



## NAVEED'S JOURNEY

#Ftcollins2Pueblo  
15 Days, 210 Miles  
December 19-January 2, 2020

Peace, everyone ~

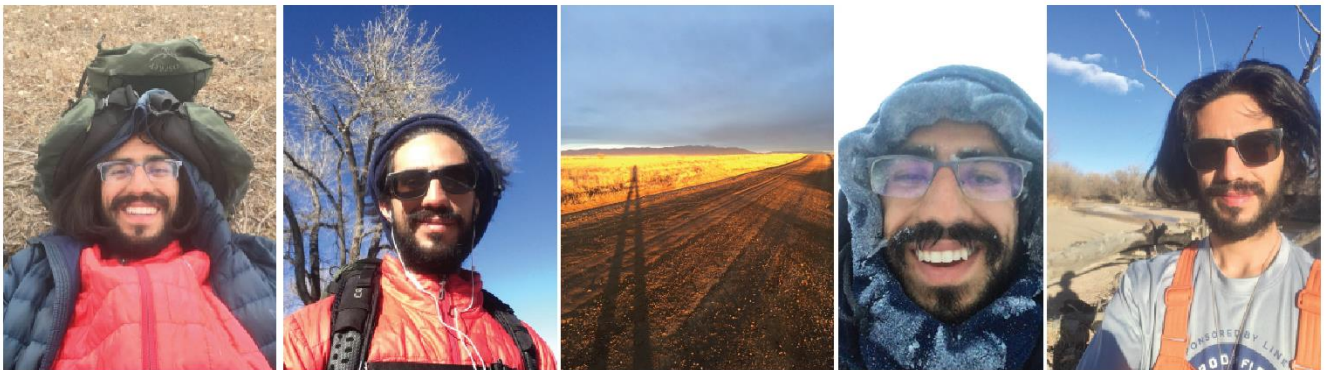
I asked a dear friend of Intrinsic Paths to share a little on his journey walking Fort Collins to Pueblo using this route and guide. Naveed was the first person to walk the route after I put it together in May of 2019. I'm so grateful for Naveed's story, witness, and inspiring way of inviting people into WHY he chose to move along this route in this way.

Sending each of you peace as you consider this unique and meaningful walking experience,

Jonathon Stalls  
Creator at Intrinsic Paths

:

**Who are you and why did this invitation inspire you?**



I am Naveed Heydari, a half-Ecuadorean half-Persian American-born, queer man and I am cultivating the spaces between all the categories, borders, and divisions of our time. I am an Intrinsic Paths Patron and friend of Jonathon Stalls and I participated in the Ways of Walking self-guided workshop. Many seeds were planted while going through the twelve workshop themes. Each theme planted numerous seeds that inspired me to walk the Fort Collins to Pueblo route. The strongest and most body-shaking, heart opening theme for me was "Walking as a Rite of Passage" where Jonathon poses the mantra "Do I have what it takes?"

In his video reflection, he was walking on an apparently never-ending rural dirt road line with cholla cacti as far as the eye could see. Months later, I would be walking across that same terrain on my final day into Pueblo and feeling confident that not only "I have what it takes, I have *more* than what it



takes. I have always had what it takes. If it is important to me, I have what it takes.” Moreover, “I have what it takes to dismantle the untruths that live within me and let my own inner truth emerge from the rubble”

### **How did this journey Bless, Ground, Open, or Transform you?**



For me it was 15 days of continuous outdoor movement. I was (am) blessed with my relationship to the mountains that accompanied my every step. I was (am) blessed with the flowing water on the many creeks/ivers at my side. I was (am) blessed by the thousands of trees that I made contact with through my eyes, hands and heart. I was (am) blessed by the ground and the earth that opened my soles and my soul to its healing presence. I was (am) blessed with the morning colors of the sunrise and the evening backdrop of the sunset.

Prior to the walk, I spent most my mornings inside practicing yoga or reading. Now, I find myself drawn to being outside even in this winter cold and witnessing all the magic around me.

On Christmas day, my dad met me where the Bear Creek and Platte River meet. Before meeting him, I felt so much sadness because I want him to open-up about his childhood traumas (ex: escaping his country at 15 years) and yet I knew that he simply is not capable of that right now. I sobbed loudly by the flowing waters and then I hugged a tree for many minutes, embracing the tree as I would my dad.

It is a wonderful blessing to know that I am surrounded by trees that are open, ready, and capable to receive and give my love.

One of my biggest transformations on this walk was in relationship to pain, discomfort, and resilience. I was concerned about my knees and my body after the first few days. I was also certain that I would get sick on several occasions... especially after the day I crossed the river and had freezing feet, or the day I walked 10 hours in a blizzard?! I could hear my grandma’s voice “you will get sick out there.”

The truth is, I have never slept better or felt better. I didn’t get sick once. The walk was an incredibly healing experience. My body, and I believe our bodies, crave to be used, to be out in the conditions, to feel cold at times, and to feel exposed. Our bodies are incredibly resilient and want to be taken to the edges of what we traditionally define as discomfort.



In a society that is easily scared of discomfort or pain, it is a liberating act to choose to move into pain and find out what is on the other side. I kept walking when my knee hurt and I did it with compassion by moving fewer miles and losing weight in my pack. I kept walking and on the final day of the trip I walked 30+ miles with a full pack and my knees felt great.

I feel like I am starting to understand an important concept for me: I am sick and in pain mostly when my life is not aligned with my inner truths. As I walked and did it in a way that was just for me, listening to my needs, my desires and my truths, my body responded with a healthier, stronger, and more resilient version of me.

**What was especially challenging? ...maybe a few examples of things that pushed your edges?**



In general, the most challenging aspect of this walk is the realization of all the internalized rules and structures that I hold onto. All the ‘you are supposed to do it this way’, or ‘that’s not how it should be done.’ The walk gave permission and allowance to release these constructs/self-beliefs which was an extremely freeing process; however, that transformation was often painful.

After camping on my first night in late December, I had a late start the next day. I was so cold, and I waited until the sun was high to get moving. I could hear all the voices inside scolding me for my late start. As I began walking, my knees were hurting, and I attributed that to the heavy weight in my pack. That day, I walked less than 10 miles, not making it to my planned destination. I took many breaks and cried often. I thought that my journey was over. ‘I don’t have what it takes.’ During some reflection at the Loveland library, I started asking myself, “Wait...who says I have to follow the route as it is? Who says I must carry this amount of weight? Who says I must walk 20 miles a day? Who says I have to be in this much pain?” My whole body and soul felt heavy as I realized that I was (and I am) responsible for all these thoughts that are so self-limiting.

The next day I got rid of half the weight in my backpack and I walked that day’s route backwards. I felt lighter with each step. I was doing things *my way*. And with each day I felt lighter and lighter as I followed my inner guidance and truth, which was very ironic given that each day I was walking more and more miles. I, like many others who have asked about the trip, had the impression that I would feel heavy and need rest once I completed the journey, when the reality is that I have never felt lighter. Now that I have energetically released many of these weights, or shed much of the armor, I feel incredibly light.





**What might you offer to anyone considering some or all of this experience... as guidance, advice, encouragement?**



A couple of things were helpful for me and may or may not apply to you:

1. Consider doing some or all the walk alone. When alone, it provides the ideal setting for you to notice and be with your own patterns and set of operating beliefs. And especially if you, like me, are someone who fears loneliness, it is so empowering and freeing to be with yourself for long periods of time.
2. Mix it up! Be open to changing things up. Be open to starting alone and finishing with others. Be open to walking off the “named route” when needed, when desired. Be open!
3. Permission to listen to your body and stop walking, to slow down, to take a bus part of the way, to not complete a day’s route... The more permission I gave myself the more I just felt like walking.

The next 3 statements have to do with #3 and I have adapted them from Charles Eisenstein’s online course on the Yoga of Eating:

- I can walk as much (or as little) as I’d like
- I can walk wherever I’d like (including sticking to the route or not)
- I allow myself to feel the full effects of the walk

Every morning I would root into a practice of accepting that I could walk 4 steps out the door and be done, or I could take a left turn instead of a right. The irony is that the more permission I gave myself to stop walking, as an example, the more I would end up just walking. And if I truly believed I could go anywhere, upwards backwards or nowhere, most times I would end up letting myself be gently guided by the Intrinsic Path maps.

In summary, this walk is an invitation to operate from a different mindset than your status quo. For most of us, our status quo is dominated by cultural norms that we have been fed from a young age, “you have to have a career, a house, a car to be successful, you have to have a husband/wife to not feel alone.” Early on in the walk, I was able to notice how these thoughts infiltrated my approach to every little detail. “You have to follow the route exactly as its written. Your body has to suffer for it to be a true rite of passage.” The unraveling of these untruths is a painful and eventually liberating process.



Given the nature of the walk (and of life), the unraveling will happen whether we want it or not. I encourage you to open yourself to the process (without creating another untruth: i.e. “I have to unravel during this walk, that means I am doing it right”). There is no right or wrong way. Just try to come at it from a different perspective than the one that dominates the areas in your life that don’t feel as liberating.

If you add this walk to a list of things that ‘should’ be done, you will do it repeating the patterns that no longer serve you. I say this with the utmost gentleness, since I contradicted this advice many times during my journey. It is a continuous journey. My walk didn’t end when I arrived in Pueblo and certainly it started long before I took my first step in Fort Collins.



Peace and presence (and turmoil and absence) for your current walk right now wherever you are and however you are. It is all welcome.

~ Naveed

*It was such a blessing to support and energetically move alongside my brother, Naveed. It was such a joy to be with him for his last few miles on his 30 + mile day entering Pueblo (extra silhouette on far right). We are both so grateful to Laura for hosting both us in-celebration of Naveed’s journey!*