

Epilogue

Excerpt from a talk given on April 17, 1985 by Yves Gélinas on the values discovered on a long, solo voyage aboard *Jean-du-Sud*, at a meeting of school directors.

You asked me to talk about the values I discovered during this 282-day single-handed voyage. I spent a lot of time thinking about what I could tell you: I did not have any visions.

I had a lot of time to meditate – the phone did not ring often – but I must say I had no great revelations, nor did I reach a state of nirvana or samadhi.

Yet I have known many moments of total contentment: ends of days when the sun dove into the sea, splashing half the sky with warm light...

The trade wind caressing naked skin (it is almost as good as caresses from a loved one) ...

The simple pleasure of watching the bow of my boat slice through the surface of the sea, pushed, but also guided by an invisible force: the magic of the wind ...

Or spending hours watching an albatross; these birds use the wind thousands of times better than our sailboats: you never see their wings flap; only the tips move, like a rudder. They glide for days on end. When it is calm, they land on the surface and wait for the wind ...

I could go on evoking moments that I wouldn't have traded for the world, but I wouldn't be the topic: those moments, even if they have considerable value, are not discoveries. I have to look elsewhere.

On the intellectual level? In nine months of solitude, I might have had the time to construct a nice theory that I could now offer to you from the pinnacle of my recent Honorary Doctorate.

But search as I might, I found no syllogism, no proof. I can only prove that the Earth is round, but I'm afraid I am not the first.

Yet I do have this piece of advice: if you want to embark on a beautiful voyage, do not forget your Magick-Byrd. I took one with me around the world: it worked beyond my expectations.

Inside the cabin of *Jean-du-Sud*, hanging by a thread from the handrail, is a little bird woven from the fronds of the magick coconut palm. More precisely, the Special Bluewater Sailing Model of the Magick-Byrd.

After seven years of sharing my day-to-day and the trials of a circumnavigation on *Jean-du-Sud* with the Magick-Byrd, I had so many opportunities to marvel its exploits that I wouldn't part with it for anything in the world.

Since you are all nice people, I will reveal how it works and under what conditions it will attain its full Magick Power.

There are two conditions essential to the good performance of a Magick-Byrd: first, you must do your best, from the highest level of your consciousness; second, you must surrender to this greater force.

Beware: if you worry about the results of your action, you are no longer surrendering, you are no longer at the highest level of your consciousness, you are no longer in the here and now, and you lose all connection with the Magick Power.

The trap is cleverly set and I fell blindly into it. Thinking about it gives me goosebumps. I almost couldn't set sail. I'll tell you how it happened:

When I was attempting to silence my mind, and base my actions from the highest level of my consciousness, I still had this imperious desire to head out to sea for a very long time. So, every morning, I would ask myself, "What is the most effective thing I can do today to make this happen?" And I would try my best to do it, with detachment and abandon.

After two years of preparation in Plouër, France, I had done all I could do without funds. So, I flew back to Montreal and worked at raising some money. Six months of phone calls, meetings, etc., and I didn't feel as though I'd made any progress.

As time flew, I became more nervous and impatient. To take advantage of the most favorable seasons, I had planned to leave three months later and still had a great deal of work to do in France on *Jean-du-Sud*. I was so tense that I got a stiff neck.

This gave me cause to stop and think. I realized I was no longer detached. I wanted to leave. I saw that I had to change my attitude and return to this state of surrender.

The next morning, I found a solution to my problem, as if by Magick.

And the Magick-Byrd got its message across, even before we headed out to sea: "*Do your share as best you can, the rest is not your problem!*" To not worry about what lay in wait in the Roaring Forties or at Cape Horn, I took for granted that the Magick-Byrd was coherent: if He was going to allow me to leave, He was not about to let me get me lost later on.

Obviously, I had to trust my boat. I knew that I could not rely on its size: *Jean-du-Sud* would be the smallest boat to attempt this route. I could rely only on its strength.

I realized right away that if I consciously neglected the smallest detail, I could never live in the here and now.

I had to be sure of the strength of the mast, of the rigging, the portholes, sure I had not neglected the smallest of details. Otherwise, I would be in a state of constant anguish, to the resounding echo of: "I should have..."

But striving for impeccability is like traveling under sail: you move towards a destination, but you are never sure you will get there. *Jean-du-Sud* was capsized by the sea and came back up without a mast. I had underestimated the load imposed on the bolts holding the lower shroud chainplates and they snapped. It was entirely my fault, but I was true to myself, and this time, the Magick-Byrd did not hold it against me.

Between the understanding of a concept and its incarnation in daily life, the going is sometimes rough and often upwind.

I undertook this voyage in order to attain a greater degree of inner peace. I thought that I would achieve it mostly through meditation and reading.

I had taken along serious reading material on spirituality. In the end, the most important thing I learned is that knowledge has no value if it does not go beyond the mental level and is not accompanied by an effort to transform daily life.

After reading a few books, I stopped pursuing my studies: I realized that the essential is not about learning, it's about becoming; and I already had enough knowledge to keep me busy through a few circumnavigations.

So, I put my serious books away and I made an effort to sail my boat as best I could, with trust and abandon.



I also experienced a new dimension of love.

I have to admit that discussing love during a single-handed circumnavigation may seem paradoxical. And I do not mean love as a platonic and disembodied sentiment. I mean this very tangible rush of warmth deep inside the heart felt when you first kiss the one you love...

This rush of warmth we experience only too rarely: when pressing yourself against the love of your life, or holding the hand of your child: you burst with energy; you could lift the whole world!

This flame of love that lifts the world can be felt thousands of miles from any human being: all you have to do is still your mind, focus on the region of the heart, and you will feel it ignite, almost imperceptibly.

By persevering in the effort of keeping it alive, I dare say that with love, it grows more tangible, and eventually warms up your whole life.

Between love and reason, the two forces that made us evolve, we have preferred reason. It is reason that we use to define ourselves: *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*. Our reason led us to nuclear power and our planet owes its survival to the Balance of Power and Mutually Assured Destruction! If this balance of power is ever broken, it will be another strike in favor of reason.

What could *Homo Sapiens Amans* achieve? A being no longer defined by reason, but by love? A being who would listen to reason, of course, but would first listen to his heart?

*“When men will live for love
There will be no more misery
The soldiers will be troubadours
But we, we will be dead, my brother.”¹*

Raymond Lévesque² will forgive me. For once, I would like to belie a poet and start to live love before we die, my brothers.

As I conclude this talk on the values I discovered during this long voyage, I notice that I talked about three things:

The need to surrender to a greater force and maintain an impeccable attitude (those are the two conditions essential to the operation of the Magick-Byrd). In other words, faith and hope

And finally, love.

This, I have heard before.

¹ No official translation exists for this song. The original French lyrics read as follows:

Quand les homes vivront l’amour

Il n’y aura plus de misère

Les soldats seront troubadours

Mais nous, nous serons morts, mon frère.

² Raymond Lévesque is a singer-songwriter from Quebec. Born in 1928, he is one of the pioneers of the chansonnier tradition in Quebec. This song was voted the best song written in the second half of the twentieth century.