



Shifting Sands: A Guidebook for Crossing the Deserts of Change

Steve Donahue

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"We had no vehicle. We didn't know how or if we could continue heading south. I was in a vast, seemingly endless desert. I didn't know when or if we'd make it to the other side. I didn't even know where the other side was. It wasn't in Algeria. I knew that much. Was it in Niger? Where does the Sahara actually end?"

We live in a culture, Donahue writes, which loves "climbing mountains." We want to see the peak, map out a route, and follow it to the top. Sometimes this approach works, but not always, particularly when we are enduring a personal crisis-divorce, job loss, addiction, illness, or death. We may not know exactly where we are going, how to get there, or even how we'll know we've arrived.

And it's not just in times of crisis. There are many deserts in our lives, situations with no clear paths or boundaries. Finding a job is usually a mountain, but changing careers can be a desert. Having a baby is a mountain, especially for the mom. But raising a child is a desert. Battling cancer is a mountain. Living with a chronic illness is a desert.

In the desert, we need to follow different rules than we follow when conquering a mountain. We need to be more intuitive, more patient, more spontaneous. Donahue outlines six "rules of desert travel" that will help us discover our direction by wandering, find our own personal oases, and cross our self-imposed borders.

"The sun appears like a silent explosion, a slow motion fireworks display dazzling the volcanic crags of the Hoggar. I stand up and walk to the path and begin descending to Klaus' car. I've made my decision. Tallis and I will travel, somehow, to Agadez. I don't have a logical explanation for my decision or a plan to get to the last oasis. I know I am on the right journey-I am following my compass."

Shifting Sands shows us how to slow down, reflect, and embrace the changes of life graciously, naturally, and courageously.

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