**Flying Solo**

“As we journey through our lives, there are times when we may choose to travel without a partner. Perhaps this is due to a divorce or the loss of a traveling companion through death or disability. Or perhaps you love to travel while your spouse or partner detests it, preferring nothing more than to stay at home for indefinite periods of time. For a variety of reasons, more RV travelers these days are choosing to travel solo.”

Traveling on your own can be as fulfilling as traveling with a companion and most likely more enjoyable than a journey with an unwilling partner. It does create unique challenges, however. You are on the hook for all tasks to be done, including your least favorite and most difficult ones. Nevertheless, there are a number of things you can do to make this situation easier and more enjoyable.

**SAFETY FIRST**

There are a number of basics when it comes to your safety. While they are good recommendations for all travelers, they are especially important for solo travelers.

First, don’t make the mistake of driving when you’re tired. Without a companion to help keep you awake, you are more likely to fall asleep on the road with dire consequences. Making a few extra miles is just not worth the risk.

Second, take your time – don’t push. After all, you have no one to please but yourself. If you are tired, there is no reason you can’t stop a bit early for the day. Relax and do what you would prefer rather than what someone else may have pushed or preferred to do.

Third, driving without a navigator takes more preparation time and better planning. Take time in the evening to become familiar with the next day of travel so you won’t have to try to learn it on the fly. Hone your skills. Plan you travel carefully.

Finally, there is safety in numbers. Without getting to the point of paranoia, pay attention to where you are and who else is around so you don’t find yourself in an unsafe situation. RVers tend, by nature, to be a generous and caring group of people. But a little awareness and a bit of preparation go a long way toward enhancing safety.

**DO IT DIFFERENTLY**

If you’ve been accustomed to traveling with a partner and are making the switch to traveling solo, make it a point to incorporate changes when you first begin to travel on your own.

*Lady Alone . . .*

**A Myriad of Unexpected Pleasures**

On the positive side, RVing alone offers a myriad of unexpected pleasures. For example, you don’t have to make committee decisions and you are free to do exactly as you please. If you are bored from driving, you can stop for a nap. Or pick up a snack. And, if you happen to run across a quaint village full of fascinating antique shops, you know what to do.

You will find it much easier to make friends when you are on your own, especially with other women who are traveling alone. After all, you already have that much in common.

It’s simple. Just smile and say, “Where are you heading?” Or “Where are you from?” Sometimes these chance friendships can last a lifetime.

A lot of things that don’t matter if you’re part of a couple can make a big difference if you travel alone. For example, your hitch, the connection between your motorcoach and your toad car, or your truck and your trailer or fifth-wheel. If you have to have someone help you when lining up your two vehicles, you might need to rethink the configuration. Sometimes, in some situations, it might not be the wisest move to announce you are alone to other people around you.

Along that line, when leaving your rig at a rest area, you might yell back at the window, “Hey George, I’ll be back in a minute.”

Some women display a man’s cowboy hat on the dashboard, or tie a hefty Great Dane-size leash outside the door. If you carry a single woman’s bicycle on a rack in the rear, slip-covering it not only prevents it from rusting but hides the fact that you are a woman alone.

Good advice for the single woman RVer is to never let your fuel tank drop below half full. It’s another security insurance tip because, especially if you drive after dark, you need to be picky about where you choose to stop for fuel. It’s more reassuring to start searching for a station big enough to turn around and return to the highway when your tank is half full than when you have just a teacup of unleaded left.

**Different Techniques for the Single Driver**

Some driving efforts require different techniques for the single driver. Without a partner outside to guide you, the easiest way to back your rig into a campsite in the dark is to plug in a string of outdoor Christmas rope lights and lay down the line to follow.

If possible, unhitch your car and illuminate the scene with its headlights. Don’t forget to look upward for low-hanging branches that may not show in your headlights.

Or better yet, avoid driving alone at night whenever possible. If you must do so, keep your cell phone charged and your roadside assistance service number handy and paid up.

Since you have to be your own navigator, plan the day’s itinerary at the dinette table with your morning coffee or the night before. Plan it from a map, listing the number of each exit you expect to take, especially in city traffic. A GPS is helpful for hurried or short trips, but it only takes you from point A to point B. If you consider your journey as important as your destination, you’ll discover more roses to smell along the drive if you navigate from an atlas.

Guesstimate the miles between landmarks so you can adjust the distances you plan to drive during the day as obstacles arise, construction delays, a flat tire, pausing to visit with friends you’ve met along the way, even needing a nap.

You’ll spend only a few minutes putting the details on paper, but taking a wrong turn and becoming lost when you can’t find a place to turn your rig around is stressful and frustrating and much more time consuming.

**Make Departing an Easy Getaway**

Decorate your RV to make things easy for yourself to stow when you are ready to leave. Double-stick tape on the bottoms of knick-knacks, lamps, anything you would have to pick up and move somewhere else before you drive simplifies efficiency. This is not just for laziness or convenience, this is for security. You might become nervous. In that case, you’ll want to unhook and hitch up so you can drive somewhere more pleasant quickly.

They say the “tin can tourists” in the early days of trailer travel used to cross-stitch this motto to hang on their walls:

*“We can be out of here in five minutes.”*

Of course, you want this freedom from lengthy encumbered leave-taking if you are boondocking in a truck stop or a public parking lot.

And finally, trust your gut feelings. If a travel situation makes you uncomfortable or uneasy, don’t worry about hurting some stranger’s feelings. As single women RVers, we have a powerful advantage over single women travelers on cruise ships or escorted bus tours. In an instant, on impulse or premonition, without apology or explanation, we can just turn the key and leave, taking our belongings with us. Now that’s a safe feeling!