

# On Writing, Reading and Retirement

Sally Handley's Blog

## Retreat...No Surrender

Posted on [March 30, 2017](#)

Dictionary.com lists six definitions for the word *retreat*. Quite possibly the first one that comes to your mind, as it does to mine, is this one: “the forced or strategic withdrawal of an army or an armed force before an enemy” This definition has a negative connotation, associated with surrender and defeat. But the retreat I want to talk about today is “the act of withdrawing, as into safety or privacy; retirement; seclusion.”



— Laurelwood, the exercise and yoga facility at Skyterra

Last week I spent seven days on a retreat...not the religious kind, though it definitely had its moments of spirituality This retreat, focusing on health and well-being, took place at the Skyterra Wellness Retreat located near Brevard, North Carolina.

Why, you might ask if you've been following my blog, would someone, who is healthy retired and spending most of her time walking the dog, gardening and reading, need to go on a retreat? I acknowledge that I am very lucky to enjoy good health, but I have noticed lately that I'm not as strong as I used to be and my balance is not what it should be either

Many people go to Skyterra to lose weight. The program does provide nutritious meals and daily strength-building and yoga classes. But Skyterra's focus is not weight loss. It's healthy eating. Not exercising to burn calories, but exercising to build strength and improve mobility. This program is about health and wellness for individuals of any age, but particularly ideal for retirees who want to stay fit, active and able to enjoy our retirement.

I must admit the first day I was terrified that I would hurt myself. Everyone else seemed to be able to stretch and perform the exercises I could not. When it came to modified push-ups on an elevated box, I completed one, but got stuck in the down position on the second one requiring help to get back up. Bending, I could reach just a bit below my knees while everyone else was touching their toes or grasping their ankles. The day we did a class on balance, I had to stand near a wall when standing on one foot in order not to tip over while others were fully stretched out, leaning forward like soaring eagles standing on one leg.



— I wanted to take the whirlpool bathtub home with me.

After Day 1 I was certain I would not be able to get out bed on Day 2, but guess what? I had no aches or pains the next morning. I think the Epsom salt soak in my whirlpool bathtub had a lot to do with that. But I also think the yoga classes in the afternoon helped restore the muscles that got tested in the morning. Skyterra's unique blend of activities gets you to move outside of your comfort zone, then helps you get back to center

Yes, Day 1 was a humbling experience, but at no time did I feel embarrassed by my limitations. The people in my group were just lovely and encouraging, and the young instructors at Skyterra are truly amazing. They pay close attention to everyone and work with you on the areas where you are weakest, assuring that you don't get hurt. Their support and encouragement is truly heartening.

On Day 2, I no longer worried about hurting myself. I did my best. It didn't matter that everyone was better. By Day 6 I could feel that I was stronger and I could actually stand on one foot longer without tipping over. On Day 7, when we were re-assessed, I'd lost 2 inches of my waist, 1.4 % of body fat and gained 1.1% muscle mass. Not bad for a 65 year old, right? I admit it. I'm quite proud of myself.

Additionally, I feel confident that I can continue to improve because the strength-building and mobility routines we were taught, I can do at home. All participants received an email with links to videos of the many exercises we performed daily

Skyterra is an amazing program for the body, but it is much more than just a physical improvement program. The Skyterra approach nurtures body, mind and spirit. The lectures on stress management, improving sleep, goal-setting, menu planning and self-compassion all help nourish you mentally and physically.



Nestled in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, Skyterra is the ideal setting for a retreat. Walking the property, hikes to the surrounding waterfalls, sitting on the dock by the lake all provide opportunities for contemplation and self-reflection...something we rarely do at home with those bills to pay, that closet to clean out, and..well...you know



— Nina and I on a hike to the waterfalls.

One more thing...all of the people at Skyterra, from the Owners to the Instructors to the Chefs, are just so darn nice, you can't help but feel welcome and at ease. So if you've been considering a vacation, or you've actually wanted to go on a retreat, I recommend Skyterra. I went with my friend, Nina, who flew into Asheville, NC from New York, but I assure you Skyterra is a place you could travel to by yourself and feel perfectly comfortable.

Yes, aging brings with it some physical limitations, but with a little bit of effort we can reduce the negative impact of those limitations. If you can, go on a retreat for your body, mind and spirit.

Remember...you're only old once. Don't surrender

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ONE THOUGHT ON "RETREAT...NO SURRENDER"



**Marian StClair**

on **March 31, 2017 at 7:34 am** said:

Looks fabulous! Do they have a six-week plan?