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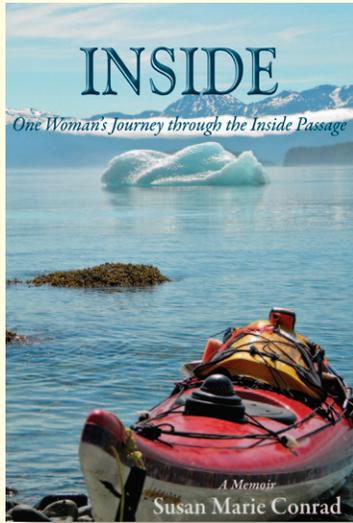
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Inside

One Woman's Journey Through the Inside Passage
by Susan Marie Conrad



Inside: One Woman's Journey Through the Inside Passage
by Susan Marie Conrad

ISBN-13:9781935347576
Publisher: Epicenter Press
Publication date: 05/05/2016
Pages: 288
Hardcover: \$24.95

Susan Marie Conrad is an adventurer, author, educator and speaker. Her tenacious exploration by sea kayak has fueled her stories and images of the natural world for decades.

Inside takes readers along for the ride and inspires them—to take chances, pursue their dreams, find their own truths, and realize their full potential—to find their own inside.

A Journey of the Sea and Soul

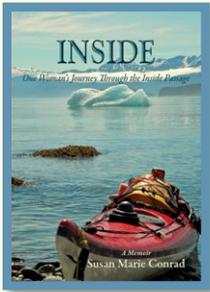
Inside: One Woman's Journey Through the Inside Passage is a plucky adventure memoir of the sea and soul told by a woman on a big adventure in a small boat along the coast of western North America.

In Spring 2010, with her world scaled down to an 18-foot sea kayak and the 1,200-mile ribbon of water called the Inside Passage, Susan Conrad launched a journey that took her north to Alaska. On the way, she paddled marathon distances for weeks on end, forged friendships with quirky people in the strangest of places, and pretended not to be intimidated by 700-pound grizzly bears and 40-ton whales.

She lived her dream.

"*Inside: One Woman's Journey through the Inside Passage* is a singular epic. It is a brave story. One of personal triumph, of heart break, terrifying challenges, soulful introspection and sheer joy. It is also a moving story about the power of friendship. Her words flow off the pages, carrying the reader along on the current of her adventure. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to read about real adventure, personal challenge and experience, through her evocative writing, the wonders and beauty of the Inside Passage."

~ Milbry Polk, co-author of *Women of Discovery* and founder of Wings WorldQuest



Epicenter Press -- New Release of *Inside: One Woman's Journey Through the Inside Passage* billed as the "Wet Wild."

Seattle, WA—On May 15, 2016, Epicenter Press released *Inside: One Woman's Journey Through the Inside Passage*

(\$24.95, 272 pages, ISBN: 978-1-935347-57-6), a quest/adventure memoir by debut author Susan Marie Conrad.)

Inside: One Woman's Journey Through the Inside Passage is a memoir of the sea and soul told by a woman who kayaked 1,200 miles to Juneau, Alaska. However, don't let the accomplishment define this book, as it speaks to many universal human conditions including self-doubt, fear, grief, acceptance, love, forgiveness, courage, and gratitude.

It's grand to reach a destination all right, but Susan Conrad knows that the journey never ends. She learned this explicitly on her solo expedition through the Inside Passage—a journey that became a paradigm of her life's journey. In the course of 66 days, she stepped back and forth between one of life's most fundamental polarities—life inside her and life outside in her environment. The Inside Passage opened new doors for Susan; doors that sometimes slowly creaked open and at other times violently slammed shut. It's this paradoxical dance that reminds all of us that it's all part of a life-long opportunity we're given to challenge and discover ourselves.

Everything in life, no matter how challenging, is there to point us toward healing and growth. Ultimately, what began as a genuine desire for adventure transformed into an inward journey as Susan comes to terms with her troubled past, her craving for solitude—and most of all—discovers the depths of her own strength and courage that will carry her through the equally tumultuous seas of everyday life. In turn, she takes readers along for the ride and inspires them to take chances, pursue their dreams, find their own truths, and realize their full potential.

Inside: One Woman's Journey through the Inside Passage is a singular epic. It is a brave story. One of personal triumph, of heartbreak, terrifying challenges, soulful introspection and sheer joy. It is also a moving story about the power of friendship. Her words flow off the pages carrying the reader along on the current of her adventure. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to read about real adventure, personal challenge and experience, through her evocative writing, the wonders and beauty of the Inside Passage.

—Milbry Polk, co-author *Women of Discovery* and Founder, Wings WorldQuest

Susan Marie Conrad grew up on a small farm in upstate New York. By dint of exploring the mountains of Colorado, Oregon, and Montana, she eventually discovered the dynamic and addictive environment of coastal British Columbia and Washington State, where she thrives as an adventure-seeker. Susan is a writer, photographer, personal trainer, kayak instructor, and outdoor enthusiast. She lives with her second-half-of-life partner, along with a ridiculously large dog and two normal-sized cats in Oso, Washington.

Learn more at www.SusanMarieConrad.com.

Inside is currently available on Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and other online retailers in both eBook and trade hardcover editions online and at local bookstores.

Bookstores and libraries can order wholesale through Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Brodart, or direct from Epicenter at orders@epicenterpress.com. Libraries can also order from Follett Library Resources or Midwest Library Service. Other electronic versions are available on Smashwords, Apple iBooks, Kobo, Nook, and Google Play.

ABOUT Epicenter Press—Since its founding in Fairbanks, Alaska, in 1988, Epicenter Press, Inc. has become the largest trade publisher of nonfiction books about Alaska. Now located in Kenmore, WA, Epicenter has published more than 175 titles covering a broad range of nonfiction touching on history, memoirs, biographies, adventure, aviation, humor, true crime, mystery and the unexplained, sled dog mushing, women's stories, and Native American culture.

The Paddler



Susan Conrad is an adventurer, writer, educator, and speaker. She's also an accomplished paddler. Her combined passions have led to publication in many magazines, newspapers, guidebooks—and now—her debut memoir.

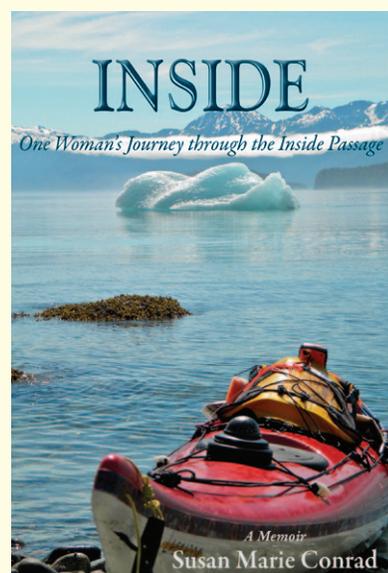
In spring 2010, with her world scaled down to an 18-foot sea kayak and a 1,200-mile ribbon of water known as the Inside Passage, she launched a journey of the sea and soul that took her both north to Alaska and inward, as she discovered the depths of her own strength and courage.

The Book

INSIDE: One Woman's Journey Through the Inside Passage

is a plucky adventure memoir about a woman in a small boat on a big adventure along the coast of western North America. It's the story of a physical and emotional odyssey through an alluring, perilous, and healing coastal landscape. It's also a story about confronting fears, solitude, crushing exhaustion—and grief.

Susan Conrad shares the magic of this beautiful coastline, along with her challenges and triumphs, experienced from the cockpit of an 18-foot sea kayak. In doing so she imparts a stronger connection to the natural environment and motivates folks not only to explore it, but to cherish and protect it. Whether she's floating in a magical world among whales and icebergs, or paddling wildly with fear at her back, she takes readers along for the ride and inspires them to take chances, pursue their dreams, find their own truths, and realize their full potential.



The Book Tour

The initial book tour has taken the author from New York to Florida, from San Francisco to Seattle, up the western seaboard, throughout British Columbia, and of course, SE Alaska. Susan has spoken at book fairs, book stores, outdoor specialty stores (R.E.I. Ocean River Sports, Mountain Equipment Co-Op, etc.), universities, sports expos, paddling symposiums, and on cruise ships, to name a few. She is a popular guest presenter onboard Princess Cruises, sailing between Seattle and Juneau, Alaska.

Inside is the expanded version of her popular multi-media presentation, which she continues to inspire large audiences with, highlighting her journey with story and images. The common response—whether man or woman, age 8 or 88, avid outdoors person or couch potato—is one of awe and inspiration.



Excerpts from INSIDE



INTROSPECTION

It's been said that a person doesn't take a trip, but rather a trip takes a person. The Inside Passage took me—in a kayak—from Anacortes, Washington, to Juneau, Alaska. The Inside Passage pulled me forward, into the now, as my past ebbed away and my future flooded in. In turn idyllic and epic, it took me through glacially carved landscapes and impenetrable forests, narrow channels and wide ocean passages, spellbinding seas and mixmaster waves. And it took me deep within myself, humbling me, reminding me that I had much to learn. I have still only begun to understand its impact.

I floated effortlessly, existing in a different reality, on top of the gouged-out channels that characterize the deep coastal fjords of British Columbia. The terrain was changing, and as I progressed up the ever-narrowing channel of Jackson Passage, I paddled into a dramatically different landscape, an intimate channel with high forested ridges soaring overhead. Its beauty seemed primeval. Heavily forested, gently rolling hills sensually met the water's surface. Smoke-like cloud tendrils wrapped around the tops of trees and then slowly wafted down the hillsides, enveloping all that was green.

I crossed over toward the mainland and hugged the shoreline, paddling in a trance-like state. A mama grizzly bear with one fluffy cub stood grazing on a blind corner, startling me as I floated practically right under her nose. Eyeball to eyeball we met, hers big, brown, and foreboding, set deep in her furry dished face. I quickly averted my icy-blue eyes, but this mental imagery would resurface for many nights thereafter while I lay hushed in my tent.

DANGER

As my bow scraped bottom, I furiously released my sprayskirt, pulled my legs out of the cockpit, and braced myself for a crash landing. I straddled Chamellia, stood up, and leapt to her upwind side to avoid the blunt trauma of the heavy kayak careening into my legs, bending my knees in a direction they weren't meant to bend. I grasped the carry handle on the bow, and running, started to drag her onshore—just not quickly enough.

Places to land were scarce and my hopes to stop and camp were dashed on two occasions that day when grizzly bears—cubs in tow—stood defiantly along the shoreline. By the time I did find a marginal place to set up camp, I was a soggy, string-of-bad-luck, hypothermic bundle of exasperation.

Sharp green seas marched toward me like angry soldiers. Cold, snotty water bitch-slapped the right side of my kayak while a vigorous rain pelted the right side of my face. My bow veered strenuously into the wind as my stern skidded out beneath me, putting my kayak in an unstable broadside position to the waves—and the fifty-degree salt water beneath me.

Conditions became more volatile, and I just kept paddling because there was nothing else to do. I picked my way through the clear, cold sea as it became alarmingly shallow and strewn with rocks, toward a tiny cove hemmed in by towering trees and chunky boulders. The ocean floor raced under my hull. Capsizing in these conditions with a 150-pound boat on top of me would make this bad day even worse. A broken bone or wrenched muscle out here would surely be disastrous. Best to stay upright.

Excerpts continued



FEAR

I screamed at the top of my lungs--at the wind, at the stinging rain, at everything and at nothing, thrusting my chest forward, my arms hyperextended behind me, all ten fingers spread wide in outrage. I was 38 days into my expedition and had come to accept, even expect, being cold and wet. But this was different—and much more dire.

Fear is a wily enemy, and as a woman paddling alone on the Inside, I entertained many fears. I feared big seas and swirling currents and whirlpools and boomers; I feared cantankerous waves that go "HISS" as they break beneath my hull; I feared bears; I feared capsizing, hypothermia, and drowning; I feared getting run over by big ships; I feared getting run over by small ships; I feared getting lost; I feared men with ill intentions; I feared what was at the other end of that snapping twig deep in the forest as I lay alone in my tent at night; I feared poor choices that could render me uncomfortable—or dead. I soon realized that my body could do this trip, but that my mind controlled it—a mind that was scared shitless at times.

Fear would not—could not—be the arbiter on this journey. Instead I relaxed, let my hips swivel beneath me, and allowed the universe—the sky, the trees, the whales, the sea, the birds—to be behind me, with me, all around me. Fear would only freeze me in space and time. Loosening my corset of fear created more breathing room between my ribs and freed my diaphragm so I could focus and stay balanced. Many times fear prattled behind me. But I wouldn't allow it to get ahead of me, for if I did allow it in my field of view, I would reinforce its power and weaken mine. And so I paddled wildly with fear at my back.

ADVENTURE

I listened to this hauntingly beautiful outdoor symphony, watching long, curving backs the length of a logging truck oscillate through the water for a few more magical moments before they silently slipped beneath the surface, momentarily leaving gentle boils of disturbed water.

...Girthy, thirty-foot-long black and white polished bodies cannonballed on the water's surface. Thunderous claps filled the air as the whales breached and spiraled, then smacked the water with massive force. Their communications resonated across the water as dorsal fins, tail flukes, and a cacophony of sounds surrounded me. ...These highly intelligent creatures are at the top of the food chain in the Inside Passage; I was somewhere near the bottom.

...Swimming powerfully and gracefully, they undulated and then dove, cutting through the water in a trajectory that had one red kayak in its epicenter. I held my breath as one swam beneath me. Looking down in a combination of amazement and fright, it seemed as if a submarine might surface directly below me.

My kayak slid over the robust swells of Dixon Entrance, and my surroundings, I thought, were beginning to take on a different look and feel. The sea exploded against the cliffs and I pulled harder on my right blade to move further out. Chamellia and I skidded around the next point, and there it was: an alive, wide-awake ocean. The landscape seemed more open. The mountains loomed bigger. Rocks seemed shinier. The water, more blue. I noticed more hemlocks and various species of deciduous trees. It all beckoned me, as if I were paddling into another dimension.

What's Susan's Story?

Susan Conrad's keen sense of adventure and insatiable curiosity have had a far-reaching influence on the course of her life—and more importantly—on her writing. It's become a venue to share her passion in a colorful, soulful reality, both on and off the water. Kayaking is her passion. "It suits my body type, my personality, my interests, my energy level, my soul," she says. "Paddling brings out the best in me and challenges me to be better."



Susan's been involved in the paddlesports industry for 25 years and currently holds an American Canoe Association (ACA) Level IV Open Water Coastal certification. One of her greatest gifts is her ability to teach both in the classroom and on the water, as evidenced by hundreds of loyal and appreciative students encompassing a broad range of skill levels.

Her favorite aspect of kayaking is long-distance expedition paddling. That's why in the summer of 2010 she completed a long-time goal of paddling the Inside Passage from Anacortes, Washington, to Juneau, Alaska. And she did it solo. It changed her life—profoundly. Susan uses this expedition, and the resulting life transformation, as

a springboard for her work, focusing on inspiring people to reach their full potential.

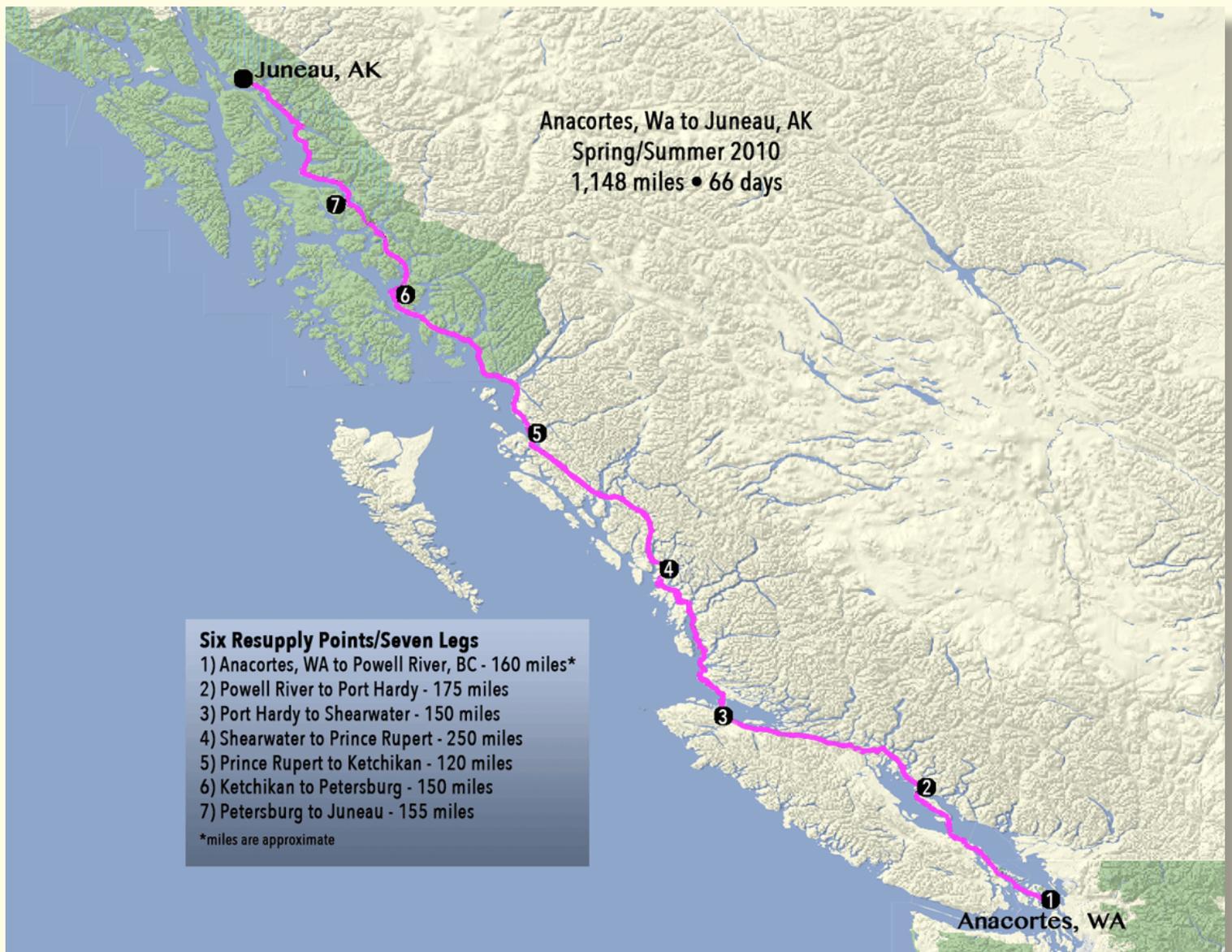
Susan has also been a personal fitness trainer, ski patroller, avalanche team leader, whitewater raft guide, graphic designer, photojournalist, marketing specialist, and other things too insipid or quirky to mention here. These days, when she's not writing, she's out exploring the natural world in her kayak, on her mountain bike, mountaineering skis, or on foot.

She lives with her second-half-of-life partner, along with a ridiculously large dog, and two normal-sized cats in Oso, Washington. She's "fifty-something" and plans on habitual escapades from Puget Sound to Alaska well into her nineties.



Life is a daring adventure or it is nothing at all. ~ Helen Keller

Route Overview

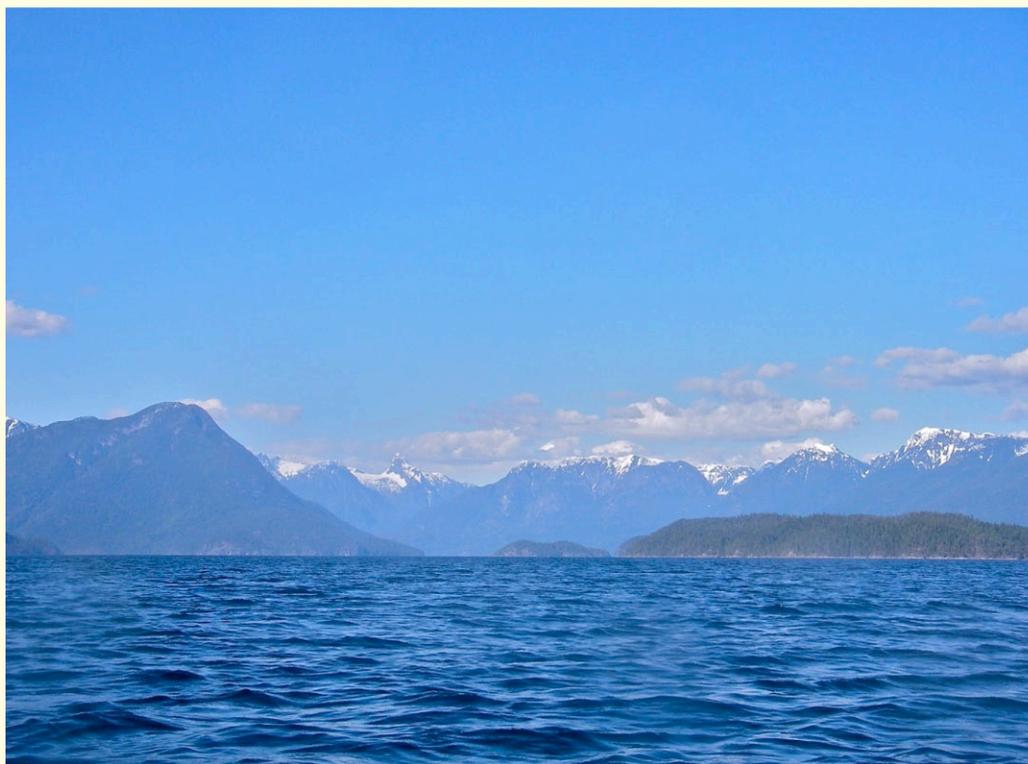


A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike... We find that after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us. ~ John Steinbeck





First strokes out of Anacortes, Washington



Looking north into the Discovery Islands, BC



Stormbound for three days south of Cape Caution, BC



First Nations longhouse, near Bella Bella, BC



Author self portrait, Alaska



Heart-shaped whale breath

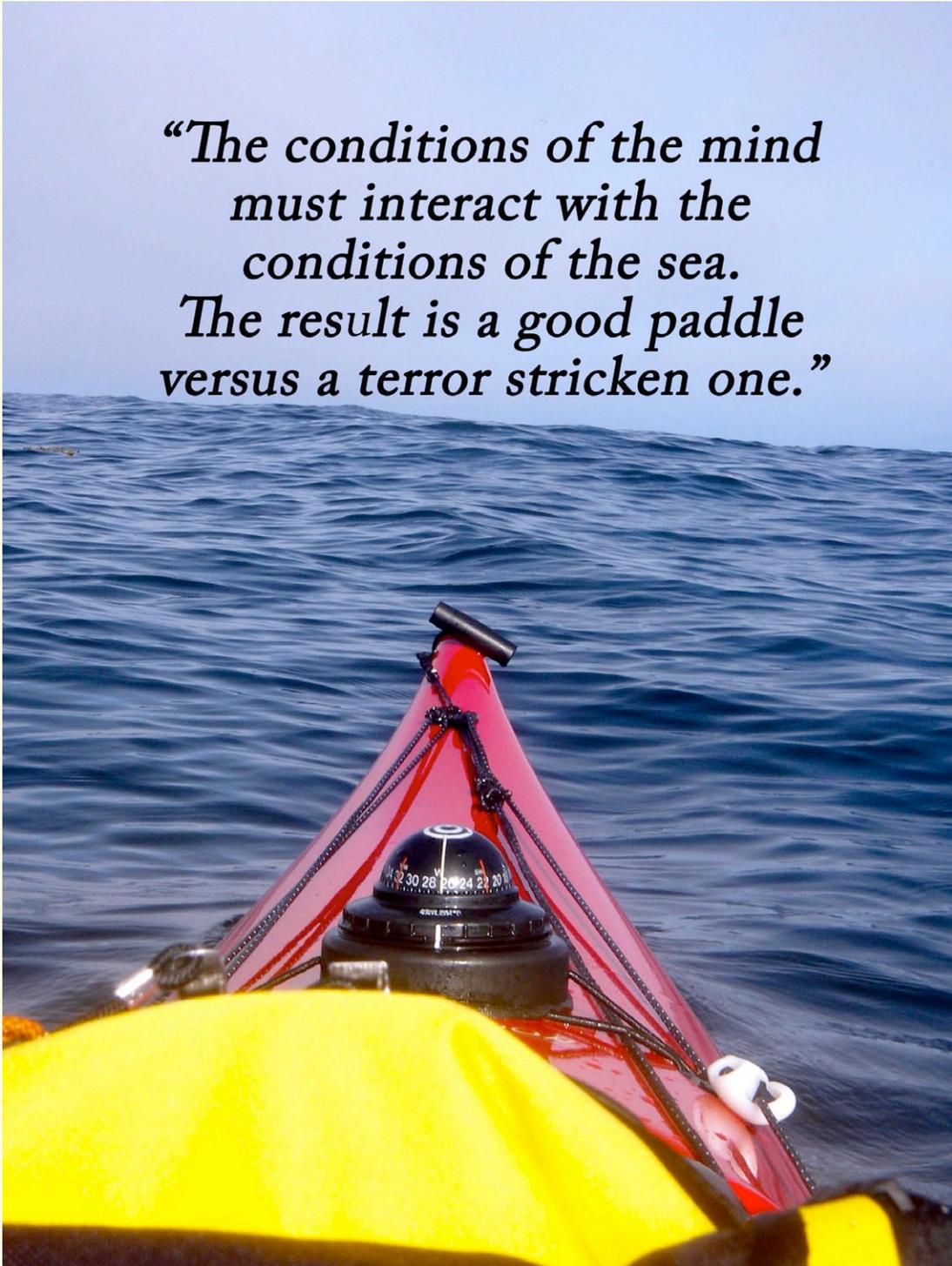


Looking north into Portland Canal, North America's longest fjord



Last campsite!

*“The conditions of the mind
must interact with the
conditions of the sea.
The result is a good paddle
versus a terror stricken one.”*





Icebergs in Holkham Bay, Alaska

Oceans of Uncertainty to a Sea of Revelations
A Solo Odyssey on the Inside Passage

Anacortes, Washington to Juneau, Alaska
Two Thousand and Ten
1,148 Miles • 66 Days

Nothing Happens by Chance.
Life is Sacred. Live on Purpose

Title slide from my slideshow presentation, taken south of Juneau, Alaska

Suggested interview questions

- Why did you choose to paddle the Inside Passage?
- Why did you choose to go solo and how did you deal with this much solitude?
- Would you call yourself an introvert?
- You spent nine months preparing for this journey. What did you do to get ready?
- You paddled this route south to north, from Anacortes to Juneau. Did you have specific reasons to paddle it in this direction?
- In the early chapters of the book you share bits and pieces of your painful childhood. You mentioned that much of this disclosure wasn't in the original drafts. What made you decide to include this information and how do you feel about this now?
- *Inside* has been referred to as the seafaring equivalent of Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*. What similarities would you draw? What differences?
- Did you struggle with the "it's not about the destination, it's about the journey" concept during your expedition. Can you give us some insight into how this played out?
- You experienced many magical moments on this trip. You also had your share of misery. What got you out of the tent each morning, and what kept you going?
- As a woman paddling solo on the Inside Passage, you entertained a lot of fears didn't you? Share some of those fears—both real and imagined—with us.
- You mentioned your biggest fear was that of "men with ill intentions." Did you have any incidents regarding men with ill intentions that gave you pause on this journey?
- What was your most life-threatening experience on this expedition?
- What was your most magical experience?
- Part of your route entailed paddling through British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, an area you fell in love with. Why is this area so special to you, and what can you tell us about it?
- Your journey presented you with some valuable lessons and led to an even more profound inner journey. What were some of those lessons and discoveries?
- You saw a fair number of bears on this trip. As a woman camping alone in serious bear country, what did you do to dissuade encounters?
- Why did you name your kayak *Chamellia*?
- You once said that your journey to Alaska was a paradigm of your life's journey. What do you mean by that?
- Your journey started off by reading a book about another woman's adventure in the Inside Passage. Then your journey evolved into your own "real world adventure." Now it's come full circle with your own book. Tell us about this process of writing the book and becoming a published author.
- How can readers successfully apply the principles you learned on this journey to their own lives?
- What's the number one take-away message you would like for your readers to come away with?
- What's next?

Inside isn't so much about achieving the goal of paddling the Inside Passage, it's about the process of paddling that coastline, of being truly connected to all of life as it unfolds.

Find Your Own Inside...

*Every journey unfolds
and answers questions not yet told*

*Go outside
Find your own inside*

*Quiet your mind
You might be surprised what you find*

Lessons take you far if you know who you are

Go inside

