds of thousands of breaths and strokes takes the mind to subliminal poetry and philosophy, when turning skyward reveals a dance of the stars that plays out in hallucinatory human dimensions. It's infinitude I am tasting. That's it. Infinitude.

All the souls who have lived and loved before us. All those that will follow. The treasure that is our Blue Planet. The wonder that is our human existence. It's all written there in the sapphire blue of the ocean. It's infinitude.

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For Good Luck

Published August 8, 2013

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◀ 09 ▶

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The people I have met on this four-year Cuba Swim journey, not to mention my intimates who have shared the adventure with me, have been tender and kind and sterling in so many varying ways.

Listen to this story of a Cuban who gave me a special piece of his heart.

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Eating Contests: American Shame

Published August 6, 2013



(AP Photo/John Minchillo)

I'm not one to normally stand in judgment of the whimsical...even the silly. We can all use a dose of light and meaningless to lessen the load of

everyday drudgery and stress.

[1 capture](#)

9 Dec 2021

NOV

DEC

JAN



09



2020

2021

2022



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I can laugh when hundreds of dash hands line up at the Del Mar

thoroughbred race track each year, their little legs scrambling furiously down the stretch, a number of them stopping to pee mid-way, others distracted and off to chase butterflies on the infield.

What a hoot to see the transvestite pageant of Patsy impersonators, dead ringers for the over-the-top Absolutely Fabulous star.

What about the golf tournament for the worst golfers in America, where some players are too girthy to see the ball below, others take as many as 30 strokes a hole....from water hazard to sand trap to yet another water hazard to 10-putting, etc? And the rule is that these must be golfers who belong to a club and play a minimum of 12 times a year!

As high-minded as we'd like our lives to be, we all need some levity.

But the eating contests that rage across America? I'm disgusted.

Last week in Clearwater, FL, it was the chicken wing contest. Some 15 wings, bones and all, hit the gullet in 10 minutes. The pros have their "sports science" tips, such as drinking warm water before they start gorging, to relax the stomach muscles.

Then there's Nathan's famous Fourth of July hot dog eating contest every 4th of July. This year's winner, 7th consecutive victory, inhaled 69 dogs in 10 minutes.

Nathan's champ enters some 20 contests a year. And there's now actually a "season" for competitive eating, March through August. Lobsters to crab cakes to shrimp wontons to fruit pies.

To be fair, these contests are popular in other countries, too. Singapore and China and South Korea and other countries host popular eating contests.

But here in America it seems particularly revolting, a blatant commentary on our over-consumption in general.

Most foreigners I know who come to the U.S., either to visit or to live, overridingly have one negative observation of our way of life....and that is that we waste so much. Our dinner plates are gigantic. We not only

eat too much but we discard more than most individuals and families have in the first place in other lands.

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9 Dec 2021

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JAN



09



2020

2021

2022

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(AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

The body itself, for starters. What does a person fighting esophageal or stomach or rectal cancer, hoping one day to return to normal function, thinking of their organs with desperate tenderness, feel when they witness the assault on the digestive system of these professional gorgers?

What is the commentary on our waste of food, our nation of obese overeaters?

Eating Contests? Let's get rid of them.

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