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The Way, My Way



Synopsis

I'd never done anything crazy like this before – a pilgrimage walk. I was not a hiker, and I wasn't a Catholic. In fact, I wasn't even sure I was a Christian. On the last government census when I had to state my religion, I'd said I was a Buddhist, mainly because they've had such a hard time in Tibet I felt they needed my statistical support. I was also not an adventure traveller. For me, adventure travel was flying coach. All this backpacking and wearing of heavy boots and flying off to France to walk ancient pilgrimage routes was a new experience, and not one that made me feel entirely comfortable. And so Bill Bennett, an Australian based film director, set off on an 800 kilometre walk across Spain to Santiago de Compostela, not sure why he was doing it, and not feeling entirely comfortable. His discomfort increased markedly a few days later when his knee gave out – so the rest of the walk was a pain management pilgrimage. But he kept his sense of humour, and his memoir is at times hilarious but also deeply moving, and insightful. In the vein of Bill Bryson and Eric Newby, *The Way, My Way* takes you on a unique spiritual journey, and gives you a hearty laugh along the way.

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Customer Reviews

I don't read travel books and I don't as a rule read blogs, but after a few exchanges with Bill on the

Camino forum I decided to give his blog a go. I liked his shoot from the hip style of writing and sometimes his shoot in the foot style too, so when he said he was expanding the blog of his Camino trip into a book I had to read it. I have not laughed out loud at a book since I read "Memoirs Of A Mangy Lover" by Groucho Marx but this book made me laugh out loud. I read it while I was walking the Camino from Sarria with my wife recently and I had to read her passages to explain why I was laughing so much. It was not all fun though, some of the sections that covered the emergence of the "new" Bill were emotional and reminded me of similar experiences in my own life. It made me smile to hear how Bills PGS had guided him past the albergue in Ciruena, my own PGS kicked in a little too late in that instance. The total anti climax when finally reaching the Cathedral in Santiago was similar to my own, a fantastic achievement, met by my wife at the steps leading down to the plaza but then nothing. The real joy came afterwards when I met my Camino family with my wife over the next two days sharing vino tintos and meals. For anyone who has walked the Camino this is a must read, it will remind you of your own experiences, you will see the places you have passed and you will have a great laugh to boot. Well done Bill, I loved it.

I just finished this book a few hours ago. I have, to coin a phrase from a new Camino acquaintance, the Camino Virus. I am obsessed with it. I have been reading memoirs and I believe this was my 6th one in about 4 1/2 months. Everyone has a different Camino experience and every book is different, but this was by far the best. The author is honest about his shortcomings and his desire to overcome them on the Camino. Sometimes he is successful and sometimes not so much, but he tells the story with humor and in a writing style that drew me in and made laugh and touched me deep down in that hopeful Camino heart that can't wait to arrive in St. Jean Pied de Port. It is a story of transformation and self-discovery. I would recommend this book to anyone who has, or who might, or who will walk the Camino de Santiago. I might even have to read this one again before I leave in 412 days! (But who's counting?)

I read a few books about the Camino before walking it with my wife. I came across this from Bill's blog and read it during our journey. Bill provides an honest account of his travels and how his own intuition, something he calls his PGS, or personal guidance system, mainly helped but occasionally hindered his experience. It is a no nonsense account, at times hilarious, at others informative, but always engaging and truthful. If you have walked the Camino it will take you back to your own experience. If you are yet to go it will give you a thoughtful insight into what to expect. I thoroughly recommend reading *The Way My Way*. Peter Fanning caminoourway.wordpress.com

I do read travel books all the time. I love them. I've just never been able to read fiction when real life is so much more interesting and entertaining. The author, Bill Bennett, has written a book about his Camino de Santiago walk that held my interest from the time I woke up in the middle of the night and bought it (2:45 am) until I had it devoured hours later with the assistance of two pots of coffee. Mr. Bennett's descriptive writing style had my knees hurting as he descended stairs at the Biarritz airport, had me wondering how much my underwear weighed, had me look back on my own travel experiences and had me laughing out loud. It also had me using the highlighting feature on my Kindle for the first time. (and I've had Kindles since the first generation!!) If you enjoy reading travel books or plan or have walked the Camino it's a fantastic book. You'll have to buy *The Way My Way*!!

In 2013 I took the 2 weeks I had available and walked the Camino de Santiago from St John Pied de sport to Burgos. I am planning to finish my Camino starting in Burgos as soon as possible. I enjoyed this personal reflection of making the pilgrimage more than many other books, for it's realistic telling of Bill's Camino. Many of his thoughts, fears and experiences mirrored my Camino. Bill wrote of a day where he felt he couldn't walk much further and he was low in energy. Two young women from Ireland joined him and when they parted, he was invigorated enough to continue walking. During my journey, I also experienced what I call Angels. In particular. There was a day that I was filled with doubt that I could make it to the next village, my pace had slowed and I was near tears. Suddenly a young Canadian appeared, slowed down to walk with me for the next twenty minutes. When we parted, my spirits had been replenished. The Camino is like no other experience; it was wonder to walk it through Bill's words.

This inspiring book is an account of one man's Camino pilgrimage. The author candidly describes his experiences and his emotional responses to the challenges inherent in a pilgrimage of this magnitude and historic significance. I found it one of the most moving accounts I have read of this great undertaking, it should be essential reading for anyone contemplating the Camino. All credit should go to the author who has shared his innermost emotions and thoughts throughout the month he travelled *The Way*, this should enrich the lives of most ordinary readers who have little hope of walking the Camino but who perhaps will find pilgrimages in their own lives which are just as illuminating and enriching

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