

Tough decision? Flip a coin

Written by Deb Egenberger

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If you're stuck between two choices, simply flip a coin. It works not because it settles the question for you, but because in that brief moment when the coin is in the air, you suddenly know what you are hoping for. —Unknown

After a full day of driving that included a stretch of dreadful construction through the Big Horn Mountains, we were ready to land in Yellowstone National Park.

Two days into the annual girlfriend tenting trip, we reached the east entrance.

The ranger collecting our fee studied us carefully after we asked about available tent camping.

It's Yellowstone, after all. Bears are so plentiful and unforgiving that there are only two campsites that allow tents.

The one with spots available that night was more than two hours across the park and would likely be full by the time we got there.

A better option, the ranger suggested, was to turn back 16 miles toward a more tent-friendly place outside the park.

Now the two of us might certainly be labeled as risk-takers, but I don't think anyone would call either of us on-the-spot decision makers.

We were torn.

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We had driven across Wyoming to experience Yellowstone, to witness Old Faithful and, most of all, to see a bear. We had not traveled 900 miles to turn back.

On the other hand, neither of us wanted to get to the other side and find out we would have to leave the park anyway because the campground was full.

So we resorted to what any grown women would do.

We flipped a coin.

Heads we stay, tails we go. It seems pretty elementary.

Then you add the element of trust.

Very early in our friendship, we began picking up every penny—every coin—we see on our almost nightly walks.

We were inspired by an e-mail that had circulated for years about a wealthy businessman who paused in prayer at every coin he encountered on the ground, slipping it into his pocket while reciting the inscription, “In God we trust.”

It became something of a mantra for us and we tested it once again with this flip of the coin.

Sitting in the passenger seat with the car still moving forward, I balanced the quarter loosely on my thumb.

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In unison we chanted, "In God we trust," and I let it fly.

When we reached the northern-most Yellowstone campground, there were exactly six sites left and not all of them were for tents.

We had both known when the quarter sailed into the air which way we wanted it to turn out. We trusted a higher power to reassure us.

We would have made the most of either side of the coin but, of course, it ended up just the way it was supposed to. It was a beautiful night in Yellowstone.