

May 26, 2015

To whom it may concern,

I was first introduced to Airbnb when I was seeking lodging in New Orleans close to where my son, his wife and my newly born grand-daughter were living. The hotel rates in their area were way beyond my budget [no less than \$300 per night, due to the prime location and Jazz events that were taking place during the time of year.] So someone suggested I checkout Airbnb, which at the time was foreign to me and I must admit a bit out of my comfort zone when I understood the premise. But... what an amazing experience! From learning about the brand, searching and viewing amazing homes, apartments, rooms and even coming across treehouses?! I found and rented an entire/wonderful two bedroom apartment in the heart of NOLA, which was a short trolley ride to my family, NOLA's attractions and amazing restaurants; not to mention the MONEY I saved!

My hostess was awesome (as was her home, tastefully decorated in vintage style with thrift market finds) she welcomed my best friend and I with a hand written message on a 48" x 36" chalkboard, had all kinds of goodies, wine, breakfast foods, fruits, fresh linens etc., and created a binder that had local restaurants, bars, trolley schedule, tours, as well as, recommendations of all of *her* favorite shops and hot-spots! Suffice it to say, "I was hooked!" Since then I knew Airbnb would be the FIRST place I'd google when planning my vacation and/or business trips. But... I also began thinking about becoming an Airbnb host myself.

But this time around, I had hope when I decided I'd use my hospitality and design background to prepare my one bedroom 600 sq. ft., apartment and become an Airbnb hostess to help with my expenses. Within a few weeks I found myself no longer focusing on my disease or how I was going to pay my expenses; but now I was focusing on my talents and passion and how I was going to use them to provide people with a great space with warm hospitality... there was no question I had found my passion.

So, in April 2015 I received my first three bookings and hosted my FIRST guests on April 9th, a lovely newly-wed couple from Spain, a few days later an attorney and her celebrity boyfriend from New York and then a writer/producer from Vienna. Each experience was different, one was actually challenging but all were awesome, learning experiences and I couldn't wait to receive more inquiries to host again,

But the fear and anxiety didn't last long; within a couple of weeks I had back-to-back bookings and found myself once again, focusing solely on preparing my space and enjoying the journey of being the best Airbnb hostess; and feeling so very grateful that I was able to make ends meet.

Since my first hosting experiences I have accommodated guests from Georgia, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Chile, and Munich and today I'm hosting a young couple from Berlin Germany; and I have guests coming in from Missouri, India and Aussie Australia in the next several weeks and months. I mention ALL of these things, happily sharing my Airbnb story/experiences because in a world where technology (texting, Skyping, emails etc.,) and high costs of living and traveling has replaced or limits physical greetings and individual encounters; if it were not for the vision of the founders of Airbnb and the passion of its team I honestly do not believe that I would have met so many great people [and cultures] from around the globe and/or formed lasting relationships, let alone consider traveling abroad like I do now.

In a nut-shell Airbnb has been a foundation for me to embrace and push past the challenges my disease/disability creates at times, continue to use my gift of design and passion for hospitality to welcome people from around the world, as well as, help me to make ends meet! And I am so very grateful to God for all of these things and especially for Airbnb!

Warm Regards,

~Deborah Sauls