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THE STORY OF THE DAY

Alanis Morissette is one of those Renaissance women who can do it all. She is a Grammy winning artist, a talented actress and writer and she tells TheStyleLabOnline.Com that travel is what often unleashes her creativity and sets her free from the confines of day to day life. Here, a revealing and exclusive Q&A:

Q: Do you hear from people who say they are inspired to do something because of your music?

Alanis: Yes all the time and that's why I am so inspired to have more interactivity in my life...even on my web site I have been soliciting so many more questions whether they be about the artistic process or about philosophical larger questions and in interacting so much more and stepping more into the confidence of disseminating some of the knowledge that I have accrued over the years I am embracing more of my purpose in this life and it is terrifying because it takes a little bit of arrogance and I have always been at odds with the concept of arrogance, but in doing so it allows me to step up and say you know what I do have some wisdom and understanding that I would really love to share.

Q: You seem to have a real compassion for other people. Where does that come from?

Alanis: My mom was always a very charitable person. I was working for soup kitchens as a very young girl and I'm from Canada –which sometimes, even self-righteously –can be a humanitarian oriented place.

But a lot of it I think it comes from some of my negative experiences in seeing what I don't want and taking some of the more difficult experiences in my past and really using them in order to serve. I have experienced things like eating disorders and objectification issues of my body as a woman. So instead of sitting like a victim and continuing to say 'poor me,' which is always fun (laughs), I try to take that and really use it. I can talk with or spend time with a 13-year-old woman who is experiencing the same thing.

There have been times when I have gone to the hospital and sat with young girls with anorexia who are in the hospital for that reason and I think wow I can say something or even sit with this person and understand. That is a huge gift and really aligns me with why I am here.

Q: How old were you when you struggled with that?

Alanis: Between the ages of 13 and 18.

Q: Does the struggle with that ever go away?

Alanis: You know when it goes away a little for me is when I travel. When I go to different countries. When I am in India and the more kind of round robust version of women is considered to be very beautiful, more so than this culture. I feel the voices sort of quell a bit. But as long as our society is the way it is, it's a daily consideration.

Q: You travel constantly. Do you have a favorite place?

Alanis: Asia. Anywhere in Asia, Japan, India...I adore it there. I want to go to Tibet. I have been to Nepal. In those countries in general I soften and feel like in

another life I was from there because I feel very home when I am there.

Q: Is there one particular place you had a spiritual experience?

Alanis: Anywhere in India...but one of my favorite places on the planet is Dharamsala, which is northern India where all the Tibetans are in exile and the Dalai Lama lives there. It is really beautiful to see this culture of two vastly different cultures squished together and intermingling. The Tibetans and the Indians living amongst each other in the mountains. It's like 'wow!' I stayed in the mountains for a while.

I love it any time I am in India. It is a place that is so inspiring to me because there is a lack of self consciousness about their spirituality, rather than in the western world where I often feel like if I dare use the word 'God' I have to cringe. There it is part of their vernacular as much as what are we going to eat for lunch is.

Q: You've met the Dalai Lama?

Alanis: Yes I met him in Ottawa. I like to say I opened for him! I performed a bunch of songs before his visit to Ottawa and had a sweet moment with him.

Q: Are you very spiritual?

Alanis: Yes, I think we are all spiritual. It's just a matter of how much we really acknowledge it. It's not so much in organized religion but I do see the thread of continuity in all religions and that is usually what I connect with.... I am a huge advocate of joy. If someone is really unhappy, my main intention in supporting them is to get them back to their innate joy. I believe our natural state is joyful.

Alanis Morissette

-- Lisa Arcella

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SIDEBAR

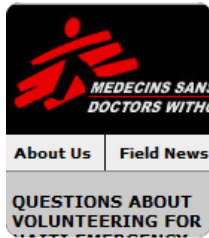
We love to bring along a candle when we travel to bring a little bit of home and a sense of peace and calm to our hotel room. We're loving the 100% pure soy candles, Makana Candle Studios. Soy products are touted as the healthier alternative to traditional candles, they can actually contain as little as 25% of soy wax with the rest composed of potentially unsafe ingredients, such as, the petroleum by-product paraffin.

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-- L.A.

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SIDEBAR

Any column about travel this week would be remiss to not mention the terrible tragedy unfolding in Haiti. Of course there are lots of organizations that are aiding with support after the horrible earthquake, but we'd like to give a shout out to Doctors Without Borders, who is operating three emergency hospitals in Port-au-Prince alone. It's a great organization.

<https://donate.doctorswithoutborders.org>

-- L.A.

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