

Book Review

Pillar: Book Review

***Live, Love, Explore* by Leon Logothetis, published 2017, reviewed October 31st 2019 by Charlie, UK**

I came across this book in a bookstore while looking for something else, and maybe that's how we always find the best things. It was first the title which drew me to this book, it's similar to Brendon Burchard's *Live, Love, Matter* motto, and I'd just finished rereading that book (see **my review of Brendon Burchard's *High Performance Habits***). The second thing which drew me to it was the colourful, cartoon cover art of a road through a desert (yes, I know you're not meant to judge a book by its cover). But the content was incredibly valuable and as I read it, I began to see how Logothetis' journey mirrored my own, and the transformational journeys we all experience at the ranch.

The book begins by describing Logothetis' 'ordinary life', living in London, busy fulfilling everyone else's expectations, but not living with purpose and making the kind of contribution he wanted to be making. It was a walk across Nepal which started Logothetis on what he calls 'the way of the traveller'. Towards the end of this journey, he stood on the balcony of his room to watch the sunrise and saw an eagle fly across the sky, calling to announce the morning. In this moment, he felt like he could see the whole world. For once, he felt truly alive.

I'm sure many of us have had a moment like that, where the world seems a place of magic and wonder, as if we're looking at it through the eyes of a child. But then, we go home, we go back to work, and nothing changes. We go back to the lives we were living before, but not truly living, just going through the motions. We have a transformational experience, but all too soon, it's as if we've forgotten it happened, we relapse and return to our old lives. This is exactly what happened to Logothetis. Back in London, he was soon depressed and feeling his lack of purpose again. And he knew he needed to go back to travelling.

The book documents his adventures, as he journeys across America on \$5 a day, to prove to the world people are willing to help out strangers, for no reward, documenting the unlikely heroes and accidental teachers he met along the way. On a return trip to the States, he bought the Kindness Cab, a twenty-five year-old London cab which he drove from New York to LA, offering free rides to anyone who needed it. His aim was to spread kindness to the people he helped. But he also ran the meter on the cab and donated the 'fare' to charity. He wanted to disconnect from computers and technology, to connect with others, to really talk to them. We see that mirrored at the ranch, we seek to connect with nature, ourselves and other people, to have real conversations about deep and meaningful topics.

However, things didn't go to plan, and somewhere around Virginia, the cab broke down because Logothetis filled it with the wrong gas. Now, here was an opportunity. He got the cab to a mechanic in time to drain the gas and save the cab, meaning they could continue their journey, but now Logothetis learned a valuable lesson – besides the obvious lesson of checking which gas you're pumping. He learned to let go of his ego, fears and sense of embarrassment at his mistake, and it was this which allowed him to make his deepest connections. We live by this at the ranch too. If you've tried, there's no such thing as failure, you've learned something. And if we can learn about ourselves or connect to someone else, that lesson is infinitely more valuable than simply learning how to do something (or what not to do in the case of the gas).

But, as they crossed Colorado, the cab broke down again. This time, Logothetis' friend and travel partner,

Steve, was the mechanic, but they couldn't restart the cab. So, Logothetis suggested the two friends and their passenger, Darren, got out the cab and danced. In the dark. In the snow. On the side of the road. Steve and Darren thought he was crazy, and perhaps you do too. But it was the act of dancing when all hope seemed to be lost that brought joy back to the situation (and potentially saved them all from dying of hypothermia). Soon, another vehicle pulled over to help and they got the cab running again. Here was another valuable lesson learned. You can always bring positivity, whatever the situation and that can bring a connection to other people. Positivity is contagious. And, the cab survived to LA, meaning Logothetis completed his journey.

Using the example of his dog, Winston, Logothetis teaches us how to love unconditionally and to express that to others. His dog, like most dogs, loved everyone, instantly, no questions asked. He wanted to be your best friend and you were his if you gave him a scratch or a biscuit. But too many humans don't give love to strangers or even those close to them. We spend too much time focusing on our differences, or just get too caught up in our own heads. But showing love to others builds connections and deepens relationships. It spreads happiness, not just to the person you give that love to, but to those around you as well. Happiness is contagious. We strive at the ranch to treat everyone with kindness and respect and, as is said in the *Remarkable!* Book (see **Jasmin's book review**), we 'believe the best in each other, want the best for each other and expect the best from each other'.

Logothetis concludes the book by describing the Hero's Journey, which we have adapted into our Transformational Journey. Essentially, this explains that every story is a journey of twelve steps, from the Ordinary Life and the Call to Adventure through the Ordeal to the Journey Home and Return with the Elixir. At the end of the book, Logothetis explains the last few stages in his Hero's Journey. He finally feels the desire to go home, something he's not had in a long time. Now, his home isn't London, but Los Angeles, where he's made a life for himself. The Hero returns home with the elixir, which is the desire to spread the word to others. Logothetis' next journey was internal, as he learned more about himself, studying himself more deeply than he had before.

From here, Logothetis created the Human Interaction Project (HIP), which aims to connect people with others using volunteering scholarships. The scholarship is based around giving to others and receiving connection and learning selflessness in return. People who apply for the scholarship are expected to genuinely care for others, seek self-growth, be open and curious and willing to step out of their comfort zone. To find out more about the HIP project, visit <http://humaninteractionproject.com/>.

Logothetis' creation of HIP is similar to our transformational journeys at the ranch. As we experience the positive culture and wilderness experiences, we begin our journeys of personal growth. As we grow and develop, we find that desire to give back to help others. And it is from that desire that Trails to Empowerment was born. We wanted to share our journeys with you, to provide a community for you, to connect to you and inspire you on your own transformational journeys.

With Logothetis and us at Trails to Empowerment, we know our journey has only just begun, this is a life-long commitment to ourselves, each other and the world to be the best people we can be. And we invite you to be a part of that.