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## Moment of Clarity – Raam Dev

Linda Wolf December 31, 2010



Photo credit: Mike Baird

On this last day of 2010, I share with you Raam Dev's moment of clarity story. A writer, changemaker, and digital nomad, he writes about sustainable abundance and practical minimalism on [raamdev.com](http://raamdev.com). Raam's moment speaks to the element of risk-taking, which is necessary for true change to occur. As the year turns, it is time to reflect on how far we've come to reach this point, and where we would like to head in the future.

Risk-taking has become more important to me, and I see the end of the year as a cliff inviting a giant leap. I gather my courage, and look to the sky, as Raam did, trusting that I will fly toward my ultimate goal, still unfolding. My themes for 2011: joyful abundance and confident determination.

**In what areas have you grown in 2010? What risks are you willing to take in 2011? Share your themes for the coming year.**

Enjoy Raam's story.

*1. Can you describe a moment (or several) in your life when you realized you had to change or else you would suffer impossible-to-manage consequences (e.g., deep unhappiness, grief, loss, possible institutionalization, jail, or even death)?*

Throughout my childhood I dreamed of traveling the world as a nomad, roaming from place to place exploring jungles, climbing mountains, sailing on open seas, meeting new and interesting people, and otherwise just living a life of pure adventure.

As impractical as those dreams may have seemed, I carried them with me into adulthood and held onto them even as started a career in the IT industry (which almost guaranteed I wouldn't be blazing trails through the jungle any time soon).

Then one day, after having spent more than a decade sitting behind a desk, I looked outside my office window towards the city and noticed a bird flying close to the building.

I paused for a moment and watched him. He was so free to go where the wind took him, so filled with potential to explore and fill his curiosity.

That's when I felt something inside me breathing its last breath, something getting ready to give up hope.

Those dreams that I had carried with me for so many years were on their deathbed. I could feel myself starting to accept that perhaps I would spend the rest of my life unfulfilled and living in a world of imagination, dreaming of adventure.

Were my fantasies really that unrealistic? Was my life really meant to be lived wishing I was doing something else?

Those thoughts scared me to death. I would not allow myself to look back at my life and wish that I had taken a few more chances, wishing that I had built up the courage to follow my heart. I realized that would be worse than death itself.

That's when doing nothing at all became more risky than risking it all.

## *2. What brought you to that moment(s)?*

Several months earlier, I had become interested in the blogging community and I began actively searching for people who were writing about things they loved.

I discovered several people who were not only the same age as me, but who had similar dreams and aspirations. They were already in the process of taking the initiative necessary to make those dreams a reality.

Despite all the luxuries and opportunities available to them; despite having very little money and no real backup plan if things didn't work out; despite strong opposition by those around them and zero international travel experience; they did it anyway. They decided to take charge of their lives.

I spent the next several months following their journeys and living vicariously through them. They went from living in Los Angeles and sitting in traffic to tweeting from the Australian outback and writing blog posts from cafés in South America.

They were overflowing with passion and couldn't stop talking about how incredible it was to be living their dream. Every tweet and blog post they published inched me one step closer to my own epic transformation.

## *3. What do you think made you able to be aware/pay attention to the warning sign, the moment of needing to change or suffer negative consequences?*

It was the firm belief that I was not only capable of anything that I put my mind to but that I would eventually, no matter how unlikely it may have seemed, make my dreams a reality.

There were many points in my life where the likelihood that I would become a nomad and travel the world seemed almost nonexistent. But that didn't deter me. I held onto those deeply set passions with the confidence that the universe would find a way.

And the universe did find a way. So many unforeseeable events – from the sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2007 that forced me into bankruptcy and ended my foray into real estate to the death of my grandfather in 2009 that reminded me of the fragility and impermanence of life.

When the warning signs presented themselves, the fork in the road was clear. It was either do nothing and let

that passion inside me die or take initiative and use it to forge my future.

*4. What did you do after that moment? Did you find or create a process for changing yourself (e.g., religion, meditation, support group, therapy, other system of principles)? How would you describe that process?*

My ultimate goal was to become a digital nomad and travel the world with just one bag on my back, using my laptop and the Internet to stay connected and earn enough money online to continue traveling.

When I decided to make this change a reality, I placed a goalpost at the point in the future where I felt the inertia of reaching that point would continue propelling me forward. I decided that point of no return would be the moment I got on an airplane to a faraway land.

Once that goalpost was set, I needed to figure out everything that needed to happen to get me from where I was at that moment to where I would be when I stepped on that airplane.

This meant, in roughly chronological order, notifying my boss of my intention to leave work (I sent him an email that very night), telling friends and family of my crazy plan, selling possessions that wouldn't fit on my back, researching places to go by asking friends for suggestions, buying the plane ticket, selling my pickup truck, saying goodbyes, and then finally getting on the plane.

When I broke things down that way and focused on absolutely nothing else, the process was so clear and simple. It was also incredibly empowering to wake up every day knowing that I'm one day closer to living the lifestyle I had dreamed of for decades.

*5. Have you been able to stay committed to the process(es) you've found for change?*

Once I reached escape velocity and stepped on plane to India, I decided to put my goal-setting on hold and let autopilot take over. This was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I wanted to let myself enjoy the moment instead of worrying about what was next.

Six months later I was on my way back home. My bank account was empty, but I didn't feel poor. My life had been filled with experiences so rich that I couldn't put a price tag on them if I tried.

Now that I have a clear vision for what I want to do with my life, I'm working towards making that vision a reality. I'm using the exact same process that got me on that plane to India and every day I feel myself making considerable progress.

I've discovered that patience and focus are the two toughest things to handle when working towards any long-term goal. As long as you can stay focused, take action every day, and be patient, the results will come.

*6. What characteristics in yourself do you think enable you to stay committed?*

Every day I recognize that I will be dead one day. It might seem like a morbid way to live, but it's actually quite freeing. When I realize that I won't be around forever, it puts my life in perspective and allows me to choose exactly where I want to spend my time.

Life is short. You're the only person who really has the power to decide how you live your life, and putting things off until tomorrow is risking that you'll never do them.

Place yourself at the end of your life for a moment and ask what you want to look back at. How can you begin shaping that life today?

**What would it take to get you from where you are today to your dream?**

*More about Raam*

You can follow [Raam Dev on Twitter](#) or join [the community of passionate changemakers](#).

Happy New Year!!!