



## Look At The View, by Anna Quindlen

I found one of my best teachers on the boardwalk at Coney Island many years ago. It was December, and I was doing a story about how the homeless suffer in the winter months. He and I sat on the edge of the wooden supports, dangling our feet over the side, and he told me about his schedule, panhandling the Boulevard when the summer crowds were gone, sleeping in a church when the temperature went below freezing, hiding from the police amid the Tilt-A-Whirl and the Cyclone and some of the other seasonal rides. But he told me that most of the time he stayed on the boardwalk, facing the water, just the way we were sitting now, even when it got cold and he had to wear his newspapers after he read them. And I asked him why. Why didn't he go to one of the shelters? Why didn't he check himself into the hospital for detox? And he stared out at ocean and said "Look at the view, young lady. Look at the view." And every day, in some little way, I tried to do what he said. I tried to look at the view. That's all. Words of wisdom from man with not a dime in his pocket, no place to go, nowhere to be. Look at the view. When do what he said, I'm never disappointed. -- Anna Quindlen in "Short Guide to a Happy Life"

A popular New York Times writer, Quindlen left in 1994 to raise her kids and today is a best-selling author of many books.