



CARIBOU AZORES

Testimonial Jürg

When I signed up for 'New Horizons in the Atlantic', I had already retired from my career. The decision had been made, responsibility handed over, and my desk cleared. And yet, internally, some things remained unresolved. The challenge of how to deal with retirement became clearer: letting go externally is only the beginning – the real sorting begins internally.

This experiential week was an invitation for me to pause and take stock: What does it mean to be retired today? Is it the end of a chapter or the beginning of something new? Am I truly 'free' now, or simply 'without a plan'? The daily reflections gently guided us toward some of life's essential questions:

- *How do I honour what has been – not just as a résumé, but as a life's work?*
- *What can I allow to continue, and what can I confidently let go of?*
- *What images do I carry of the 'autumn of life' – and how is my identity changing?*

It was comforting to realize that I was not alone with these questions: there were others who, each in their own way, were standing at a similar threshold: between career and a new chapter, between responsibility and freedom, between farewell and new beginnings.

What made this week special was the varied daily programme combining experience with fresh perspective. The guided morning meditations in the cloister led to inner peace. After a hearty breakfast, the thematic Impulses opened our eyes to what lies ahead – not a nostalgic look back, but a recognition of what has been, and a quiet curiosity for what may come.

The idea that life stages are not linear but can continue holistically particularly appealed to me: it is not about achievement or withdrawal, but about transformation. The question was not, 'What remains?', but rather 'What have I not lived enough? What wants to come into being through me?'

The nature on São Miguel is a mirror: vastness, depth, wildness, stillness. Whether hiking, bathing in warm springs or gazing out over the endless Atlantic Ocean – being outdoors often brought clarity to things that I had not yet found words within. A special moment was the sound healing in the classic cloister. The vibrations stirred something that was difficult to name but palpable: perhaps tensions, old patterns, even resistance. The 'lotus massages' felt tangibly healing for both body and soul.

In one of the Impulses, a sentence stood out: 'Meaning does not arise on its own – but it can be invited.' This is exactly how the siblings Urban and Regula shaped the week: as an invitation to gently reorient oneself in a welcoming atmosphere — not with a ready-made plan, but by slowly (re)learning to listen to the inner compass, as the prelude to a new chapter.

This week showed me that our view of what lies ahead becomes wider when the past is honoured with gratitude and the present is lived holistically. Retirement is not a pause – but a quiet, yet promising new beginning...

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