

# Adventure CALLING



by Holly Love King, Tennessee

Known for my sense of adventure more than my sense of caution, I blindly told her everything would be fine. My friend, Haley, was having trouble eating her oatmeal as we were about to embark on our first-ever mountain-climbing trip, a 5.5-mile hike, climbing 2,763 feet, to stay at the world-famous Mt. LeConte Lodge in the Great Smoky Mountains. We had planned a girls' trip for the summer, but never had we envisioned it becoming a mountain-climbing trip. We were thinking more along the lines of a spa getaway. But when presented with the idea of scaling the highest heights atop the Smokies, I couldn't resist talking Haley into it. She laughingly agreed, and one month later, here we were—the morning of the big hike.

Sitting down to breakfast before the climb, experienced hikers began to come over and meet us. They told us to eat up and stretch, and hoped we had trained (we had not). All the kind advice was not helping Haley. Due to health issues, she had just recently been given clearance from her doctor to resume physical activity. Staring at her oats, she

Holly says, "I own/operate my own house-cleaning business, Happy to Be Home, and freelance write. I love adventure, deep belly laughs, and friends." To learn more or order her devotional journal, visit [HollyLoveKing.com](http://HollyLoveKing.com).

said, "I don't think I can do it." Calming her fears, I quickly replied, "All we have to do is walk. We can go as slow as we want and take as many breaks as we need. We're fine!" A compliant "If you say so ..." was muttered.

Halfway up the trail, we stopped for a break at Alum Cave. It's not really a cave, but rather, a huge stone wall about 80 feet high and 500 feet long, and at that moment, it was *Haley's* stone wall. Again, staring at me in glazed fear, she said, "Holly, I can't do this. I'm done. We have to turn back." I could see she was serious, but we had already come so far. Not only had we driven four hours to get here, we had done the hard work of leaving our families. You know, meals in the fridge, notes left for Dad, outfits, diapers, and back-up pacifiers all laid out. We were young mamas, and we needed this getaway-turned-adventure. If only we could hike 2.5 more miles, we would be sleeping *on top of a mountain!* Up to this point, I had been very gentle with Haley, but gentle compassion wasn't working now. Something had to change. Somehow,

some way, I had to get her up that mountain with me.

Unsuspecting, Haley put on her backpack and stood in front of me. Continuing to tell me we should have gone to a spa and that she was hiking back down the mountain, her fear began to trigger my own. And out of nowhere, I spanked her! I literally spanked her. Two grown women, one in a full-on panic and the other one spanking her best friend. You know how they say in panic situations you will either fight, flight, or freeze? Well, apparently, I *spank!*

A jaw-dropped Haley turned around and laughingly asked, "Girl! Did you just spank me?" Laughingly, I answered, "Yes, I did! And you're gonna get the hell up this mountain! We didn't come all this way to go home now!" In shock at my action and language, we both began to die laughing, and somehow, the moment distracted us enough to start walking *up* the mountain instead of down. We laughed for the remainder of the hike, talking about that moment, and made many more memories. We were terrified we'd encounter a bear, but we never did. Once there, we overslept and almost missed the sunrise. We made new friends along the way, and were so sore we could barely hike back down. Apparently, hiking 2,763 feet requires some training.

However, something new happened within each of us on that journey. It woke us up to the nurture found only in nature, and 11 years later, we still haven't had that spa getaway. Instead, we choose something outdoors. We've found that letting loose is worth the effort it takes to put work down and remember what it feels like to play. So once a year, somewhere out in the wild, you can be sure to hear us laughing our heads off as we endure yet another ridiculous catastrophe ... *because adventure is always calling.*

