

PREFACE

November 17, 2012

Experienced Mexican fisherman José Salvador Alvarenga goes out on a fishing trip off the Costa Azul. After a few miles from the coast, he switched off the engine to indulge in a few amusing phrases with his travel companion and friend Ezequiel Córdoba, after which the two men set sail off the coast. With hundreds of miles of experience José never thought he'd be faced with an experience like this: 483 days away from home. The sky begins to darken. The first drops of rain fall. Ready at any moment to go back and sure of his skills, José continues on his journey knowing that on his return he will allow his family to continue eating a good meal that he has caught.

The rain begins to get heavier and the waves begin to rise and gradually courage begins to give way to fear but José remembers that at home there is a family waiting for him. So he reassembles his ideas and reactivates his spirit of survival. He tries to align the hull but the engine fails and he finds himself at sea for more than a year, eating raw birds and using old plastic containers to collect rainwater. Unfortunately, Ezequiel's fate was quite different. Exhausted and exhausted, he decides to let himself die. The ocean became his grave.

José survived by being adrift in Micronesia. On February 3, 2014 José arrives in Majuro, capital of the Marshall Islands, with a disheveled beard, swollen ankles and long hair. His psychological state was so low that he could not maintain eye contact with people, but the most important thing was that José was still alive. He had not been overwhelmed by the stormy waves for 483 days ^[1].

José's was a truly extraordinary case of how a person can manage to enter such a state of mind that allows him to survive. All of us today, albeit in different ways, live experiences like José's but in the "ocean of life". Every day we face waves that can sink us. But you have to learn to ride those waves. José knew the sea. And he knew his way around on his fishing trips. But how can even the most

expert of sailors be able to understand where he is when he is in the middle of a storm? It's impossible and, as in José's case, psychology comes into play, or rather, the set of those complex mental processes that help us make quick decisions while maintaining a certain degree of rationality. In this book we will see just how to do this. We will examine some situations in which "the sea of life" on which we sail could become so choppy as to kill us but it will be possible to do something that is concretely impossible but abstractly is: steer the sea.

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- 1 José's story was written by Jonathan Franklin, writer and journalist of *The Guardian newspaper* through testimonials and scientific data on how psychology can help the individual survive.