



*Valerie Lyons*

I absolutely love Ft. Lauderdale, the beach, the sun, the palm trees! I love it all! In late June of 2021, I had the pleasure of traveling to Ft. Lauderdale with my dear friend Vanessa to visit her sister Renee and her brother-in-law Frank. I was thrilled. This was the first trip I had taken since 2019 and I was eager to leave the confines of New York and spread my wings!

Prior to the pandemic, I would have reserved a shuttle van to the airport, which would have meant getting up super early to jump in a van and make a number of pit stops to pick up other passengers on the way to the airport. This time around, I chose to reserve a luxury car to pick me up from home to take me to the airport. This was the first time in my life, I was consciously choosing luxury! I wanted to be intentional with starting my vacation early!

We stayed in Florida for 6 days and maximized each and every moment -- eating at great restaurants, relaxing on the beach, and simply enjoying each other's company which truly was a novelty. I almost forgot what it was like to be with people!

When we arrived back in New York, a car was waiting for Vanessa and I (yes, I booked the luxury car service round trip!) to drop us off at our respective homes. It was then that the thought came to me "Vacation as a Way of Life" This is now my life motto!

"Vacation as a Way of Life" for me means planning to take time of vs. waiting to take time off. It means creating time for travel, near or far. It also means allowing my physical health, mental health and spiritual health to lead me It is a reshuffling of priorities. It means work is a priority not THE priority. It means not getting myself worked up over things that I have no control over.

"Vacation as a Way of Life" has me choose Joy! There is a difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is a reaction to something external - someone, something, some circumstance. Happiness is fleeting. Joy is a way of Being. It's a commitment grounded in peace, acceptance and love. It's a choice. Outside influences cannot rock your joy. I look forward to expanding my "Vacation as a Way of Life" mindset to see just how far it can take me!

## "Vacation as a Way of Life"

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**Valerie J. Lyons, founder of Valerie J. Lyons Enterprises, is a career empowerment coach, personal and professional development facilitator, and author of "Power Networking from the Inside Out: Where Your Career and Your Well-Being Meet".**

**Valerie has over 20 years of experience positively impacting and teaching others how to be the leaders of their own lives and careers. Valerie's platform for her coaching business and her life is "Creating Your Joy Driven Life".**

**In her work with women in the 50 + age range she seeks to support women who are juggling the demands of their career and personal life or career changers willing to step out of their comfort zone to find work that aligns with their values, purpose and passion. She is a Certified Professional Coach, Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.**