

# Spiritual Healing

## Beating the odds in Mexico

By Jennifer D'Alvarez

Sequel to Jen's previous article,

[My Non Toxic Wedding and Honeymoon](#)

For our first wedding anniversary, my husband and I took a trip to Zihuatanejo, Mexico for what we thought would be a relaxing week on the beach. Zihuatanejo is a small fishing village a few miles away from Ixtapa, which is a major tourist destination. After extensive research on [TripAdvisor](#), I found a small family-owned hotel right on the beach. I corresponded with the hotel manager for weeks to ensure that the proper arrangements would be made (no pesticides sprayed for at least two weeks prior to our arrival, no fragrance in our room, our linens washed in vinegar and water, a room far away from the pool) and she was more than happy to oblige.

**“Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens.”**

Kahlil Gibran

We had prepared as much as possible and everything seemed to be in place, however once we got there we realized that we were in for some challenges. Though they had not used fabric softener just prior to our arrival, it didn't matter. Every washable item was inundated with the scent. We always travel with our own sheets and we immediately stripped the bed of blankets, sheets, then the mattress pad, and finally found that the mattress itself reeked of fabric softener. The first night we put our sheets over the mattress pad hoping the scent might be contained by clean sheets but unfortunately, it was not. We hardly slept at all that night and the next day we went shopping. We bought a new mattress pad, some beach towels (because theirs stunk so badly), some vinegar and baking soda and went back to the hotel. To clean the sheets and the new towels we poured 3 bottles of vinegar and a whole can of baking soda in the Jacuzzi tub, threw the towels and sheets in, turned the jets on and let them do their work. We gave the new mattress pad to the manager so she could wash it with vinegar in their washing machine and then we were going to hang dry it (our theory was that they used fabric softener sheets in the dryer so by

having them not dry the item, it wouldn't smell - boy were we wrong). Eventually we finally moved the mattress out on the balcony and used the pads from the patio lounge chairs as our mattress for the remainder of our trip. It definitely wasn't the most comfortable bed in the world but it worked.

I wish that had been the end of the challenges but on the third day of our trip, my husband got a stomach bug and I was getting eaten alive by mosquitoes. There were intense thunderstorms the first four days which also limited our ability to go out. Needless to say the first few days of our trip were exhausting and stress-filled but we were determined to enjoy ourselves. Unable to swim in the ocean due to the storms, we ended up spending a lot of time reading under our covered balcony while watching the rain come down (pretty nice actually).

Finally, on our fifth day, it became sunny and beautiful. We chartered a small fishing boat, caught some fish and the captain took us to a secluded island where our fish was cooked and served to us on the beach. It was incredible. We swam in the calm waves and relaxed just as we had planned. Everything fell into place from that day on and the rest of our vacation was wonderful and relaxing.

Our trip was a lesson in patience and perseverance. Through sheer determination and a willingness to face challenges we managed to have a great time. Though it's not always easy when you're chemically sensitive and even when it seems all odds are against you, it is possible to enjoy yourself. Our vacation ended up being a good one and we have the pictures to prove it.

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