

A Mindful Adventure



Photography by Donna Adinolfi - ©2009

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." - Lao Tze (570-490 BC)

The journey began at Miraval - Life in Balance, an all-inclusive Resort and Spa located in the beautiful foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains just outside Tucson, AZ. I chose Miraval for some of the same reasons others do from all parts of the world. I wanted to find myself, do some soul searching - change my life...and I expected it to come to me by the end of the week.

You can just hear Jack Palance (Curly) telling Billy Crystal (Mitch) in City Slickers that we get wound up 51 weeks a year and expect to get all the answers in just one week. That's what I wanted - I wanted to "find myself" by the end of the week. I had to because I'm turning 40 this year and just like others turning 30, 40, 50 or more, I'm looking for answers.

I did my best to figure things out by midweek yet "it" wasn't quite clear. I was looking for the clarity, vision, and purpose of my life. Wasn't it supposed to come in loud and clear or was I searching for something that I already had and just didn't know? Then, it all began to make sense. I wasn't living in the moment, I wasn't present, and I was thinking of yesterday and tomorrow and missing today. I wasn't being "mindful" and all at once I figured it out, almost mindlessly.

It's so hard to explain the feeling of emptiness you feel when you're just going from day to day. More often than not, you take a vacation to relax and perhaps do something fulfilling. It's an opportunity to try new things and you only have a week so you attempt to do as much as you can. You get home and you wonder what you did. You recall having some fun, however it becomes a blur. When you're mindful of your actions and you truly live moment to moment, you walk away with more, so much more.

That's what Miraval offers - a *Mindful Adventure*, a vacation with a purpose. You put yourself into each activity - mind, body, and spirit - all combined equals you. It's very easy to exercise your body, however if your mind and heart aren't involved, it's just exercise. When you're mindful of your actions, you get more out of it. Once you begin to practice mindfulness you feel more fulfilled and are more likely to continue putting these different lessons into daily practice.

There were many opportunities to practice mindfulness at Miraval, from the challenge course where you can climb a 32 foot rock to working with horses in the "Equine Experience" which happened to be a personal favorite. In addition to the exquisite accommodations, Miraval also offers a variety of fitness classes, nutrition consultations, spa services from hot stone massages to facials, mindful eating with their "Conscious Cuisine" menu and so much more. Needless to say, Miraval is surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in the country.

Miraval states that "a mindfulness practice has been shown to be a powerful way of approaching our lives to bring balance, promote health, and enjoy life." It has only been a week, however I'm still practicing what I learned and for me that's a blessing. I understand what it means to be mindful and I feel different. I believe I am different and I am looking forward to my next trip to Miraval where I can continue my journey of self-awareness and self-acceptance. ***Remember that it all begins with one step. Enjoy the journey!***

We emerge from what appears to be a restrictive cocoon to the beautiful wings of a butterfly, setting us free to explore.
- Donna Adinolfi

Writer's Note: *This is based on an article originally written by me in November 2000 and published in Balance Magazine. I've written about Miraval since then, however this was nearly 10 years ago, which means....yes, I'm approaching 50 (and don't look a day over 40!). There have been many other journeys to Miraval as I alluded to in this writing and each one was as profound as the one before. There have been so many amazing spa adventures to other destination spas and many of the positive changes in my life have come about due to the insightful experiences from each. The last four years have been among the most challenging years of my life, due to the passing of my husband, who always inspired me, and through it all I can honestly say that traveling and the freedom and awe of the places I've been on my own, have helped me through these times and allowed me to embrace life and move forward.*



Donna Mantone-Adinolfi

2010 Event Preview

Dr. Andrew Weil

February 28 – March 3 and
October 24 – 27

The Miraval Equine
Experience™ Immersion
with Wyatt Webb

February, April, June,
August, October,
December*

Creative & Mindful
Cooking Series

May 12-16, July 21-25,
September 15 – 19, and
November 10 – 14