

# “Motivation”

By Andrew Freirich

Much of the time, I look at the world around me for inspiration and motivation. Your drive and spirit needs to be fed, nurtured and exercised. Your motivation arrives from many sources in your life. You always hear the phrase “Much health and happiness” on almost every special occasion. We work on being happy, and we work on being healthy. Otherwise our happiness is ill fated. Read on, and you may just find your motivation, if you have not already.

## “Childs Play”

You are in a deep sleep, it is Saturday morning around 6 a.m., this might be the morning that you can sleep in and enjoy a relaxing morning in bed. You hear a small voice and a little nudge as the bed shakes with a slight tremor. Get up, get up ! Let's go and play. That little voice repeats itself, and the nudging slowly ends up near your shoulder. You eventually smile, and the little one has succeeded. You get up, and start your day. Today, will be a day filled with playing in the park, swimming, and playing baseball with the family. You are not in your teens anymore, but you still have that memory, and your body has the desire. As you run the bases, your legs feel heavy, your lungs begin to feel tightness, and you know that something's need to change. A red light goes off in your head. You glance over at your child, and feel a sense of fear, knowing that your health has been ignored. Knowing that, if you don't change your lifestyle, you and your child will not have these wonderful moments and memories. Your child runs over to you, and gives you a big hug. This hug is enough for you to lift mountains. You now move on a course to complete and total health. Which includes exercising, a complete nutritional plan, regular check ups with your doctor, and more knowledge on maintaining this lifestyle.

Three months later, it is a bright sunny day, the morning air is crisp and fresh, the ball is pitched, swing, and you hit the ball into left field. As you're rounding second base, your speed intensifies.

You feel young. Your legs and lungs are working in peak condition; your child is cheering you on, a smile crosses your face, you lock eyes. That is all the motivation you need. Home Run !

*They're as literally so many ways that you can begin a program to better health. Magazine's such as your Shape En Espanol, the internet, as well as many other sources from a personal trainer, local health clubs, fitness videos. DVD's, walking, running, bike riding, swimming, any sport or activity you enjoy, just playing in the park with your kids, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and much much more.*

*Be your best, not only for yourself, but also for your children. Be strong, be healthy, become a role model, that your children can follow. Health statistics are alarming among Hispanic's. One out of every \_\_\_ Hispanic women are obese. One out of \_\_\_ suffer from diabetes. Childhood obesity is at an alarming rate. \_\_\_\_\_ (HHS report). Regular exercise or physical activity 30 minutes per day, along with healthy eating habits are recommended.*

## “The couple of sweats together stays together”

When we think of any physical activity, indoors, outdoors or even in the bedroom, a good workout is a good workout. Sweat is just the residual effect of whatever activity you may be engaged in. Sweat, lingers with you, as you wipe your brow with satisfaction. A jog well done. Finding that balance with your partner is key to a successful relationship. Ever hear of the phrase, “Your body is a temple” ? In fact this is true. How we take care of our body not only effects our personal well being, but every aspect of our relationship with our significant other. Find activities that you both enjoy. Create a routine, and stick to it. Not only will it give you quality time together, but also you will be working on a healthier you, with more strength, endurance and agility. I am sure that all of the other areas in your relationship will take a turn for the better as well.

Dancing and movement is synonymous with being Latino. No matter what shape or size you are, shaking your booty is shaking your booty. Feeling the music, is like feeling your own heartbeat. Tap tap, pitter pat...the beats speed up and slow down, your body moves with the flow of the music. You become one, with the rhythm. Legs, arms, hips, feet and your booty, all move in directions that express your what you feel. Your body temperature begins to rise. You become aroused at the energy in the room. You and your partner are now hip to hip, getting down the way you know how. You begin to feel the sweat trickle down your back. Your legs begin to feel the workout, but your having the time of your life.

*Thirty minutes of dance burns \_\_\_ calories. Imagine calorie burning and having a great time. Sounds good to me. As you know, music, dance and movement are infused in Latino culture. Dance, dance, dance, in the house, in the backyard, house parties, barbecues, clubs, with the family, friends, (other then going to a club), it's free, you just need a little music, find your groove, and there you go ! Muevete tu cuerpo ! There are also many schools and clubs that give lessons on all types of dance from Salsa, tango, to ball room dancing. Many of your local newspapers will list these schools. Of course there are many other activities you and your partner can participate in that will not only put some sweat on your brow, but also give*

*you an opportunity to meet new friends. Many local clubs and organizations cater to singles, couples or both. The opportunities are endless.*

## **“A Ride in the Clouds”**

**By Andrew Freirich**

I have always thrived on exploring our beautiful world, while absorbing and learning lessons along the way. There are always those unexpected pleasures and moments we cherish. Friends made along the way in passing, and friends made for a lifetime. A winding path, a new bridge to cross, an un-chartered territory. Sometimes this may be discovered in our own neighborhoods, or in a foreign country on the other side of the world. These unforgettable experiences are waiting for you “Carp Diem” !

Every so often, I enjoy planning a new trip, which allows the act of randomness and planning to take on a life of it's own. The beautiful country of Costa Rica, where heaven and earth seem to spread it's inviting arms for us to enjoy, create that merge. I contacted a few good friends to join me, they were so excited about the opportunity, they almost joked about packing their bags as we spoke. I wanted to share this experience with two good friends Keith and David. Two people who would also take home some unforgettable moments captured in time. The next thing I knew, we were off for two weeks to hike and mountain bike the volcanoes Irasu, Poas and Arenal of Costa Rica, while taking some time in between to enjoy the surf and rainforests. Here is a brief inside description of one of our trips, that was simply unforgettable. We had only slept two hours the prior night, having taken the red eye from Los Angeles to San Jose, Costa Rica. We un-packed our suit cases, and ate breakfast full of foods that would give us a substantial carbohydrate fill for energy. Packed our gear, met our guides in the lobby, and we were off. We had already broken a full sweat from the 85-degree temperature and humidity already at 8 a.m. in the morning.

As the van hitched with mountain bikes ascended up the winding road, the mercury on our friendly thermometer descended rapidly. We had just passed a sign that read 8,500 feet above sea level. We headed into the gates of massive nebulous formations. The last inkling of sunlight filtered through only long enough to catch a glimpse. As we negotiated our way through the skies thick blanket of moist air, our visibility was only good enough to ensure us that the road has not vanished into this air. I felt my body rapidly trying to adjust to the extremities of the altitude and increasingly cold temperature. I knew it was only the beginning of what was to be one of the most physically challenging and exciting excursions I had ever taken. Our destination was to the top of Irasu volcano, almost 12,000 feet at the lip of the crater, where the conditions would soon slap a rude awakening to any thought of a normal day of mountain biking. Knowing that, I soon accepted what nature had in store for us.

Our van continued upward, the rain began to play Macarena on our van. One of the van's windows had decided to stay at half mass, as the elements were invading us. The cold mountain rain, gave me a prelude to what was only the first course on the menu leading up the entree. We stopped briefly at 10,000 feet to attempt to warm ourselves with the internationally well known Costa Rican Java from a small mountain cantina. The opportunity I was waiting for. Our guides seemed well versed on the terrain of the mountain, but they had omitted to tell us about the below 30 degree temperatures at the top. I on the other hand should have planned better. With a short sleeve riding jersey to my back, I knew that the difference between ammonia and warmth was anything that I could barter or buy from the locals at the cantina. Three t-shirts stapled to the wall would have to suffice us. As we arrived at the summit, the rain subsided, and we quickly on-mounted our bikes, we were excited to ride along the lip of the crater. A few minutes later, we saw our first view of the spectacular inner crater of Irasu. Inside the crater existed an aqua green lake, created by the many years of rainfall, minerals and gasses, specifically sulfur. We soon began to hear a hissing sound, which lingered in the background as we admired the beauty of nature's work. As the gasses filled our nostrils, we knew it was time to exit, before being overcome by the gas. The sign made us very aware of this danger. We continued our ride to the foot of the park entrance, we discussed the strategy of the terrain. Suddenly nature had decided to throw another surprise and ensure us of a most memorable experience, hail, hail and more hail, dropped from the skies.

The moment of truth had arrived. Our guides looked at us, and wanted to know, if we should pack up and play it safe, we looked quickly at one another, smiled as we were freezing, and said let's push onward. So our journey began. As small balls of ice deflected off our rain soaked bodies, we began our decent. Our bikes cut through the mountain air of 26 degrees and blankets of ice. My body began to shake from the extreme temperature conditions, not good! As we entered a steep slick road that would lead us to our off road mountain trail, our speed increased quickly even with braking, in that short moment, I lost complete control of my bike. My world was in a slide and spin as I desperately attempted to gain control. A surge of blood ran through my body like a locomotive train, and that quick again, I was in complete control, 40 meters further down the road. Back in control, the scare must have stopped the shaking and I began to find my rhythm. I would have never imagined, that in a country known for it's humidity, tropical weather and jungles, I would have been dodging my way in and out of a hailstorm. Don't you love it!

Our ride for the next 7 hours, was not only a journey of physical triumph and exhaustion, but a ride through small mountain towns that were interwoven around the volcano. The earth was rich with minerals; the aroma was sweet, filled by the flora and vegetation. Ideal condition for trees and farming. Many rare woods come from this region. Curious as I was, about the exotic woods, I stopped at a small wood shop that found itself at the foot of my mountain bike as I veered around a sharp decline on my way down. This was an opportunity for me to rest, and appease my fascination with rare woods. I introduced myself to the owner and entered into a small but well kept woodshop. The owner was as excited as I was, and more then hospitable, he invited me in for lunch, and talked about his life and family, as I told my life story. I often think about his

kindness, and how honest and gracious he was. He presented me with a walking stick that was comprised of five different types of rare woods. He would not allow me to pay, this was a gift. He also wanted me to have a sample of the 13 woods that come from the Costa Rican rain forest region. He proceeded to cut small pieces. This was one of those moments in time, where human powered exercise, paved the way for a short kinship that I would always remember. As I strapped my new mementos to my back, I thanked him many times over, for a memorable time shared, and for his kindness. I began peddling and soon was off continuing my journey.

Herds of cattle passed along the narrow dirt trails, which we all shared. We all had a place to go, yet we shared a common path. That is so true, in so many parts of our lives. Even though we all rode down similar trails descending down the mountain, we all had our own personal experiences. We met many more special people along the way as we observed a way of life, and region of the world that would only be discovered by hiking or biking. I had a great deal of time to do allot of thinking along the way, and often thought about, many places I have walked, run or biked, and how many experiences that came along with those trips. I began to reminisce about a few of my excursions. My 12 hour walk through the ancient and historic city of Rome, Italy. The day I walked 100 city blocks in New York on a marvelous fall day, where I took in all New York has to offer. Or the day I rode over 100 miles on my bicycle from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, enjoying one of the most beautiful coast lines in the world. My yearly trips of hiking in Sedona, Arizona, where I re-energize and find peace and tranquility on the pungent red mountains and mesas. Or perhaps the day I hiked down into the dormant volcano Haleakala in Maui, Hawaii, where for 9 hours, we passed through four different climate and temperature zones, one of the most fascinating hikes yet. The list goes on, I plan on adding to that list. My camera always accompanies me on all my trips. I love to find those spontaneous moments where only you and life are at one, and you capture that moment in time. Yes, a picture does speak a thousand words. Over a period of time, all of my excursions have ranged in difficulty. I typically plan the activities of my trips, based on the following criteria. Who I am traveling with, they're physical condition, and their mutual interest. You should do the same.

As I found my way at the bottom of the mountain, I looked up and said a small prayer, thanking God for his guidance and protection took in the moment and smiled. I still feel that smile as if it were yesterday. As I looked over my shoulder, I heard one of my guides, calling me. He told me that Keith and David were almost down the mountain as well, and we would all meet at a local cantina. We all joined one another, and compared our experience down Irasu. We laughed, patted each other on the back and drank a cold cerveza in celebration of a day well done.