

Ready About - Hard Alee

Ready about - Hard Alee is a sailing term. It's used to alert the crew to the fact the boat is going to change course and they need to prepare.

"Ready About" is to prepare and then, when the captain sees the crew is ready, they say "Hard Alee" to confirm they are turning and changing course. The phrase "Come About", also refers to the boat changing course. To be technically correct, it's when the bow of the boat passes through the wind and the sail goes to the other side of the boat.

My last article was "Stay the Course" and now I'm writing about changing course. Which is correct?

Both. To "Stay the Course" and continue towards the selected destination often means one has to "Come About" changing course in order to get back on course, or to adjust to the current conditions before getting back on course.

Our plan is to head to the destination and stay the course, going in a straight line, the shortest distance, to the destination. That is the plan.

Yet, the plan works best as a guide, and a road map, to the objective. Then, once you have started, life, people, obstacles, breakdowns, and a multitude of events are destined to occur. You will have to adjust your course, you will have to "Come About", and you will have to adjust again. It's not right or wrong, it's life, and it is going to happen.

The key is to accept it, and to change as needed. Yet, at the same time, you must keep in mind the course, the objective, and the goal.

Get back to the course as soon as possible. Do what you have to do today with the objective to get back on course. Keep as close as possible to the course while handling the distractions of life, while also adjusting back to course as time and circumstances allow.

To succeed, we need to be firm in our resolve to stay the course, while, at the same time, being flexible. If we are rigid, we break. If we are flexible, we roll with the punches, we come about, and then come about again to get back on course, when it is possible to do so.

The ships of old used to stop and rest in certain areas when the tide was against them and stronger than the wind. They could not overcome the tide with what little wind they had. Hence, they stopped and rested. When the conditions were right, they were rested and moved forth. We can and should learn from these old sailors.

Don't fight and expend your energies on something you can't win. Adjust to the conditions of life itself. Then, move forward when the conditions allow. It is that simple.

Be flexible, be nimble, change course as needed, and yet always keep your eye on the chosen course, so you can get back on course when the conditions allow.