



## Walk in a Relaxed Manner: Life Lessons from the Camino

*Joyce Rupp*

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At age 60 Joyce Rupp didn't know what she was getting into when she began a 47-day pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago in Spain. Joined by a friend, Joyce learned lessons that can help all of us travel on life's up-and-down journey with more grace and lightness. She shares them in this enjoyable recounting of her journey across mountains and valleys, cities and farms.

## Walk in a Relaxed Manner: Life Lessons from the Camino Details

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## From Reader Review Walk in a Relaxed Manner: Life Lessons from the Camino for online ebook

### Teresa Biggie says

This book was recommended to me and then loaned by said person. I really enjoyed the book. It was my first book about the Camino pilgrimage. I enjoyed the way Joyce wrote it... life lessons from the trail and then how they applied to real life. It really sounds like quite the journey.. I don't think she sugar coated it.

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### Jill says

On my bucket list, among other things, is the dream to journey the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the nearly 500 mile pilgrimage route across northern Spain. I have read several books on the Camino, but Joyce Rupp's story, *Walk in a Relaxed Manner*, is different. Instead of a chronological tale of travel from the Pyrenees to Santiago, Rupp has organized her story by lessons discovered and learned on the trail. Rupp made the journey with her beloved friend and priest Tom Pfeffer. They studied, prepared and centered with great intention before they began the hike, but still they were met with surprises, disappointments and difficulties. The tale is told with revealing honesty and simplicity. And still it is profoundly deep. The lessons learned and shared are not unique to the Camino, but wisdom to be applied to everyday life. If I ever make it to the Camino, I will try to carry a copy of this book with me for the difficult days. It is a beautifully written gem of inspiration.

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### Liralen says

Rupp may have had an advantage in writing this, in that she was already an established author. This is the first full-length Camino memoir I've read that doesn't take a start-to-finish approach—rather, she structures her story around lessons she learned.

Hers seems a very contemplative, intentional trip. She is a nun and her walking partner a priest, and while they try to go in without too many expectations, they also treat the trip as some combination of spiritual retreat and chance to examine, and improve, their inner selves. (Or perhaps those are one and the same?) But they focus on the more prosaic as well, worrying about blisters (this is the only book I've read where the author has claimed not to suffer from blisters at all along the trip—combination of walking in a relaxed manner, letting the feet breathe when they stop to rest, and regular applications of vaseline) and where they will next find food and whether or not there will be space at the *refugio*. They kept their professions to themselves along the way, with the understanding that doing so would result in a different set of interactions than they might have had otherwise.

The end holds an unexpected, sad twist, which Rupp treats with the same grace and perspective as she applies over the course of the book. She says up front that she hadn't planned to write a book about the Camino—she had actively planned *not* to write a book, in fact—but she ended up writing one of the better ones.

*Written February 8, 2015; edited May 2016 for some minor fixes.*

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### **Carolyn says**

For the fan of the Camino and its enticement, these lessons and observations are perfect. Twenty five ways to grow as you walk plus many reasonable explanations of the trials and tribulations one may or may not encounter. There is a reality check on the various places provided for food and lodging. There are warnings for those of us with back, foot, or other physical problems to expect. The spiritual experience is for everyone different, but open to whatever you are willing to allow. These two people managed to successfully travel the distance and return home with a friendship that indeed grew and to this day is a remarkable example of love as a neighbor, in a tender way.

Their little prayer they opened each day of their walk is fit for everyone of us; whether we walk out to water the garden, race down the highway to work, meet a friend for a chat, enjoy the cats or dogs we have; it is something to carry in our heart! THE PILGRIM PRAYER, Guardian of my soul, guide me on the way today. Keep me safe from harm, deepen my relationship with you, your Earth, and all your family. Strengthen your love within me that I may be a presence of your peace in our world. Amen Tim Pfeffer and Joyce Rupp. This lovely book was finished a month ago, and I was afraid my words would be insufficient reflection, but humbly I present these today.

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### **Cecily Bailey says**

Another in my reading series of Camino walk books. There are more than I thought and this is a good one. Two over-60s friends take a walk --for 37 days on the great Camino de Santiago in Northern Spain. Insightful, spiritual, funny, and sad--this book brings a lot with it and a story of Life and living and how we view ourselves in this context.

She says "Struggles are the fertilizer for spiritual growth, " and boy is she right. I did only 100 miles of the Camino--she did all-- and i got it! Thank you Joyce Rupp for a lovely pilgrimage.

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### **booklady says**

Excellent to read before, during or after walking the Camino, especially if you are walking it for spiritual purposes. But the book is also highly instructive whether you go on pilgrimage or not, each chapter being devoted to a specific spiritual task or lesson.

*Walk in a Relaxed Manner* is the type of book you read in small bites. I recommend reading one chapter at a time—which is what I finally did the last time I started it, the time I finally finished it.

It was my dear aunt who first suggested I read something by the author Joyce Rupp. Although I'd never heard of her before then, soon I began seeing Sr. Rupp's books everywhere, especially on the shelves of my favorite religious bookstore. But which of the many books written by this prolific author to begin with? In the end, it was the cover which drew me to the book—the picture of a woman backpacker hiking in the mountains among the sheep. And perhaps the subtitle also had something to do with my selection, *Life Lessons From the Camino*.

I did a European pilgrimage last fall. One of the stops was Santiago de Compostela, the destination of all pilgrims along the Camino. The author, Sr. Joyce Rupp hiked the Camino in 2003 with Fr. Tom Pfeffer, now deceased. This book is a collection of short essays or reflections she wrote on the lessons she learned while hiking the Camino. In fact, each chapter is given over to one succinct lesson, e.g., go prepared, live in the now, return a positive for a negative, travel lightly, look for unannounced angels and keep a strong network of prayer to name but a few from the list of twenty-five. Oh! And, there is a chapter specifically devoted to walking in relaxed manner.

In retrospect, even though I did not hike the Camino, this would have been an invaluable book to have read, savored and prayed before I left on my pilgrimage. I regret not having done so! And yet, I did finish it very soon after my trip. Was I able to relate to the author's mistakes so easily because I had recently returned from my own trip and I recognized myself and my own errors in the author's self-deprecating stories? I wonder. Would I have derived the same benefit from the book if I'd read it before leaving? I like to think so. There's no way of knowing of course. However, if you do plan on hiking the Camino—especially if it's for spiritual reasons—I cannot recommend this book too highly.

And as a beautiful spiritual guide, this book is wonderful, uplifting and insightful.

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### **Bob Henry says**

As one who is fascinated by pilgrimage, specifically the Camino, I found Joyce's account one of my favorites. Indeed, she has shared universal "life lessons" for any journey we find ourselves traveling. One of my favorite phrases in the book came near the end and was the title to chapter 24, "Enter into the Hum of Humanity." Through her inspired writing and descriptive way of showing the various "ups and downs" and lessons along the way, she had me entering her "hum" - at times feeling as though I was literally "walking in a relaxed manner" with her and Tom through northern Spain. This was a great read and I look forward to traveling with Joyce's words again. My favorite quote from the book follows:

"If we are aware and attuned to the larger community of humankind, we will gain strength and hope from our commonalities. If we look outward and allow our minds and hearts to stretch, every day we will be connected to the hum of humanity. As we walk the road of life we will find we are united at a deeper level with each person we meet...What a changed world it would be if the hum of humanity became loud enough to drown out the deafening roar of what separates and divides us." - Joyce Rupp (Walk in a Relaxed Manner)

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### **John says**

A review of "A Man Called Ove" and "Walk in a Relaxed Manner":

A combined book review is unorthodox, particularly for these two books which, on the surface have little in common. For starters: "A Man Called Ove" is a work of fiction. "Walk in a Relaxed Manner" is a nonfiction book.

But I read them at the same time, and I noticed one clear similarity. Ove, the main character in "A Man Called Ove" is 59 during most of the book. Joyce Rupp, the author and central figure in "Walk in a Relaxed Manner," was 59 when she decided to take her pilgrimage hike across the Camino of northern Spain and 60 when she took it along with her friend the retired priest.

I am 59 and will be 60 before the end of this year, if I'm permitted to live that long.

See how this all fits together?

Granted, Ove and Joyce have virtually nothing in common. Ove is a cranky, fussy, pessimistic, profane, irreligious Swede. (I'm happy to say that author Fredrik Backman doesn't find it necessary to share much of Ove's profanity with us.) Rupp is a spiritually-minded, positive-thinking, earnest Catholic sister from Iowa. Rupp advocates what her book title suggests, walking in a relaxed manner, and that's referring not just to how to handle a 37-day hike but how to handle life in general. Ove has never done anything in a relaxed manner in his life.

I amused myself while reading these books by imagining the two having a dialogue. Here's where my thoughts were going, using words from the books:

Joyce: "Acknowledge the kindness of strangers."

Ove: As he drove across the parking area he passed the Pregnant Foreign Woman from next door. She was holding her three-year-old by the hand. The big blond Lanky One was walking beside her. All three of them caught sight of Ove and waved cheerfully. Ove didn't wave back.

Joyce: "Remember, life is a great adventure."

Ove: If they had to go anywhere, why not just take the Saab? But Sonja insisted that buses were "romantic," and that sort of thing was incredibly important, Ove had learned. So that's how it ended up. Even though everyone in Spain seemed to think they were exceptional because they went around yawning and drinking and playing foreign music in restaurants and going to bed in the middle of the day. Ove did his best not to like any of it.

(Hey! Another commonality! They both went to Spain!)

Ove is a curmudgeon indeed, but what also becomes clear is that he's a man of integrity. Given a choice between a curmudgeon who is a man of integrity and a friendly fellow who can't be trusted, I'll take the curmudgeon every time. A friendly man of integrity would be even better.

I am not like Ove or Joyce, but I'd have to say I'm more of an Ove than a Joyce. I appreciate her spiritual insights, some of which I'll try to apply to my life. But on occasion, her Kumbaya-ishness had me rolling my eyes a bit.

On one occasion, Joyce describes walking past a vineyard and desiring to become one with the grapes. My inner Orv would prefer to eat the grapes, and let them become one with me.

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### **Chris says**

I read this book in early preparation for my own pilgrimage along with the Camino a year from now. Some of the commentaries get a bit florid, in my opinion, but nearly all of the authors insights were helpful to me. I borrowed the book from my library. But I think I will buy a copy to keep.

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### **Carol says**

See my full review here: <http://carolhomeschool2.blogspot.com/...>

This was recommended to me by a nun at the Mount Angel Shalom Prayer Center after I told her that it is my dream to walk the Camino de Santiago. I waited until I could find a good used copy. It was worth the wait. What a delightful read. It is written topically. Rupp is an excellent and easy writer. The lessons are applicable to our life's journey and not just to the Camino.

I was a nanny in Santiago de Compostela from Columbus Day 1982 to New Year's Eve 1983. It was

probably the hardest three months of my entire life as a 23 year old, out of the country for the first time and dealing with a bad living situation. It was also the best three months of my life in that it drew me ever closer to the Lord. Although I have long since healed from the effects of my three months there and gained much wisdom from the suffering I endured, I want to walk the Camino to that ancient city. I will probably cry like a baby when I arrive. God is good.

Someday.

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### **Patricia says**

This is the fourth book I've read about the Camino and it hit the spot. Rupp was 60 when she walked the almost 500 miles. Her book is not a chronological day by day account of her walk. Instead, as the title indicates, each chapter is about something she learned on the trail and details the various contexts in which the lesson came to her. Here are some chapter titles: "Embrace Beauty" "Experience Homelessness" "Deal with Disappointment." Though Rupp is a member of a religious community, she is gentle and unobtrusive in the way she infuses spiritual considerations into her writing. Even in a chapter titled "Trust in the Divine Companion," her portrayal of this companion allows plenty of latitude for how to interpret this lesson. Like most of the authors I've been reading, she is not totally clear about why she is drawn to walk the Camino, but through the journey, she accumulates the many lessons described in her book. She didn't even plan to write a book, as did three of the other authors whose books I read. She decided to do so months after she got home when the lessons were still reverberating in her being. I have to say, also, that this is the book has me questioning my plan to walk it when I'm 70 . . . questioning in a good way, for I don't want romanticize such an undertaking which I have a strong tendency to do.

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### **Mary Engen says**

I thoroughly enjoyed the book reading it slowly and feeling relaxed! I enjoyed the author's insights and observations as she walked. It didn't inspire me to walk the Camino but to keep some of her insight in daily life.

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### **Virginia Pulver says**

I read this in 2009 as I prepared to walk my own Camino. The author is from Iowa (which is where I was born and raised). I found tRupp's language and attitudes resonated with me - perhaps because they are familiar and reflect attitudes and ideas that seem very Midwestern. My Father-in-Law read this book and that was when he realized what kind of walking adventure I was undertaking - how simple the "accomodations" would be and the challenges I would face on this pilgrimage. Often people expect a pilgrimage to be prosaic, but it also involves a lot of challenges. Among those challenges is discovering things about oneself - things that one may not like, as well as discovering some wonderful qualities too. I walked my almost-1000 kilometer pilgrimage of gratitude across northern Spain, unaccompanied for the 40 days it took me. I met some amazing people and had the solitude I longed for. I recommend Rupp's book as an insight into Camino life (though, to me, it reflects a middle-class background...of course I have been through US Air Force Basic Training and served in Peace Corps as well as travelled in rural, remote Malawi...)but I think it provides a

useful insight into this ancient pilgrimage.

"Ginn"

Peregrino Pulver

My Camino - May 2009

In Steamy SC

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### **Becky says**

This is a wonderful book about walking the Camino and the lessons one can learn. While this is most often viewed as a spiritual quest, Rupp also brings to light the every day lessons that one learns while on this spiritual quest. Since I believe that life is a pilgrimage of sorts, the life lessons that Rudd relates are relevant for each and every one of us. I would suggest anyone considering the Camino pilgrimage read this book.

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### **Dora Barba says**

A must read for anyone contemplating walking the Camino. So glad I decided to use a tour company to book my housing every night.

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