

100 Things
I Learned
as an
Everyday
Adventurer
Jens Oliver
Meiert



100 Things I Learned as an Everyday Adventurer

Jens Oliver Meiert

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For Barbara C. Müller.

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Introduction

I used to be the most boring person on the planet. First I had no hobbies and all I did was play Lego and Playmobil. And collecting stamps and reading a lot, maybe. Then I had no hobbies and all I did was play computer games. And annoying my friends whether I could play at their places. And then I had no hobbies and all I did was working. And saying no to my friends, no that I couldn't join for whatever they were doing, there, in the park, or in the mountains, or in that other country.

This little book is a testament of my change into a more adventurous and open person. It lists factoids that I learned during my adventures. That's the main goal in fact. Spreading little factoids. And it shares some ideas on how to become similarly open.

This may beg the question, what is an adventure, and what does openness have to do with it?

Adventure is normally related to something uncharted, uncertain, or unusual. Something that has never been tried before. Or something that's dangerous. Thrill, excitement, adrenaline. But there's also another side of adventure. It's trying something uncharted, uncertain, or unusual for oneself. With or without thrill. Challenging oneself. Like being afraid of heights and then doing bungee jumping from a tower. Hating the idea of going to a polo match but joining regardless. Or just being uncertain about knitting but giving it a shot at a class in the neighborhood.

Adventure is about being open. It means being open to new impressions, influences, and the unexpected. It means being open to the possibility that there are things out there that, no matter how trivial and unexciting they may seem, may be worthwhile, useful, or even fun. And it means being open to the fact that there are indeed things that are not as interesting and enjoyable, and recognizing that it's good to know they aren't, rather than guess they aren't.

What all this means is that adventure can be found everywhere. It's all around us. Life is an adventure if we opt to make it one. And that's why I call myself an "everyday adventurer," and why this piece of literature says "Everyday Adventurer."

One note about this little book. It has an autobiographical touch as inevitably, I found myself rummaging through my very own and sometimes brief impressions. So it's individual. It's not neutral. It's very Jens, always keen to do everything—at once.

The book is organized into separate chapters for each activity. That means, there are 100 chapters (plus a few more for things like this). The chapters are ordered chronologically for realistic randomness. Each one talks a bit about what the activity is, if an explanation is useful, how I got to it, what happened at the venue, and what I learned. I then added a rough indicator for how expensive I found the activity, how fun I thought it was, and how risky I deemed it. Very individual. Sometimes exaggerated.

Now, what activities are included? The answer is everything. Everything that was "new" to me starting 2010, when I opened up and at the same time became methodical about trying new things, to now, 2013. So I won't do a life review and tell you I went fishing in 1988 and learned speed reading

in 2004. I sometimes left the house back in those years, but that's not going to be covered here. The everything of activities described, then, ranges from ordinary classes and online trainings to special events and extreme sports. It just doesn't include the more trivial new things like my first ice hockey game or live boxing event. That would be a bit much.

I believe this gives you a little idea of what to expect. Everything can be an adventure, and everyone can be an adventurer. That's the Jens view on things.

—Jens Oliver Meiert, October 2013, from Quito, Ecuador

Legend

Every activity chapter is concluded with some little extra information.

Cost, \$-\$\$\$\$\$. Prices based on what I paid or how costly I found it.

- —: Oh, free!
- \$: Coins??
- \$\$\$\$: That's going to sting.

Fun factor, ☒☒☒☒-★★★★ (0–5). How fun did I find the activity?

- ☒☒☒☒ (0/5): 10-year-old Jens was right, just stay in and play Lego.
- ★★★★★ (5/5): Can I move here.

Risk factor, ☒☒☒☒-★★★★ (0–5). How risky did I find the activity?

- ☒☒☒☒ (0/5): lol.
- ★★★★★ (5/5): The afterlife seems pretty real.

Currency is in U.S. dollars but units follow the metric system (sometimes they're accompanied by the imperial equivalent in parentheses).

Quotes, mostly for definitions, are based on entries in the English Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org) retrieved from April to August, 2013.

Disclaimer

First, nothing's perfect in this book.

Second, I hate disclaimers. I believe we're all smart enough. Just know that I'm not an expert in any of what I'm writing about in this place. I've done and tried many of different things but that just means I'm bad at everything. The same may go for Wikipedia and their definitions as they don't give any guarantees, either, and I can't offer any for them.

What this all means is, before you take any action, do some due diligence. Make sure that what you do is safe for you and whoever you want to bring with you, and that it's in budget, if that's a concern. In general, use this book at your own risk. But we're all grown-ups, so thanks for walking these two paragraphs with me. Please welcome now to: *100 Things I Learned as an Everyday Adventurer*.

Acknowledgments

No book writes and publishes itself alone. I thank Sarah M. Tyrrell for editing and polishing. I thank Julia W. Tang for the book cover concept and reviewing the first draft. And I thank J. Felix Desroches for reviewing parts of the first and parts of the final draft. You're fantastic. Thank you very much.

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91. Sand Blasting

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92. Powder Coating

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93. Snowshoeing

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94. Learning About Edible and Medicinal Weeds

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95. Surfing

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96. Learning to Play the Ukulele

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97. Segway Riding

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98. Canoeing

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99. Singing and Voice Training

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100. Filipino Martial Arts

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How to Become an Everyday Adventurer

You read through this account of Jens's infinite free time, and now you want the same? Or better?

What I found most important in becoming the type of adventurer I'm depicting in this book is *mindset*. You have to work on that first. The moment you hear about something new, you *must* stay open, you cannot discard it immediately. What you'll discover then, if you work on this, is that you pick up far more new things than you think would be possible. You notice how a colleague says he tried water skiing during his vacation. You take note that you've never been in a submarine. And you find that knowing how to identify wild geese actually has a ring to it.

The second most important thing is organization. Of course, you may have an excellent memory. But chances are, especially if you're just about to begin to become a bit more adventurous, you need some assistance. And that assistance is simple to get. Take a piece of paper and write down what you want to do, and mark what you did. (What I'm doing is a bit more green, in that I'm working with an online Google Docs document.) Writing activities and topics down will be both motivating and surprising. It will motivate you because you see all these things that you can do, and all these things you have done, and you'll love it. And it will be surprising because you, say, start with 10 items, and then you do 10, but you see that you have another 14 left. Yes. That's what happened to me: At the time of this writing, I have done 167 different things—but have another 72 waiting for me.

Now, *how* should you go about all of this? I've already mentioned one way: listen. But here's a list of ideas to get you started.

- Listen.
- Subscribe to deal providers, like
 - Amazon Local (local.amazon.com)
 - Google Offers (google.com/offers)
 - Groupon (groupon.com)
 - LivingSocial (livingsocial.com)
- Subscribe to local event lists, like
 - Daily Secret (dailysecret.com)
 - Funcheap (funcheap.com)
- Subscribe to local meeting groups, like
 - Meetup (meetup.com)
- Check out the websites of the places, organizations, and organizers you've already been to for other activities and classes.

(International readers, many of these sites should be available for your country and language, too. Also, have an eye out for local alternatives!)

A note for people on a budget: You realized that becoming an adventurer doesn't necessarily mean jumping from burning planes into volcanoes on tiny islands you yourself have just discovered. So you noticed when going through this book that there are plenty of low budget options. Take note please of the options above, because especially the deal sites are an excellent way of finding low-cost options to do something new and fun.

Ultimately, it's all about your mindset. If you're closed off, your life will be closed off. If you're open, you're life will be more adventurous. And you'll be surprised how much more open you can be.

Thanks for reading.

(And for sharing! Let's be in touch and share what we're learning in future adventures using the hashtag [#onethingilearned](#). I'm [@j9t](#) on Twitter, though usually listening.)

Feedback

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About the Author

Jens Oliver Meiert believes that people have many talents.

Jens is an established expert web developer who has contributed to technical standards of the Web (W3C) and who has laid the foundations for large-scale international websites that reach tens of millions of users every day (GMX, Google). He has written a book about designing with CSS (O'Reilly, 2005/2007), developed frameworks and quality management systems for Google (2008–2013), and got nominated “Web Developer of the Year” by .net magazine (2011).

Jens is an everyday adventurer, described in this very book, who has traveled 6 continents, 40 countries, and more than 200 cities. He has made it his priority to try whatever is new to him, whatever activity or sports or training or even food comes near him, and documented nearly 150 of these in the last 3 years alone. Jens just quit his job, left his city, to go backpack the world.

Jens is an amateur philosopher who has over the last few years studied more than 100 works around the topics of philosophy, psychology, social sciences, religion, spirituality, public relations, marketing, and advertising. He's an active supporter of and contributor to initiatives for societies that place emphasis on trust, freedom, and rights, and he's focusing his own efforts on breaking through some of the apathy we observe in our world today.

Follow Jens's work on his website, meiert.com.

About *100 Things I Learned as an Everyday Adventurer*

Written and published by [Jens Oliver Meiert](#), Apartado de correos 3, 36070 Pontevedra, Spain.

Editor: Sarah M. Tyrrell

Reviewers: Julia W. Tang, J. Felix Desroches

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Contact +34-610859489 or press@meiert.com for questions and more information.

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