

Saucepan in hand I felt my entire body fix itself to the kitchen floor as the screech threatened perforate my eardrums.

“Mummm what the actual no! That’s so not fair! I can’t believe Chloe would have invited you without me!”

“Aw love she was just responding to my Facebook post” I lamely replied, eyes fixating on a lump of congealing bolognese sauce clinging one of my crocs.

“I cannot let this happen. No way can you go to a music festival before I do. You can’t go alone you will need someone to go with you.”

“What as my carer?”

“How old does she think I am for heavens sake!” I think to myself exasperatedly before uttering “Umm I am not sure what’s possible” now desperately trying to buy myself time in a bid to avoid any form of what could be interpreted as the ‘yes’ word in my reply.

“I mean you might not get the time off work or have enough holiday for a start.”

“Hey! How long are you going for? Festivals are only a few days?”

“Yes but I will be flying to the USA & I thought I could spend a bit of time travelling around”

“Travelling? Around? You mean like a sort of road trip?”

“It’s only an idea for now. I haven’t made any definite plans”. With the words falling like a cold vapour trail behind her out of the room my gaze returned to watching the orangey goo circumnavigate the pan. I sensed my loins girding for this I knew was not to be the end of it.

I was correct but long story short this is how I found myself a few months later in camper van convoy from Oregon to Washington State together with my niece, her wife & my daughter.

Todd according to his badge appraised me quizzically and as the words “Ma’am Are you sure you’re at the right camp site?” left his lips I could feel the self doubt seeping from my pores & soaking my shirt.

Just breathe.

Breathe in. Two Three

Breathe out. Two Three

His gaze followed my finger as it pointed to the wagons accompanied by the words

“I don’t know. I’m with them”

Despite his youth the head shake resonated ‘I’ve seen it all now’ while tapping the keyboard. Then he proffered me a scrap of paper with something indecipherable written on it.

“Here Ma’am take this to Tanya on the gate she’ll look after you’ll. Have a good day y’all”.

That was it.

Conversation was done.

Joining a queue of motley looking trucks we reached Tanya who checked the paper with nodding approval while spraying a white symbol on the windscreen then waved us through to find a pitch.

Venturing to stretch my legs amongst the gathering throngs, none of whom seemed the wrong side of thirty, the rationale for Todds question suddenly dawned on me.

Had the naysayers prior to departure been right?

Breathe for gods sake.

Rising panic combined with nausea rose. My lungs seemed to have been switched to manual so conscious was I, of the air entering & exiting my lungs as rejoined my companions. Had I been wrong to come?

“Hi Auntie Pauline wanna come join us?” came a familiar voice & I looked up to a sea of faces peering down at me.

“Umm invitation or challenge?” I mused entering the converted old school bus.

With no second thought I found myself climbing upwards, one foot on top of a conveniently placed swivel chair to triumphantly emerge through a skylight. Amidst much cheering and the pressing of a cold beer into my hand.

Honorary admittance to this Millennial Tribe was granted.

So as the sunset so did my fears. The roof top party got underway & I realised an amazing adventure now beckoned.

