

THE ISLAND OF PEACE, LOVE, AND JOY

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Summary

A personal story of how we found our own paradise island. How we discovered it, why it became a family tradition to visit it, and why happiness is found in the joy of nature and in simple things. This story earned the second place in the 2015 Family Traditions Contest, Emerald Isle Realty, North Carolina.

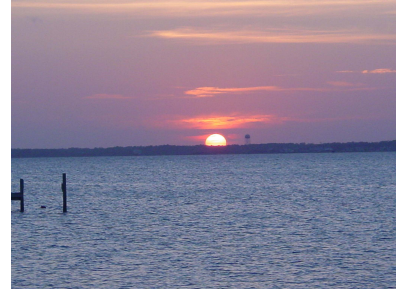
The search for the elusive paradise is a recurring theme in art, literature, and cinematography. How many times, in the midst of adversity, we dream of a place we could scape where happiness is a way of life? We learn by trial and error that happiness is in fact a state of mind, not a geographical place. Yet, we keep dreaming, is there a real place on earth where conditions induce us to relax, to leave our worries behind, and feel the joy of the present? Of course, those joy-inducing conditions depend on our character and preferences. I would like to share with you one such place I found. I confess that until now I did not want to write about it, fearing an increased popularity and development would ruin it. I do not wish to disappoint you. It is not an exotic island in the South Pacific or the Caribbean Ocean. No, the place is a bit more modest, and much closer to home. The story of how we discovered it, and how visiting it became a family tradition, is a bit magical.

It all started in July 1987. My wife and I were worn out at our very stressful university jobs, and a friend suggested a quiet coastal area where we could get away from it all for a week. Without much planning, we packed a few things and drove to Emerald Isle, an outer bank island in North Carolina. As we crossed the bridge over to Atlantic Beach, a warm breeze seemed to greet us. We passed through a forest of twisted evergreen dwarf trees, which seem to stand triumphantly in defiance of many ocean storms. The aromas turned into a strange blend of azahar-like flowers and sea water. As we left Salter Path, something indescribable overtook us. It was a profound feeling of peace.



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absorbed in a timeless contemplation.*



It took us a couple of days to leave behind all worries about work and truly immerse in the beauty of the present. There was something about Emerald Isle that invited us to enjoy the simplicity of nature. The smells in the air, the sounds of the waves, the wind, the birds. The extraordinary variety of sea shells, their colors, the intricacy of their geometry. The mild greens of the vegetation in the sand dunes, the deep green of the water. The curious kinds of creatures living in the sand and the water; they were there for our enjoyment . . . if we took the time to observe. The feeling of freedom when walking barefoot on the sand in uncrowded beaches. The romantic mystery of strolling the beaches at night, while the children seek crabs with lanterns. The nice people. Everyone seemed relaxed, calmed, happy. Everyone, everywhere, greeted us with a smile; everyone took the time to talk, to listen. We spent the days playing with water and sand like children, lazily reading, cooking, walking, or simply admiring the horizon, absorbed in a timeless contemplation. Love was in the air too; parents playing with children; youngsters playing ball with one another; grandparents strolling with life-long partners; couples enjoying renewed intimacy. What is the magic of Emerald Isle? It is like a place to find a renewed vigor in life! Yes, it is the island of peace, love, and joy.



*. . . we made her with sand, sea shells, and ocean water.
Thus, she was named Sandra, “Sandy,” in honor of Emerald
Isle.*

Nine months later, exactly, our daughter was born. We wrestled a lot with a name for her, and every time our memories turned to the wonderful time we had in Emerald Isle. She is the fruit of love, we thought; we made her with

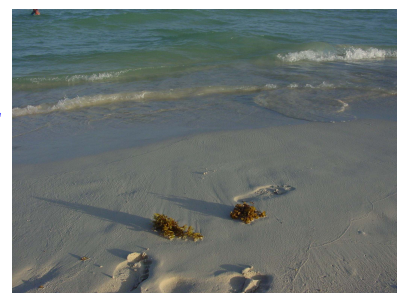


sand, sea shells, and ocean water. Thus, she was named Sandra, “Sandy,” in honor of Emerald Isle. Every year, the whole family kept going back for a few days of peace, love, and joy. We have stayed at many cottages; ocean front, ocean sound, ocean view; they all have their charm. We have met wonderful people each time; people from very busy places like New York and New Jersey seem to succumb to the magic of the island. Yes, each time it takes about a couple of days to relax. I called it “emotional detoxification.” In my book [*The Three Spirits*](#), I detail some procedures one may use to dialog with our unconscious self and some practical means to eliminate the negative emotions that arise when the conscious self quiets down and leaves behind the worries of everyday living. Indeed, we can use our vacation as an opportunity for growth. For all of us, Emerald Isle is the symbol of paradise on earth. In our hearts and minds, we keep it as a reminder that there is a place to return after a year of hard work; a place without stress; a place to renew oneself. During sleepless nights throughout the year, images of Emerald Isle come back to help us calm down. During the stressful years in the armed forces, Sandy has also found solace in the memories of Emerald Isle.



The story does not end here. Like ungrateful sons and daughters of a good parent, we stopped going to Emerald Isle between 1995 and 2014. Because of career advancement and the desire “to see the world,” we traveled to and lived in many places. We visited Hawaii, the Caribbean islands, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Canada, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Britain, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Austria. We even visited China. Indeed, great experiences, but above all of them, the memory of Emerald Isle shone with its own brilliance. Should we go back? We knew from experience the disappointments of going back to a place, hoping to find again the joys of some past memories. We kept imagining that the island had probably overdeveloped and traffic would be intense.

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In spite of these excuses, last year we decided to return to the island. To our amazement, the magic is still there. Yes, it has grown a little, but somehow the island planners have managed to keep development under control. Many parts of the island remain as if in a timeless peace. We went back again this year with Sandy, now twenty seven. We were rejoiced to relive the wonderful experiences we had. The most remarkable about them, is that they were not extraordinarily intense or filled with excitement. Well, some of them were, but the most important feature about them is their simplicity.

Discovering the joy of the simple things in life is the greatest gift we received from Emerald Isle. Thus, we have gone full circle. We discovered the island twenty eight years ago. Then we saw the world, and then we returned. From now on, we will go back every year, until the end of time. To the magic of Emerald Isle, the island of peace, love, and joy.



Dr. Sergio E. Serrano is the author of

[*RIDING THE WAVES OF THE STOCK MARKET*](#)

[*Applications of Environmental Astronomical Cycles to Market prediction and Portfolio Management*](#)

[*THE THREE SPIRITS*](#)

[*Applications of Huna to Health, Prosperity, and Personal Growth*](#)

Translator of

[*AN ART OF LIVING*](#) by André Maurois.