'Mom this is amazing, I love our new life.'

THE VAGABOND BOY

ING fallen out of love with her high-paying city life, Lainie Liberti sold all her worldly ds and set out to travel the world like a nomad – taking her young son with her...

e and Miro when he was a boy

Miro enjoys a meal away from 'home'

ie and Miro meet new friends

'I KNEW that while owning my own marketing company was profitable and earned me around R1.5-million a year, it was sucking the life out of me. I was a single mom to a fantastic 10-year-old son called Miro, but while I could buy him anything he wanted, I couldn't buy him quality time with me.

The last straw came one night in September 2008 when I finally sat down with Miro before bedtime and he looked at me and said 'Mom, you never spend any time with me, you're always working.' It was like a knife to my heart, but I knew deep down he was absolutely right. I didn't want to waste another minute of Miro's childhood working all hours of the day and night.

In that moment I knew I had to make some changes. It was then I began to hatch a plan that was to change our life forever. What if we gave everything up? What if we didn't spend R130 000 a month on medical aid, rent, a fancy car and shopping for things we didn't even need? What if we packed up and just went and saw the world?

The next morning I sat down with Miro and started to show him photos on the Internet of volcanoes, Machu Picchu in Peru, far off lands we had never been to and said, 'What if we packed up and went to see these things? What if we got rid of everything, found a simpler life, climbed a volcano and lived in the jungle?' Without missing a beat Miro said, 'Let's do it.'

Miro was always such a smart, adventurous boy that during the last year at school he had grown more and more despondent at not being challenged enough. His teachers had even started using him to help the other kids finish their work, and he felt like he was being punished for being smart – instead of giving him harder work, he was being told he had to help everyone else with theirs.

I began to research home schooling on the Internet and discovered a movement called 'radical unschooling' It's a way of life where kids don't study a set curriculum at all, but instead learn through play and experience. It made perfect sense to me. I don't believe you have to study textbooks and sit exams in order to learn. I honestly thought travelling the world would enrich Miro's life far more. I wanted the world to become his classroom.

Over the next few weeks we sold or gave away all our possessions. The more we got rid of, the more liberated Miro and I felt. Our initial plan was to travel for one year.

We packed just one backpack each and headed to Mexico. From the moment we left, Miro and I knew 100 percent we had made the right decision.

For the first time ever I allowed myself to be lazy and stopped thinking that to feel successful, you always had to be earning money. For the first time in my adult life I was not obsessing about making money, but instead sharing so many magical moments with Miro.

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Lainie and Miro in Peru

Miro makes new friends in Peru

'Mom this is amazing, I love our new life' Miro would say. It felt so wonderful to be travelling with my son and spending every minute of the day together. Without school Miro just flourished. Within months he could speak Spanish fluently without ever looking at a Spanish textbook, and we started to adopt a way of education called 'World Schooling'.

That means Miro never has to study books or set topics while we were on the road. Instead, my son guided his own education led by his interests. Since we began travelling I have seen my son pursue his interest in mythology, zombies, gardening, the internet cooking, pirates, tae kwon do, acting, learning a foreign language and even sword play.

It's perfectly legal, since because we're classed as ex-pats, we aren't governed by the normal laws of America, and perfectly entitled to do what we want.

Miro and I travel using our inspiration as our compass, planning our next destination. For the most part our accommodation has been couch surfing – which is where local people give up their sofas for people travelling in the area. It's a wonderful way of meeting local people and keeping to our very strict budget.

And we kept on going. Five years on we're still travelling. Miro and I have climbed mountains, held tropical animals in the Amazon, visited the Panama Canal, volunteered in Nicaragua at an animal clinic and helped at a cat rescue center in Belize. The list just goes on and on and every day Miro and I are blown away by all the world has to offer.

Today we have very little money, but we have a blog about our travels and that is starting to make us money by people advertising on it.

People are always asking me, 'What about if Miro wants to go to college?' But if that's something Miro ever starts to want, then he is smart enough to make it happen. For now, we just love our life and are excited about what other adventures are in store. We plan to travel to Europe, Asia and the world really is our oyster. We are equals and there are no rules, no set bed times, no home and no hierarchy in our relationship. But what there is in our life is an abundance of love, laughter and now a childhood full of magical, unforgettable memories."

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Riding horses in Colombia

'It felt so wonderful to be travelling with my son and spending every minute of the day together.'

Lainie and Miro on the shore of the Amazon river

Miro in the Huachina desert in Peru

An art museum in Peru