

03. Separation, fear, solitude

Raphaëla Le Gouvello Education packet - Windsurfing solo across the Indian Ocean

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Life on board



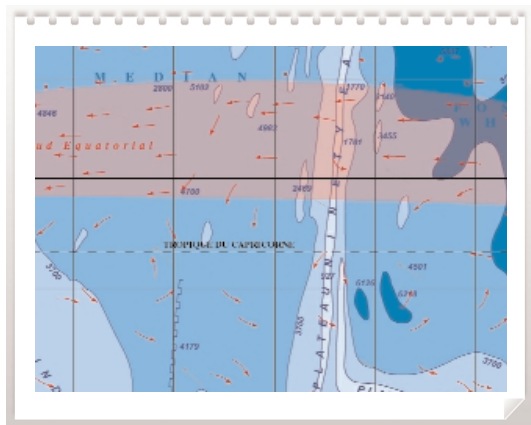
Leaving

Leaving for more than two months to cross the Indian Ocean alone, on a sailboard barely eight meters long can't be easy -- even if, like Raphaëla, you have thought the decision through well in advance, and spent a year and a half in intensive preparation! When the time comes to leave behind on terra firma all the nurture and support of a close-knit team that is deeply committed to her project, Rafaela is bound to experience some intense emotions...

"When the day of my departure dawns, I know one thing: when I leave to cross the Indian Ocean, I will be taking many others with me, adults and children, to whom my thoughts will go when things get rough."

Raphaëla

Raphaëla's only link to the rest of the world will be her radio, which will connect her to her support team and to Course headquarters. She will use it every night to check in. Her friend Hélène André will act as her spokesperson.



Did you know?

Many psychologists and researchers have wondered about the source of separation anxiety. One of the most popular theories is that people experience it very young, around the age of nine months, when babies realize they are separate beings from their mothers.



Activities

- ▶ Read Raphaëla's words closely.
- ▶ Inspired by her ideas, describe in 15 lines one or more causes you would like to be involved in. Explain why and how.

"Of course, we are leaving all the time, some to climb mountains, go on backpacking trips, visit foreign lands, attend seminars, go on retreat, or... cross an ocean. Others may study theater, take up Chinese or the violin, or devote themselves to a particular sport or cause. And some work in their gardens or develop their culinary talents. Maybe it is a question of simply working at something intensely. To each his own path, as long as it is a source of energy for ourselves and those around us; as long as it allows us to take ourselves further and become truly involved."

Raphaëla

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Fear

Although Raphaëla is well prepared mentally for her challenge, she is not immune to fear. Her preparation (stress management, relaxation, and self control), should enable her to master her emotions as much as possible so that she won't give in to panic and make a mistake with the sailboard that could put her in danger. During her long months of training, Raphaëla sought to anticipate situations that might arise during the crossing... certain encounters, for example.

"[...] We tried to anticipate the most nerve-racking situations possible and what I could do to overcome them mentally. [...] Diving with sharks at Nausicaa Sea Park on the north coast of France was part of this preparatory work, my mental training for the crossing."

Raphaëla



Photo by François Lopresti
Diving in the shark tank with Alexis Rosenfeld, June 22, 2005, at Nausicaa National Sea Park in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France.

Did you know?

What is fear?

Fear is an emotion, like joy, pain, jealousy, shame ... It arises when we are confronted with danger, real or imaginary.

Solitude

Raphaëla will be alone on her sailboard in the middle of the ocean for more than two months. She will sometimes go for days without seeing any other vessel. But although she will have plenty to do to keep her busy, being far from the people she loves and thousands of miles from land will leave her feeling very lonely at times. Raphaëla will check in with her ground partner every day. The few words they exchange will be her only link to the outside world.

"Sadness comes from solitude of the heart."

Montesquieu

"The torment of our existence is that we are eternally alone. All of our efforts, all of our actions, are nothing more than attempts to flee this solitude."

Guy de Maupassant, from *La Solitude*

Activities

Closely read the two quotes by famous authors.

- ▶ Can you explain what they mean?
- ▶ Which one do you prefer? Explain why.
- ▶ Find out more about the author whose quote you liked best. When did he live? Give the titles of other books by this author.