



In the movie with Tom Hanks (2000), the plane exploding, and the long aftermath of survival, is like divorce.

Sometimes you anticipate the crash. Sometimes it comes out of nowhere. You “strap yourself in” hoping to avoid the worst. (going to therapy, negotiating) It happens anyway. You go into shock.

You’re thrown into another world.

In most senses you are utterly alone...even when others are around you.

The other world is foreign and hostile; you will have to relearn how to survive. Your daily routine is going to change drastically in some cases. You must make new priorities.

You will look with horror upon the carnage of your life.

Even from the “dead bodies” of your old life you will learn to take and hold onto what is useful and necessary. You will see the total uselessness of other things.

You must start with the basics (food, water, fire...)

During recovery you’ll need to find what best keeps YOU “fed” and quenches your thirst and makes you warm. The tendency is to grab onto the love of the kids. Be careful because they are people, not lifesavers, and they were in a crash, too.

You’ll have to make or find “shelter”

This should first be God himself, through prayer and the sacraments, but also can be your support system and friends, group at church.

You’ll begin to experience little joys in the successes at making new “fires”.

You will experience nights and times of deep loneliness.

You will be angry. Be careful; in the expression of anger you may hurt yourself.

What seemed so necessary before will no longer be so important.

You will begin to lose “excess weight” that you have carried around with you for years.

This could be old habits, ideas, beliefs, prejudices, etc. Things like this will tend to fall away and the most important things will become more obvious.

You will begin to build mental, emotional, and spiritual “muscle”.

However, some days depression may come back so intensely you may want to kill yourself.

In your loneliness and fear you may overly attach yourself to “Wilsons”...those people who you begin to rely on or get romantic with who are like inanimate objects and have no capacity to love you rightly. But *you will create them in your own image* and make them fill your loneliness.

When they drift away, you may feel deep pain again not because they were such great relationships but because they were not the best for you and you were too attached.

Eventually you'll start to have thoughts and hopes of getting back to normal. You'll try to see how you can escape this temporary world you've had to build. Many attempts will fail and some days you'll feel trapped forever.

Like the barrier reef, there is one big mental, emotional, or spiritual obstacle that you'll have to overcome because you can be on your way “home”.

After doing all the planning and big work (passing the barrier reef) you will have to surrender more to the work of God in your life. This is when you truly let go of EVERYTHING ...even the temporary safe world you created.

You'll go into deep waters and let currents of his grace carry you without knowing or understanding all the details or the directions. Thus takes incredible trust in something much bigger than yourself and all YOUR best and most noble efforts. The saints and mystics call this the cloud of unknowing.

You WILL be rescued but you will not know by whom, when, or how.

When you return to your life, things will be different. Your “tastes” will be different. You may not be able to tolerate old ways that were once important or pleasurable to you.

You will find your purpose in being a GIFT to others. Just as Tom Hanks returned the Fed-ex package, you will learn to go out of your way to be more self-giving. It doesn't matter how it ends up, happiness and joy is in the “job” of delivering authentic love to others.

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