



THINGS HAPPEN!

Do things and rewards will follow. Don details his new high-seas boating adventures from the tropical Philippines to Antarctica

I have to admit I've done some crazy "things" in my life and I guess that continues to roll, as I'm still here with reasonable health. So why not give it a go?

My "new" favourite saying for the past 10 years is: "If you don't want things (dramas, problems, etc.) to happen then don't do anything. Just keep it simple and cruise through life." It's not rocket science and most people do just that.

But, hey, it is pretty cool when you do something and it works. It's hard to describe that feeling but it comes from deep inside and drives many of us. Things always happen along the way, so life is a challenge and so it should be.

DON'S DAY

January 25 was pretty typical

for me. I am a big-list person and that day's list was big! I didn't sell my 15.2m 40-tonne steel ice-strengthened motor sailor *ICE*. So www.bluetreasure.me has begun with this boat. It's my latest

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treasure-hunting expedition and now in full swing. Crew selection is complete, last minute gear-buying and shipping from all over the world to the Philippines is underway,

where the boat is being slipped.

Meanwhile, as I write this, I'm about to join *MV Orion* for another 21-day Antarctic expedition leading 100 passengers, so the pressure is on. I'm trying to sort paperwork to sell my gyrocopter, prepare *Talisker Bounty Boat* for display in the Australian Wooden Boat Festival while I'm in Antarctica, and organise a final fitout of the Shackleton *James Caird* replica in the UK for future fun. The days are long and the list never gets shorter.

I also had a call that day from another young adventurer friend, in the middle of a serious problem with his preparations in achieving a dream. He was stressed out and had every right to be, as human nature on the part of another person had kicked in and created



a major issue. He could have given up, but I know he won't.

OUR JESS

About 9.30pm that night, I was checking emails and discovered that "our Jess" had been chosen as Young Australian of the Year! Pretty cool, hey! Well, I think so. I had goose bumps and felt really proud.

I remembered the laughs and silliness that we had, when a 15yo Jessica Watson and I were out from Mooloolaba (Qld), sailing on a white S&S34 for the first time, in a gentle breeze with a blue sea and sky. I remembered the second day of the first press conference on the Brisbane River, talking to media and defending the right of Jessica's parents and indeed Jessica to do things. And I remembered only too well the sat-phone calls we had when she was out there while I was sailing *Talisker Bounty Boat* across the Pacific.

But more than anything, I remembered the night in Antarctica, exactly two-years ago to the day. I was laying on my bed in five-star luxury onboard *Orion*, wondering how best I could help a young, ambitious yet determined Jess. I was considering buying a boat for her to use.

I seriously wondered and contemplated how I would feel if I did that and she never returned, but I quickly started to visualise the reaction of people, if and when she did return. I knew it would be a big moment and I new that little Jess Watson could do that, if she was given half a chance. (Once, a major sponsor — at the last minute — decided not to sponsor me, because they thought I might die? I remembered that too!). So, like many others over the next many months, I decided to do my thing.

Jess is not little any more. She has done her thing for now and will continue on in life with more, that's for sure. I know Jess pretty well and what you see is what you get.



Chief mate Kev in the upper bridge (top left) of *Gojira*; she's 10m longer than the *Ady Gil* and can outrun any Japanese ship in the Antarctic (this photo and above). Opposite: Making plans, Don McIntyre with a 15yo Jessica Watson.

She has given me something very special and now she is giving that to all Australians. Wow!

WHALE WARS

The Sea Shepherd Society definitely does things and make things happen.

Last summer, we stumbled across the Japanese whaling fleet onboard the *Orion* and a passenger was able pass on the position to Sea Shepherd vessels. The Whale Wars began and the high-speed *Ady Gil* was cut in half by the Japanese. It had to be abandoned, after the crew removed all pollutants before she sank.

Now Sea Shepherd has a replacement high-speed chaser, the ex *Ocean Adventurer*. (In 1998, it circumnavigated the world in the record time of 74 days 20 hours and 58 minutes). Renamed the *Gojira* (after a Japanese 1950's movie monster), it is an awesome boat, 36m long and able to take on some serious weather.

Nonetheless, having been onboard, I have to tell you that Captain Locky Maclean and his 10

crew are real adventurers in their own right. It is not a cruise ship down below.

WHALE DEBATE

As expedition leader on *Orion*, I ensure a whaling debate is always part of the program. The guests like to look at the issues and the interactions we have with whales down south are always stunning.

Just weeks ago, we had 30 whales playing in the pack ice as we cruised in Zodiacs. It leaves a lasting impression. On the next voyage south, we have 30 Japanese tourists onboard all hoping to see whales.

The whaling situation is a complex argument on one hand, but simple on the other. Do you like whales? I do. Maybe, it's time our Government did something?

The NZ Government plans to send a navy ship to Antarctica for the first time this summer. What is Julia Gillard doing? Maybe she doesn't want things to happen?

By the way, I missed last month's column as "things" happened. Oops! 🙄