

Blessing or Curse - The Saga of the Tools

by Kenita Gibbins

I love to travel with my tools. Skimping on the number of clothes becomes necessary. My iPhone; laptop computer; Bose noise blocker; Sony RX4 camera, which requires batteries, charger and bag; adapters for being able to keep everything running; and my CPAP had to fly.

Upon arrival, I gathered my luggage and went to find a reserved driver to take me to JJ's Paradise Resort. The driver had a sign saying KENITA GIBBINS. We began the hour journey up the scariest roads ever. They drive on the left in St. Lucia, a small country in the West Indies. There are no straight roads. The driver stopped for me to see about getting distilled water for the CPAP. Distilled water in St. Lucia doesn't exist. Boiling water in our apartment for 30 minutes suffices.

Immediately the adapters don't work. I crept down a hill to the reception office to borrow an adapter. Yay! My iPhone works, and so does the plan with Verizon for calling my husband. My Global Volunteer job doesn't start for three days.

More hell happened right away. Safari, my search engine on the computer disappeared! There was no way to connect with Norton and protection. The Mac account still worked without safety measures.

I did get some Eastern Caribbean money before leaving the airport. The restaurant at JJ's would take a credit card.

Barbara arrived the next day. The Bose ear covers came into use to block my roommate's snoring.

Barb and I met our beautiful children on Monday. Picture taking wasn't allowed until Wednesday. The children needed to get to know us before getting in their faces.

Our team of four showed enthusiasm. Barbara worked with a child for 15 minutes on their math. I helped my child for 15 minutes with reading. We then traded children in the same room. We both brought tools to use in teaching, like books and our imaginations. One of my storybooks had repeated sentences using over, under, and around. I learned quickly our five, six, and some seven-year-old children didn't know these words. They caught on the meaning of over, under, and around after a demonstration. Fifteen minutes doesn't sound like enough, but it is enough for their attention span. We saw 14 children almost daily for two weeks.

The three women volunteers did not have any way to type their journals. I offered to type for everybody and lived to regret opening my mouth because it took a long time.

Barbara's husband received emails back and forth. I do know him. Not having some tools doesn't make sense to me; she knows I will always have ways to communicate. Generally, I'm generous with my photographs when I make the offer. I love my tools.