



The Great Loop Epilogue

Editor's Note: David completed his Loop solo on July 1, 2017, aboard his dinghy, Journey. We wanted to share the blog post he wrote reflecting on his journey. He shares with us his "why" and what he learned along the way. We think his story will resonate with many of you, regardless of how you decide to do your Great Loop.

Well, a little bit of time has gone by and I have had a chance to reflect on my "Great Loop" adventure aboard "Journey".

Let me begin by saying that this blog post is not about "The Great Loop". Nor is it about "Pickleball!". So most of you might want to just stop reading at this point.

This post is mostly about me and how this adventure has changed me and my perspective/outlook on life. Throw in a few lessons learned and the would of, could of, should of moments and there you have it! Ramblings of an old guy!

So, here are my thoughts! I warned you to stop reading!

I believe the reason for my trip was not to escape anything, but rather to experience a unique adventure while I have my health. The aging process has a way of moving forward, like it or not.

I have never been one to follow a well-worn path, so my decision to choose a path less traveled (Great Loop in a Dinghy) should be no surprise to those who really know me. Anyone can do the Loop in a big boat I tell myself.

Why solo? Perhaps the most vexing question for me to consider and answer with some time now behind me. This may sound crazy but I think it had something to do with being completely responsible for all the failures, mistakes, and successes along the path of this "Journey".

Make no mistake, Ann (my spouse and best friend) was very much part of my support team and she provided all the encouragement at all the right times. But the part of doing it physically alone was important to me. Failure or success was all on me! No one else to blame!

Being alone, I had no crutch to lean on (what I wanted). At times, I was way out of my comfort zone and it would have been so easy to rely on someone else to deal with those situations. I have always felt "socially challenged" and uneasy meeting people and carrying on a meaningful conversation.

This trip threw me into the "Lion's Den" and I was constantly meeting new people during my adventure. That forced me to deal with my "inadequacies" and come to terms with them.

During my trip, I have had so many strangers walk into and out of my life buying me a meal, leaving me a cup of coffee at the dock, driving me somewhere, lending me something, just going out of their way to help a complete stranger. It was very refreshing and completely unexpected.

It has made me think about “paying it forward” as much as possible in the future and I will look harder for that opportunity to do so!

On another topic, I was surprised how easy it was to not dwell on all the unknowns and where I would stay the next night. Most mornings, I did not know where I would be staying that night and that was ok. In some ways, even satisfying to know that it will work out all right, no matter what. It was easy to let go of those things I had little or no control of.

Of all my experiences on this trip, one stands out that caught me emotionally unprepared. That was a quiet Sunday morning circling the Statue of Liberty in my little boat. That experience gave me the goosebumps and a real appreciation of our country (land of immigrants and native Americans). While we are far from a perfect country, I believe it offers more opportunity than any other.

On this Journey, I also learned that I actually look forward to writing in my daily blog. I have never kept a diary, and this is as close as it will ever get. Reflecting on the day and capturing the highlights was a very healthy exercise for me. I have never had a great memory and overtime, I know these experiences will lose some of their detail. By documenting them, “the fish I caught will always be the same size”, unless perhaps I embellished a story or two in the telling.

I do not have a lot of would of, could of, should of's to share. I did learn to limit my time on the water to no more than 6 hours a day. Unfortunately, I adopted that plan late in my trip! I did underestimate the weather and its impact on me. The heat, humidity, and rain at times, were almost too much for this old body. Glad I did not wait until I got a little older and wiser!!

So, in closing, I do believe an underlying reason for my adventure was to have something that I could experience and document as a legacy for children, grandchildren and their children. You cannot tell these stories without the reader getting some sense of who you are and what makes you tick. So, sorry to all my blog followers, but this blog was not for you or me. It is for them and the hope that they might see a little of me (the good stuff) in themselves!

May you all find your adventure to chase! It matters little if you catch it! It is the “Journey”, not the destination!!

Thanks for joining me on mine!!
Dinghy Dave signing off for the last time!

Visit his blog: <https://sixthousandmilesinadinghy.wordpress.com/>



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