

Living An Empowered Life Through Travel



20 Lessons travel taught me about Life

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Introduction	3
Relationships to Others	6
1. <i>Same Same But Different</i>	6
2. <i>Hang Around People Who Celebrate You, Not Tolerate You</i>	8
3. <i>You Can Understand Others Through More Than Words</i>	11
4. <i>Helping Another Means Helping Yourself</i>	13
5. <i>A Smile, a Laugh, Encouraging words, and Appreciation will Break Down any Barriers</i>	17
Relationships to Earth	19
6. <i>The Earth Is a Living Organism that is so Much More Powerful than us</i>	19
7. <i>Nature is a Place of Rejuvenation</i>	22
Relationships to Self	24
8. <i>You are Powerful Beyond Measure</i>	24
9. <i>Trust in your Gut</i>	28
10. <i>Your Past does not Matter and you are Not your Problems</i>	31

Relationships to Life	35
11. <i>Share Share Share</i>	35
12. <i>This Too Shall Pass</i>	38
13. <i>There is Power in Pain</i>	41
14. <i>To Progress Through Life you Need to Swallow Your Fear</i>	45
15. <i>Change is Good... Change is Life's most Natural State</i>	49
16. <i>The Only Way to Find the Answers is to Ask the Questions</i>	52
17. <i>Silence and Stillness is a Friend</i>	55
18. <i>The only place where life exists is NOW. Live it!</i>	58
19. <i>Enthusiasm, Joy, Awe and Gratitude are our most Powerful Emotions</i>	60
20. <i>God exists everywhere</i>	62

Introduction

“The difference between a tourist and a traveler is that a tourist seeks only comfort while a traveler seeks discovery. They take more risks. They get pleasure in overcoming difficulties and discomforts, and they seek out the people.” Lea Lane

Travel means so much more to me than just a portal in which to see new destinations and learn about new cultures. Travel is a journey within myself. It is through travel that I have learned more about who I am and what my purpose is.

It is through my experiences that I have also learned certain truths about life and natural laws. These are the sorts of things that you are never taught in school, which is always such a surprise to me, as these are the truths and lessons that help to create for you a fulfilling and empowered life, and isn't that what schools are meant to be for?

Anyway, I don't want to bore you with a rant on the inefficiencies of an outdated educational system. I do, however, want to share with you what some of these lessons I have learned are that have helped me to grow into, what I think, is a person who lives an empowered life.

What is an empowered life?

To empower is to give power to, and enable oneself to become the authority of his or her life. Living an empowered life means you take responsibility for your life, and you develop the ability to confidently make decisions knowing that you are in control of the effects of these decisions.

Empowerment is a growth process that develops in you skills needed for a successful life such as positive thinking, an awareness of your own

greatness, the ability to decipher right from wrong, and living with an attitude of kindness and gratitude.

Living an empowered life means that the marks you leave on your own life and those that you come into contact with will be positive and uplifting. An empowered life means striving to live your best life and to help others to do the same.

Four Major Relationship Areas

I have categorized the lessons into the four major relationship areas of our life: Relationships to Others, Relationships to Self, Relationships to the Earth, and Relationships to Life or as some might call it God. To me they are one and the same.

These lessons may belong to several of the categories, as these relationships are never separate; all living things are interdependent. You need to be strong in each to be strong in all, maintaining an empowered balance as a result.

These truths, or lessons, I have found to be the same no matter where I have traveled or whom I have interacted with. They never let me down. Some of these truths I have extended upon in my own life through private study and teachings from those, dare I say, “enlightened beings” who have walked a continual path of learning and who now pass on that wisdom to others.

Could you learn these things by not traveling? Yes. You can learn anything by keeping your eyes and ears open no matter where you are and what you do. A lot of our lessons in life come through the pain we experience and that is why I explain that pain is actually your friend. But there are certain things I think you would find harder to learn without traveling, and I think travel helped me to learn the lessons a lot quicker.

For instance, how could you truly know what God means, if your only experience of it was through the four walls of a church and the religious

upbringing of your childhood? When you travel, you look to learn about other ways, and you experience new things, not through a book or audio CD, but by using your 5 or 6 senses. You may visit a Hindu temple, attend a Muslim wedding, teach at a Buddhist school, or just spend a lot of time in nature. At the end of that entire discovery, you might find that, yes, God is in the place where you were first told to believe growing up, or you may not. You would never have affirmed this, or discovered a new way, if you did not go out and see the other ways for yourself.

And so in many regards, one could then consider travel to incorporate any event or journey that leads you to discover a new way of being or thinking. And with that discovery comes a changing of thought, and an embracing of either the old or the new. So yes, you can learn these lessons without having to travel around the world or for long periods of time. You may just travel to an ethnic part of your city for the weekend.

For me personally, I found my ability to learn these lessons was heightened through my travel experiences.

Relationships to Others

1. Same Same But Different



This is one of my favorite sayings that I learned from my time in Bali. The Balinese use this all the time to explain or describe something they can't really explain or describe. With a wave of their hand they will just say ***"Same same but different."***

I absolutely love this and I think it really shows a natural law. Everything and everyone is the same... same but different. I love how the saying first recognizes that what is the same is what is most important. But within that sameness comes some differences, differences that can just be waved away with your hand, they are so minute.

Whenever I travel to a new destination, I always first view it through the eyes of what is the same. This helps me to find a connection to it and be less willing to turn my nose up in case I don't like it. Once I have found the commonalities, I am more open to accept and appreciate the differences. And in the end if I don't like what is different then I can just focus on what I like about it that is the same.

The biggest truth to this I learned is in regards to all people. It never stops to amaze me just how much we human beings are the same. Every new place I go to, I run into the same personalities from where I just departed. I meet people who laugh at the same jokes, I talk to people who share similar dreams and experiences, I see children on the dirt roads of Cambodia playing the same games that children in the playgrounds of private schools do in Sydney. I experience the same joy at a Muslim wedding that I do at a Catholic one. A Buddhist ceremony is performed with the same reverence and awe as Jewish one. And I see that when people are hurt they bleed the same color, and have hearts that cry the same salty tears and burst with the same deep love. **Same same but different.**

Inherently we are all the same. We are made up of the same stuff. **The differences are so unimportant; they are just the minor details that make us all unique.** If only all people could view others like that, there would be no need for war and hatred. If I first recognize that you are the same as me, then why would I want to hurt you?

When you get to the heart of all major religions, when you delve deep below the dogma and traditions, you will find this truth. It's just that most people practice the dogma and tradition, the differences, and forget to go deeper to seek the truth.

Same Same but different

2. Hang Around People Who Celebrate You, Not Tolerate You



When you are traveling, you have the luxury of choosing who you hang around. You are not obligated to keep a connection with the people you meet. They are not family and they have no childhood history with you. You can spend time getting to know them and if you decide they are not your cup of tea, then you wish them a fantastic journey and you go on your way. There is no drama or sorrow that comes with moving on.

This grants you greater freedom to form deeper bonds with those people you do enjoy being with. Moments spent with friends like these will be placed in your treasure box of memories forever. These are the people who have loved you for who you are. When you are traveling, barriers tend to get removed and you find yourself opening up more to people. You can be yourself. There is no one around who knows you or your past. You can be

who you are at this moment, and be loved for it. When traveling you tend to choose your circle of friends to be those people who celebrate you, not tolerate you. Hopefully you choose to be a celebrator yourself.

Who are the tolerators and who are the celebrators?

The Tolerators: These are the people who have known you forever and put up with you just because. You find you probably don't have much in common anymore, and you can't relate. The thing each of us needs to learn is that **this is okay**. People change; it is the nature of life. You don't need to hold onto past relationships just because. Let them go. Why waste yours and others times by being tolerators of each other?

Tolerators won't really listen to what you are saying, they won't get excited by the great things you have done or plan to do, and they will think of all the reasons why things you choose to do won't work. They'll try to compete with you and when you are not around you can be sure you will be a topic of their conversation with others. They won't really want to hang around you; they do it only through a sense of obligation. You will find that you are definitely being a tolerator as well with people within your network of friends. Tolerators tend to bring out the worst in each other.

The Celebrators: These are the people that uplift and inspire you. They are excited about your life and the things you choose to do. They offer you words of encouragement and believe in you. They don't feel insecure around you and they know the relationship is reciprocal.

When you hang around those who celebrate you the experience is always fun. You are there together to just enjoy each other's company. Who you are yesterday or tomorrow doesn't matter, I just like who you are now. Conversations with your celebrating friends flow easily and you feel comfortable to let down your guard and be yourself. Celebrators tend to bring out the best in each other.

Traveling gives you the confidence to choose to only hang around those who celebrate you. There are some tolerators that you just can't shut out

of your life for good. I have them as well and I become a tolerating friend of theirs, which is not what I really want to be. All you need to do is to maintain pleasantness at all times. Do what you can to be a celebrator and limit your time with them. Make the conversation less about you and more about their lives. And when you are done go take a shot of whiskey to calm your nerves!

Travel taught me that I have a choice. I don't have to be friends with people who tolerate me just because, and this is so empowering. Removing the tolerators from your life might reduce your connection pool, but it will make your circle of friends higher in quality. It is so liberating to know that you can choose to surround yourself with celebrators, and with that positive and uplifting energy. You don't have to settle for anything less.

Celebrate don't tolerate

3. You Can Understand Others Through More Than Words



I'm really good at reading people. I usually can tell very quickly if I can trust someone, or if they are merely tolerating me or celebrating me. I can tell if someone is nervous, insecure, or shy. I'm really good at interpreting those who don't speak clearly or in Pidgin English.

When you are traveling you are interacting with many people all over the globe those whose culture is vastly different to yours. You will network with people who speak a language you can't understand, forcing you to rely more on your sight and your intuition to aid communication. You have to learn how to read gestures and facial expressions as you try to put the pieces together of what they are trying to say. Travel opens your eyes to the other forms of communication that are vital in understanding someone.

Teaching English in Bangkok really helped me to tune into non-verbal forms of communication - they speak so much more than words ever could.

When you are living in the same place all your life, you are mostly hanging around the same people. People you know and trust who are probably of a similar personality to you, and most likely of the same cultural background with the same ways of speaking, sharing, and believing. You tune out of non-verbal forms of communication because you don't need it; you hear and understand their words. Truth can be so easily hidden by words, which will be believed by those who only pay attention to the words.

When you are traveling you are out of your comfort zone. You are meeting people of many different personalities and getting to know these different personality types quickly. Human beings are so similar in the way we think and act. I can very easily tell now the type of person someone is when I meet them, and that is because I have had exposure to a wide variety of people. This makes me feel very comfortable in talking and relating to people. If you can read someone well, then you know how you can act around him or her. You know if you have to put your guard up or down, you know if you can throw a joke out to ease perhaps their discomfort or your own, and you know if you need to offer an encouraging word, or ask a question to initiate conversation.

Humans connect with each other through energy. This is what brings you the feeling of wanting to get know a certain person or not. It is the energy field, or chemistry, that connects you. Traveling and having all these interactions with energy fields, helps you to read the energy better. If I don't like the energy of a person, I know to be wary and keep my distance because that energy can rub off me in a negative way. Remember you can choose to be with tolerators or celebrators, and you can choose to be one or the other yourself.

Connection and truth runs deeper than words

4. Helping Another Means Helping Yourself



This is one of the most difficult concepts, I think, for humans to understand and practice. And that is because our individual lives are often filled with so much unnecessary pain. When you are so involved in the pain of your own shortcomings, past failures, and daytime dramas it is almost impossible to give any positive energy into helping somebody else.

The first thing I have learned in regards to this principle is the **first person you must help is yourself**. You have an obligation to do whatever it takes to empty the baggage that you are carrying around with you. Everybody has it, and if you think you don't then you are in denial. This is just life. Life has problems and we carry around the harsh words that our 3rd grade teacher shouted to us for years, and we struggle to let go of the bullying in the playground, the pain of our parent's divorce or our teenage broken hearts.

There is a very wise Buddhist tale of two monks who were walking down the street in silent meditation.

“Two Zen monks were walking along a river when they came upon a beautiful young woman. The bridge was out, she tearfully explained, and she needed to cross the river right away. “Don’t worry,” said one of the monks,” just climb on my back and I’ll carry you across.”

The girl climbed on the monk’s back and he took her across. The monks then continued on their journey, but the second monk was very upset. Finally, and a few hours later he couldn’t stand it anymore and asked, “How could you, a virtuous monk, allow a woman to ride upon your back?”

The first monk said, “Are you still carrying that lady? I put her down when we crossed the river hours ago.”

When you put down the baggage of your past, you are free to move forward. You release the negative energy that has been permeating out from every orifice of your body. Positive energy replaces it and you are more capable of helping someone else. When you travel on an airplane, you are instructed through the safety dance, that in the event of an emergency you must put the oxygen mask on yourself first before you help anyone else, even your child. This is because you **can’t help someone unless you first help yourself**.

Travel is such a journey into one’s self that it forces you to stare into the faces of your demons. So many people say that others travel for long periods of time because they are running away from something. I don’t believe this at all. It was when I started traveling that I actually began running to life, and to the problems of my past. They were now staring me directly in the face, whereas in my normal society driven life there were multitude of ways I could bury them or run.

When you are traveling you are learning how to get along with yourself and with total strangers. This forces you to evaluate your life, and who you

want to be, and then it gifts you the opportunity to be that person. Travel allows you greater freedom to change.

A lot of people hold onto who they were in the past, as they are served constant reminders of it in their day to day living. They think their past defines them and as a result cannot be anyone other than that. And in reality, the people around you mostly will not let you release yourself from the past either. As a traveler there is no need to do this. You are free to be, as the majority of the people you meet do not know anything about you. They don't know your past or your future, just who you are now. So you can choose who you want that to be. The old adage works perfectly here, ***'Fake it till you make it.'***

Moving into the second part to this truth then is that **when you have helped yourself, you are in an empowered position to help others.** In your interactions with others you can transfer to them positive energy and greater strength. And when you help others, in return you receive so much more back. Zig Ziglar, a popular motivational speaker, often says, ***"You can have everything in life that you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want."***

Prospering in life does not have to mean I need to compete with and tear down the person beside me. I can get ahead by helping my competitor get ahead also. How does this happen?

By helping someone else get what he or she wants you are saying that I believe there is enough to go around. There are no limiting thoughts of lack. When you believe there is enough to go around, you will start to see the abundance that exists around you ready to be shared. You attract into your life who you are, which is defined by your thoughts.

There is truth to the saying what goes around comes around. When you help others, that good energy you throw out comes straight back at you magnified. This works powerfully in two ways:

1. What you give out you get back.

2. When I help someone else I feel great, which empowers me to help yet another person. And with this empowered feeling comes more powerful energy. And the more powerful your energy, the more things you will attract to you that has the same energy vibration. That is why good attracts good, and bad attracts bad.

Help yourself and be empowered to help others

5. A Smile, a Laugh, Encouraging words, and Appreciation will Break Down any Barriers



Some of the most beautiful conversations I've had with others have purely been through a smile or joyous laughter. So much is communicated through this one simple act; barriers can be destroyed and friendships formed.

The people of the countries of South East Asia have taught how to bring ease and joy into my interactions with others. Their cultural need to save face means they bring a smile and a laugh to every situation. They use this as their weapon of choice to disarm any angry or volatile situation. Every conversation is conducted with smiles, gentleness, and respect. They like business to be conducted in a pleasing and happy manner which brings to them good luck. Bartering in Asia is always great fun and done with a

teasing joke, laughter, and smiles (at least that has always been true for us). We always find that when we approach bartering like this we always come out with a good win-win price.

We now use this way of being in almost all of our dealings with others. We don't see a purpose in being any other way. **Why would you choose to be mean, rude, grumpy, and negative to others? How does this help someone else to feel good and how does this make me feel good?** (Although, we will admit to not being perfect and having the odd occasions when we just crack it through pure frustration and tiredness. The results are never great and I always feel bad.)

However, when we smile, try to encourage laughter, praise whoever we are dealing with, or communicate our appreciation for their help, we are always met with smiling eyes of relief and gratitude which in turn makes us feel wonderful for making someone else's day a little easier.

Not only that, sometimes we may find little treats have happened, like a room upgrade, a discount on a vehicle, or free air freight of 900kgs of personal effects from the US to Australia. Yes, true story. Craig received this bonus from his Delta boss, not because it was the Delta policy, but because his boss really appreciated Craig always coming to work with a smile, a good attitude, and a friendly personality to everyone who worked on his team. It makes a huge difference.

When interacting with others your first thought should be ***"How can I bring a little more joy to your life? How can I best serve you?"*** The simplest and easiest of answers is a smile, a thank you, or a compliment.

Uplift others through smiles, encouragement, and appreciation

Relationships to Earth

6. The Earth Is a Living Organism that is so Much More Powerful than us



It's funny to me how many people still believe they can conquer the Earth. She can wipe us all out in a minute if she so wishes. **The Earth doesn't need us to survive; we need it.**

Previous to travel I was caught up in my own everyday life, paying scarce attention to the natural world around me, and having a huge disconnect as a result. I only knew something of beaches and the bush. I didn't know

anything of towering mountains, deserts, volcanoes, lakes, canyons, snow, or rainforests.

Sure, I learned about this at school, but it bared little relevance for me, as I could not connect to it through my own personal experiences. The best way to learn is to experience things for yourself. Traveling exposed me to so many different ecosystems and allowed me to see, in action, how each one survives, thrives and operates. And it does this in total perfection, through the perfect synergy of nature's elements. The Earth is a living organism, just like you and me and all living things that exist on it. It is the biggest living organism and incredibly powerful.

When you learn and discover the truth of this you allow your mind to dig a little deeper into its power. If I am a living organism and my body fights off diseases and invading predators that do not wish to look after me, then my body will go into battle mode to fight it off. If my body does this then wouldn't the Earth? **Wouldn't the Earth do all it could to fight off those predators not looking after it?** Something to think about next time you want to release those carbons into the air, or throw your cardboard box into the underground waste pile.

Respect nature. She holds all the lessons and **provides you with everything you need to survive.** The Australian Aboriginal culture is the oldest living civilization. They survived for 50,000 years before white man came along with not even the common flu ailing their healthy bodies. Nomadic dwellers, they had no permanent structures, refrigeration, or synthetic medicines. They were completely connected to Mother Earth. They understood her power and how she is here to help **us** live and survive; she is not our enemy to be conquered.

In our modern day lives, we have drifted away from Mother Earth and fail to recognize the power she has to offer all we need in sickness and in health. Turn to Mother Nature more. Look to her for your cures for ailments of the body and mind. Eat more of the produce she grows to strengthen your body for superior health.

I could rant and lecture for pages about the health of our world today and the very simple solutions that are present through the Earth, but if I had never traveled, and opened my mind up to learn these truths for myself I may never have listened either.

Craig, Kalyra, and I rely on Mother Earth a lot and we are rarely sick as a result. We are vegetarians, we incorporate a lot of herbs and vegetables into our diet, we drink a lot of green tea and every day we take spirulina- this is not a medicine but algae- the world's richest source of food. We avoid pumping our bodies with synthetic drugs, and processed toxic food. We avoid sugar (but still treat ourselves in small doses), opting instead for healthier alternatives. And we always look to nature or the power that lies within ourselves to solve our problems and quieten our anxiety. The only time we start to feel sick is if we stray from this plan.

Trust in Mother Nature; connect to her power

7. Nature is a Place of Rejuvenation



I hug trees. I admit it, I do. Ever done it? Why not? Try it. Trees are perfect, and so with that comes perfect energy. When I hug a tree I get a short little burst of energy transferred to me. Think I'm an idiot? Maybe so, but that is probably because you have been brought up in a culture that has ingrained to believe in the idiocy of this - those trees are just something there in the background, like all things in nature, serving no real purpose or holding any power.

I challenge your thinking. I invite you to look around the natural world that you live in everyday. Study its vibrancy and the perfection of it. It's beauty lies in its perfection. It doesn't need changing or improving; it grows and exists, as it should.

Think about how you felt the last time you spent a day in nature. Relaxed... carefree...rejuvenated? Even if it was pissing down rain, I'm sure there was some part of you that felt heightened, and once you got out of the rain and heard the sound of it falling on the roof above you once again felt calm.

Traveling put me in touch with nature a lot. Days spent hiking in the mountains, camping on the edge of escarpments, exploring rainforests, swimming in lakes, or relaxing on beaches, no matter where I was or what I was doing I always felt a sense of being in the perfect place for that moment. I never feel as peaceful in any other man made structure. This is the powerful energy that comes from being in nature. It centers you and brings you back to what is important. My worries fade into the background and I know all that matters right now is myself, my breath, and the perfection of being.

If I spend too long away from nature I crave it. This is my body and mind craving a restoration of peace and belonging.

Go to nature to restore your sense of being

Relationships to Self

8. You are Powerful Beyond Measure



Out of all the truths I have learned traveling, I believe this is the most important one that should be instilled into us from birth. I wonder how many issues in life may disappear, how much less Prozac may be prescribed, and how many people may take more risks in their life to actually live the life that dream of.

So often, through various influences, we are taught to fear ourselves, to live in shame, and to be less than what we are capable of being. Travel involves risk, lots of it. It also involves stepping out of your comfort zone. When you step out of your comfort zone, you realize a little bit more about **how powerful you really are**. When you stay in your comfort zone, you forget

this. You don't understand that you have the power to learn new things and to grow in tremendous ways. You don't understand just how adaptable and flexible you are, and how well equipped you are to deal with any challenges that come your way. Your fear holds you captive and renders you powerless.

When you understand that you are **powerful beyond measure**, you understand that you have the power to choose who you want to be and how to react to situations, positive or negative, in your life. You are not a victim. You are powerful beyond measure. The circumstances of your life are not there as a result of bad luck. Believing this is holding you in a state of being a victim. When you are a victim you cannot choose who you want to be. There are always others and circumstances dictating that for you and so you become powerless.

When you are powerful beyond measure you can take responsibility for all that is good or bad in your life and make a different choice. If you don't assume responsibility you cannot make a different choice, because it is not your fault, therefore nothing will change- because it is not the cause of your problems fault either.

I was a victim of circumstances for many years. I could not help who I was because the events of my life made me this way; as a result I reacted to life constantly. These reactions came about from insecurities, self-doubt, a lack of self-love, and remaining trapped in the negative power of these emotional states. My reactions always resulted in the same dis-empowering displays of anger, jealousy, nastiness, and shame. I never knew how to respond; I only knew how to react. I never understood that I was powerful beyond measure and I had the ability to make a different choice.

It was only when my life reached the point of survive or die, did my true power kick in. I decided that in order for me to live a better life I needed to make a different choice, and from that day on I have understood this most powerful truth in my life. I am more powerful than measure. I have a

choice, I can be whoever I want to be, I can do whatever I want to do. And I deserve it.

When you understand are powerful beyond measure you let your own light shine. **We are born with a light inside of us that burns brightly.** Just spend any time with a baby or young child and you will instantly feel this light stirring something inside of you. It is your light's recognition of one that is more powerful than yours-only because it is **allowed to shine freely.**

A baby is so pure and innocent, so unconditioned and accepting, trusting and loving; their light shines so brightly. It is only as a child grows that the light is diminished. Diminished by circumstances, by events, by the words and actions of others until a child soon forgets how to let their light shine. The child grows into an adult and the world becomes a little darker.

To remove the darkness all we need to do is light up what is most powerful and special about us. Why do we hide it away? We feel that playing small benefits others; that we are preserving their self-esteem and sense of security. We think that it helps others to feel better when in reality it doesn't. **It makes them feel as if they too have to play small.**

Celebrating your power does not mean that you think you are better than anyone else, it's just saying 'Hey, I'm a cool being because.... tell me, what makes you great?' Each of us has our own light of unique greatness that contributes to making this planet a special place. You are not inadequate. You are powerful beyond measure. There is a powerful light of truth and goodness that exists inside of you. If you allow this light of yours to shine brightly it will unconsciously allow others to do the same. You will be serving the world.

There is much about you that deserves celebrating. Do not fear your greatness, celebrate it, and let it shine for the world to see. You will find that you will then enjoy celebrating the greatness of others. We all have this light, let us not darken it anymore.

I'll leave you with my favorite poem by Marianne Williamson.

**Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure
It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us.**

**We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, handsome, talented and fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.**

**Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.**

**We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us.
It is not just in some; it is in everyone.
And, as we let our own light shine,
we consciously give other people permission to do the same.**

**As we are liberated from our fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.**

You are powerful beyond measure

9. Trust in your Gut



I read a story in Richard Branson's biography that really illustrates this point. He, his wife, and two tourists were off the coast of Mexico with two local sailors on a boat fishing for Marlin. A huge storm came through and the boat, due to some sort of rudder failure became stuck and could not make it back to shore. The boat was pitched about in the storm horribly and they were lucky to make it through the first couple of hours of the storm. When everything around them suddenly became calm, they realized they were in the eye of the storm. When they looked ahead of them to what was coming, they saw a whole lot worse headed straight for them.

Richard, as did his wife, knew that there was no way the small boat was going to survive another beating. His gut began to talk truth to him, while his mind screamed something different. He decided to listen to his gut, and he and his wife jumped over board with flippers on in an attempt to swim to shore. They knew that they were both good swimmers and could make

it, as they were only a couple of miles offshore. The remaining tourists and captain of the boat listened to their minds, which told them they would be crazy to leave the safety of the boat.

Richard and his wife swam for three hours in the howling wind and thrashing sea. Eventually they made it back to shore and raised the alarm for help. The tourists, the fisherman and their boat were never found.

Your logical mind serves a definite purpose. But it cannot connect very well to our “sixth sense” and our natural survival instincts. All animals have these. These instincts come from our gut, which is the area that can best connect to our higher powers. **The gut does not listen to reason, or to logic, or to illusioned fear. The gut listens to the truth and is highly tuned into the energy of the now and a couple of steps into the future.** Your gut is the bond between you and your life. Listen to your gut more; it speaks the truth.

When Kalyra was first born and it was time to take her home from the hospital, I looked at this tiny bundle of life and thought “Holy crap, What do I do now?” I had no knowledge or experience of looking after a child. I had never had a pet to care for and any plant that came within 5 feet of me met with a very premature death.

My logical mind was at a complete loss. And so I allowed the only thing that knew what to do, my natural instincts, to take over, just as all mothers do. There would be times through the first few months of her life, where I would listen to what others would tell me- well-meaning advice that went against my better instincts. My mind, however, told me that I didn’t have a clue, and obviously those who had been parents before knew better than me.

I soon learned to ignore the advice from others, because every time I listened to them, instead of my gut, things just did not work well and I deeply regretted it. My only advice to new expectant mothers would be “Don’t ask me, **ask your gut.** Only you know what is right for your child.” Just as **only you know what is right for your life.**

When you are traveling, you are wandering through an alien world most of the time. You have to rely on your gut. Your logical mind can't help you much; as it does not know too much about the new place you are visiting. Your gut will let you know when something does not feel right, and force you to look for an alternative solution. Whenever I ignore my gut, I head into troubled waters. Whenever I listen to it, I find my way out of dicey situations, or I choose the right and most fulfilling path to walk upon.

Listen to and trust in your gut

10. Your Past does not Matter and you are Not your Problems



Everybody has a past with things lurking there that they maybe ashamed or embarrassed about and wish they could wipe away from their history. Part of living and growing involves making mistakes, sometimes revoltingly worse than others. It is by making the mistakes that we discover who we are and what we want to evolve into.

I have many skeletons lurking in my closet, but they are lying in there peacefully now as I have laid them to rest. I realized they **did not benefit my present life by continually dragging them around with me**. I decided to use them instead as a form of empowerment.

Traveling the world taught me **that your past does not matter and you are not your problems**. Problems come and go, like all things, and they do not have to define who you are. You have the choice whether to remain embroiled in your problems and become a victim, or to instead allow them to be, take responsibility for them and to know that you have the power to choose otherwise. You can make a different choice, and become a different person- a victor who is in control of their life.

When you are traveling you understand the power of this more, as you can define who you want to be with each new place of arrival and each new friend you make. If you stuff up a friendship in one town, instead of beating yourself up to be a loser, you can discover the mistake and make a decision to not be that person when you arrive in the next town. Once you begin living your life like this you begin to learn a very powerful truth that it doesn't matter who you once were, **all that matters is who you are now**.

I decided that I was going to use my travels to learn how to live a good life. I wanted to be the victor of my life, as I was tired of being the victim. I knew it did not serve me at all; instead it trapped me in a cycle of endless pain and recurring problems.

I took my new power and transformed myself. I moved to a place where nobody knew me and I started again. Running away, some people may say. Maybe. But if I had of stayed where I was, I am sure my life would be a total different story. I would have been held there, unable to change because those around me, and the memories I held would have haunted me into remaining a victim. So by running away and starting fresh I actually became a stronger person- a more positive, kind and happy person. I became who I wanted to be because I knew I held the power within me to choose otherwise.

Steven Covey, an authority figure on leadership and motivation says,

“Until a person can say deeply and honestly, I am who I am because of the choices I made yesterday, then that person cannot say I choose otherwise.”

I currently have a problem being that my finances are in transition. In other words, I don't have a lot of money. This is because I made some terrible decisions that landed me in this situation. But, I know that this is a problem that will soon pass. This does not define me as being a loser, a terrible manager of money, or unworthy of a more ideal financial situation. I am not my problems.

A problem is something that passes through my life to teach me a lesson and enable me to move forward. Deep down, I am still an inherently good person, like we all are. I know that I hold the power within me to change my current situation; it does not hold me captive in hell.

When you meet someone at a party for the first time, do you introduce yourself as “Hi, I am Caroline. I am a pretty big loser. You wouldn't believe what I did in my life when I was seventeen. You see I was traumatized as a child and felt unloved so I went and”

You certainly wouldn't be a hit at the party if you approached people in this manner. Yet so many people carry this definition of themselves around with them on the inside. A definition of himself or herself as a loser with an awful past that can't help but affect their ability to make any good decisions now or ever. And this perception is projected subconsciously onto those who meet them. Strangers, who know nothing of your past, somehow pick up on the shadows that are lurking in your background and begin to make their own assumptions based on the stranger danger vibe you are casting off.

Let go of the past, it does not matter. Who do you want to be now? Be that person. You can. You are allowed to because you are the victor of your life, and all that matters is now. Remember this other truth, change is good. People can change by letting go of their past and problems.

All that matters is who you are now

Relationships to Life

11. Share Share Share



This is a truth I only recently discovered through the pain that I went through upon returning to “civilized” life after our five-year “honeymoon.” In my mind, I perceived travel to have finished and I fell apart as a result. I could not cope with living a life that did not involve the constant change and excitement of life on the road.

All the meaning I had attached to my life suddenly disappeared and my purpose became stagnant. I wallowed in my self-pity whilst trying recklessly to dig my way out. Through my desperate digging, I created desperate circumstances, and my life of travel drifted further and further away. (You create your life by your thoughts and actions.)

I felt like I was dying inside, and I would constantly remark to Craig ***“I don’t understand what was it all for? Why did we have all those experiences traveling for it to all be for nothing? I feel like I have so much knowledge and experience inside of me that is being wasted.”***

Throughout this desperate struggle, however, one constant remained the same. I continually asked to be shown what it was I needed to do to fulfill my purpose. There was a constant hunger inside me- a need or an itch to do more and be more. I knew I was not living up to my potential and so I continually asked for help.

The pain persisted because I was very slow in learning the lesson. Ideas came to me about writing a travel book and setting up travel websites, but because I was filled with such self- doubt and a lack of belief in what I was capable of doing, I did not start. Until one day the pain became unbearable, and I let go, trusted, and started. I wanted to share all I had learned, not for me, but for it to help others. I just wanted to find a way to inspire others to realize the greatness that exists inside of them, so they can start living the life of their dreams. When I see this as a being a reality, I see a very happy, positive, and powerful world that we can all share.

So, I found my niche and I began sharing. All I needed to learn in order to do this came to me, and I started to have success very quickly. Nothing that I had attempted to do previously worked, because I was not sharing what was unique about me.

And so the most painful and disconnected period of my life happened to teach me that in **life you must take all you learn and share it**. It is no use to you or anyone when it is trapped inside you. **Break free from the confines of doubt and insecurity and just let loose what it is you were born to do**. When you live from this position of share, share, share, you will be amazed at what comes back to be shared with you.

It doesn’t have to be just knowledge that you share, it can be a smile, a hug, a thank you, a high five; anything that brings joy to another human being,

anything that brings positive energy that will uplift or improve their life in some way.

Share Share Share

12. This Too Shall Pass



Missed flights, stolen gear, travel sickness, penniless, jobless, and friendless...the list of all that can and will go wrong on your adventures continues. The only common thread that each one has is that in the end it all works out just the way it should. Learning this helps you to realize that problems are a part of life and they are there to be worked through.

Instead of getting caught up in the drama and victimhood of it all, accept it as another road block in time and take it step-by-step as to what you need to do now to fix it. **Knowing that it all works out in the end gives you much confidence and comfort in moving forward, and takes away the need to consume all your time in worry.**

Worrying is such a futile exercise and you soon learn this when traveling. There is so much that is out of your control, so what is the point of worrying. You learn to just relax into life. A lot of the time on the road the biggest challenge you may have is deciding what to have for breakfast. This

kind of relaxed way of living teaches you the joy that exists in each moment if you so choose to see it. Spending so much time in Asia really taught me the benefit of not worrying and the truth to the saying 'this too shall pass.'

When Craig and I missed our return home flight after 5 years of travel, our Thai friend was right there with us. *"Mai pen Lai Caroline. No worries, you'll get another flight tomorrow. This just means you spend more time with family in Thailand."* You can always find the silver lining in the dark cloud.

I have turned up twice in a strange country, London and Ireland, with no money, no jobs and no friends. In London it was my first time traveling alone, I had an infected foot and I wandered between King's Cross and Euston station for hours trying to figure out the tube and rail system and how to get to Wigan to stay with family friends that my mum arranged for me. It was frightening. But it soon passed and before I knew it I was earning great money living in a house with 12 people in London, and partying in Convent Garden 3 nights a week.

In Dublin, alone again, this time an emotional wreck, I wandered the streets of the Temple Bar area trying to pull myself together, and banish the lonely birds from my soul. Within days I was earning great money, staying in a fun hostel, and forming friendships with strangers who brought the gifts of joy and love back into my life.

This too shall pass. The dramas of your life will always be there, but they will always go away as well, as long as **you keep your eyes and ears open to learn quickly the lesson that is there to be learned.**

As one of my favorite quotes from the Dalai Lama says,

"If you have a problem and there is a solution, then why worry? If you have a problem and there is no solution, then what is the point in worrying?"

This too shall pass is not just about the problems in your life. It is also about the happy times in your life. A lot of people find this even more disturbing. Travelers become accustomed to this very quickly. Memorable days spent with new friends in joy and excitement soon ends, and you know it is time to say goodbye. Goodbyes are frequent when you travel. This is why travelers really make the most of their time not just spent with people but with places they develop an affinity with.

My daughter is such a wriggle butt, that I know whenever she graces me with a cuddle I may only have 5 seconds to relish every second of it. I never feel anxious about the impending loss, or resist this, or try to hold her longer, as I understand this will soon pass. Instead, I embrace her with all total joy and presence, appreciating the moment for what it is. Just as quickly as she comes, she leaves, and I am left with a joyous warmth of love and gratitude. Embrace every moment of your life as you would a small child.

Travel is such a transient life and you accept that these treasured moments are a gift for such a finite time, so you appreciate every second of it more. If only more people understood the truth to 'this too shall pass' they may **relish every moment of their lives good or bad**. It won't hang around forever, so take what you can and lock it away in your treasure box of memories with such gratitude for being able to have the experience.

This too shall pass

13. There is Power in Pain



It seems as if everywhere you turn, most people are intent on avoiding pain. Doctor's waiting rooms are overfilled with patients waiting for repeat prescriptions to the latest pain relieving medication or anti-depressant pills. **Anything to take the pain away.** Pain is such an enemy, to be feared and not trusted. Of course we can see why this is- pain hurts.

Why would pain be there if we were not meant to feel it? How can we understand pleasure if we first do not understand pain? Pain, like all emotions is there for a reason. **Pain is here to teach us and to help us grow.** Instead of seeing pain as an enemy to be avoided at all costs, you instead need to see it as a friend and embrace it as so.

There are times of course, when pain can be unbearable and needs to be deadened somewhat and I understand that. What I am talking about is the

stuff that you can handle. There is pain in your life that you are capable of dealing with, if you just give yourself a chance. One of my favorite sayings that I use all the time is **“What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”** If the pain you are experiencing is not going to kill you then just embrace it. Feel the pain, know that it is making you stronger and rejoice in that. Look for ways to move through the pain. How can you make it your friend?

Ancient meditation techniques will teach you this very concept. You can, through your meditation, feel the pain, live it, breathe it and then eventually through the embracing of it, the pain will subside.

For women, I think one of the biggest ways you can grow in strength through pain is from childbirth. I am always so stunned and surprised by the amount of pregnant or soon to be pregnant women without further thought, immediately state they will be taking painkillers for the birth of their child. (I must avoid pain at all cost because I can’t cope.) My response is always **“But why? You are a woman you can do this. At least try”**

Some of my American friends think I am a she-hero for taking on childbirth without medication but I don’t think this at all. I think I am just living up to the potential we have as women. My thought was always, **“If women have been doing this for years, then why can’t I? Will I die from it? Very slim chance. Will it make me stronger? Yes. Can I make that pain my friend? Yes.”**

Childbirth is the most painful experience any woman can go through. It is horrifying. The pain is almost unbearable. In the midst of the greatest pain, my thought was **“Oh shit. I don’t know how I am going to get through this, but I can’t go back.”** I did not know what to do to make it through. So I did what every woman before me has done. I dug deep and found a way.

You dive into the pain and find the nearest hand (hopefully your partner) to squeeze. You squeeze with all your might, you grunt or scream, whatever you have to do and then finally, the greatest gift of your life comes out at the end and the pain disappears. It’s gone, forgotten about; the only trace of it left behind is the stronger woman you have now become.

I recently had a child in my class who had experienced unnatural levels of pain for his short 10 years on earth. His mother died when he was very young, his father was not in the picture, and he suffered from leukemia at a very young age. He was sick for many years; he fought hard and won his battle. He had wisdom beyond his years and was such an inspiration to me. His maturity, strength of character, and positive outlook grew out of his experienced pain.

He understood that from pain you could learn and grow and that what **doesn't kill you makes you stronger**. One day, he spoke in front of the class about how he and his grandmother were being evicted from their rental property as the local authorities had condemned it. They were going to have to live in a hotel room "But that's okay," he said, "because that means I get cable TV and I've never had it before, so I'm excited."

He was never afraid of his pain and he would write beautiful essays that expressed his dreams of the future, what he needed to draw from his character to fulfill them, and the faith he had in his spirit to do so. He was indeed a rare, human being, and if were not for his pain, he would not have learned so many truths to life. I am looking out for him in years to come, as I just know the magic he will be creating in his own life and others.

There is so much power in pain. I think as travellers we place ourselves in these positions of pain more easily. Doctor's aren't as readily available on the trail, and you know going to see one will eat into your budget, so you are more likely to harden up and deal with it.

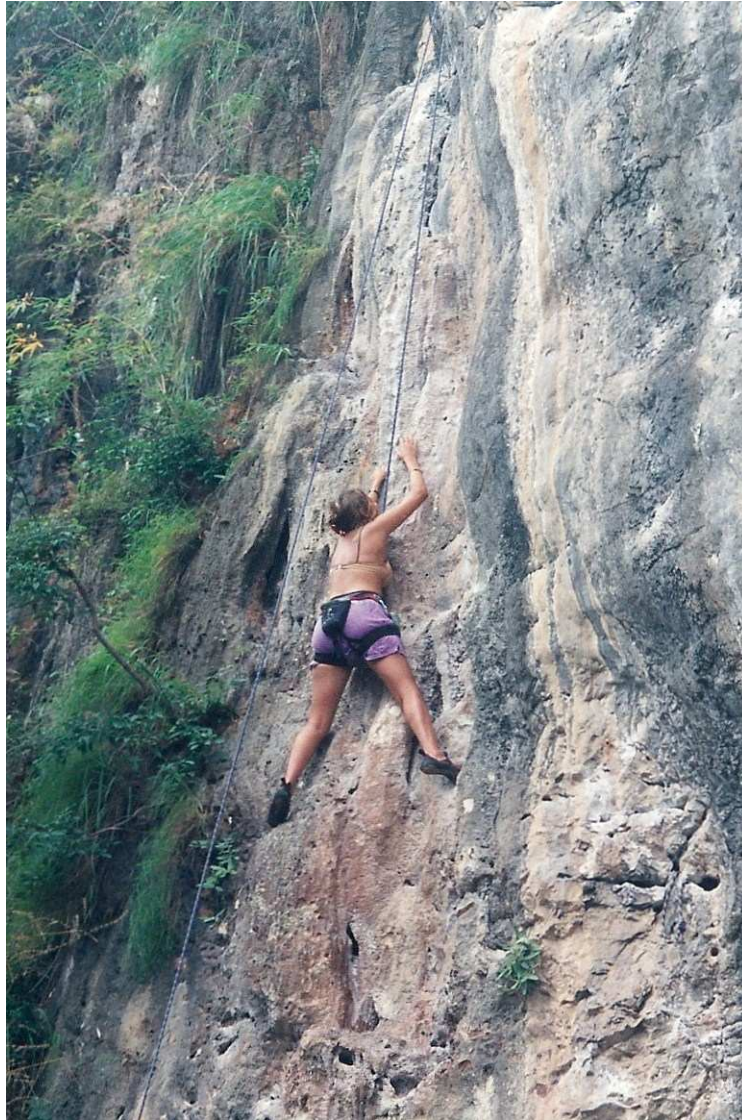
You experience pain squashed in the back of a pick up for 8 hour journey's over rough terrain; cuts and bruises come from jungle treks, rugged mountain climbs, and outdoor activities; tropical diseases and infections come visiting; and food poisoning becomes more of a reality when you move outside the Western world.

Traveling throws you into lonely and challenging experiences. There's no one around to pick you up and carry the load for you. You are forced to feel the pain, stare it in the face and deal with it. The outcome is generally

always the same. The pain goes away (this too shall pass) and you grow stronger as a result. Pain is so powerful when you embrace it. Life will become easier for you, your tolerance levels will increase and you will actually feel less pain throughout your life.

Feel the pain - it is your friend

14. To Progress Through Life you Need to Swallow Your Fear



This truth goes hand in hand with pain is powerful. Fear is pain, except it is imagined pain. Fear is just an illusion. The quicker you realize this the easier your life will be. As Franklin D Roosevelt said,

“The only thing we have to fear in life is fear itself.”

Fear will hold you back from reaching your potential. It disguises itself in the myriad of excuses we offer ourselves as to why we can't do something. Like our pain, we need to swallow our fear to progress through life. We can't run from our fear, nor can we chase it, we need to swallow it. **It is in the swallowing of the fear, we take away all of its power and transfer it to ourselves.**

Fear has its purpose, as a protector from danger. This is the only true purpose it serves, and this is when we need to listen to it. I remember sitting in my teacher's orientation class when I first arrived in the US. The leader of our program, David Young, was given us an inspiring speech about the company's mission and what we as teachers, being a part of it meant for the students in America. He finished off his speech with this question,

"Put your hands up if the thing you are most frightened about by being here now is walking into the classroom to teach in a system you know nothing about?"

Over half of the room, raised their hands, including me.

He then asked, *"Put your hand up if the thing you fear the most is driving on the opposite side of the road?"*

A smattering of people raised their hands while the rest of us chuckled.

"Yes," he replied. "You don't need to be afraid to teach in our foreign classrooms, you are capable and you will quickly find your way. You should, however, be afraid to drive on our roads. This is the only thing you should fear, as it's the only thing that threatens your life. Just remind me to stay off the roads when you do drive" I have never forgotten this perspective on fear that David taught me this day.

Other than in times of danger, fear is not a friend to you. It is holding you back from doing something that will enrich your life or make you more powerful. Swallowing your fear involves a lot of risk, which is why many don't do it. Taking that risk means you are going to be floating around in a world that is way outside your comfort zone. But stretching the comfort zone means you are stretching yourself and all you are capable of doing

and being. Stretching your comfort zone allows you to see the truth- that you are powerful beyond measure. Sometimes you take the risk and you fail. **So what. Big deal, Next.**

Failure, like pain and fear, is also your friend. You can't have success without failing. Failure is a part of life. Craig and I have taken many risks before, the rewards have been great, but we have had our failure through the risks. Failure so bad that I still can't bring myself to name the cost of the failure. But as my successful mentors and celebrating friends always **say "So what guys, you took the risk, you can't have success without it. Just learn from the failure and move on. Do better next time."**

So you see fear is not an enemy to be avoided at all costs. If you swallow the fear and fail you get rewarded with a lesson to help you progress through to your eventual success, and if you swallow the fear and succeed then your reward will be massive.

The minute you become confronted with a decision that will involve you pushing the barriers of your comfort zone, and you feel the fear, don't stop to think about it, which only leads to procrastination and paralyzation. Instead **look at the fear, swallow it and take the plunge.**

I remember going rock climbing for the first time with newfound Swedish friends in Railey Bay, Thailand. I was terrified. My body was shaking, my heart was pounding in my throat, and the sweat teeming down my body was not just because of the humid heat. I sat on the rock at the base of the cliff, looking up and fearing what was ahead. Doubt and fear continued to scream at me **"Don't do it."**

Kim asked who wanted to go first. I jumped up and said I will. I knew that if I did not go first and **just do it**, then I would sit and listen to fear, allow it to win and remain as a spectator, only wishing that I had the guts to have as much fun as everyone else. For the next week, our close-knit group climbed every day and our little excursions exploring the caves of the surrounding area were some of my most memorable traveling days ever.

Travelers are good at facing the fear. You have to swallow the fear, first to leave everything you know behind you; jobs, home, family, security, to enter in a world you know nothing about, with nothing but a backpack, a few thousand dollars, and maybe a guide book to help you find your way.

And then on the path of travel you are met with many opportunities to swallow your fear: talking to strangers; dealing with foreign currency; trying to get a job; having no place to stay; trying new foods; riding around on the back of a pickup with sacks of rice, bicycles and the whole village; bungy jumping, jungle safari-ing and so the adventure list continues. There are no rewards without the risk.

Turn fear into a friend and use it as a guide. When you walk towards it, the fear melts away. You will find true power within yourself and be liberated. If you turn from it you make the fear real, it will become a shadow and chase you forever.

Ready 1..2..3.. jump.

Swallow your fear, and turn its power into a guiding friend

15. Change is Good... Change is Life's most Natural State



I see so many people struggle in life because of this natural law. They design and set up their lives so that everything is the same, day in day out. This is so dangerous, because **life can never be compartmentalized. Life is in motion constantly.** The only thing in life that **is** constant is change. When you try to set up your life to be stagnant you are headed for disaster. Life can't happen this way; it is a natural law.

What happens to people when life changes, as it surely will? They feel so out of control and spiral downwards into despair; despair that leads to anxiety, stress, failed relationships, health issues, anti-depressants, alcohol, drugs, or worse suicide.

Change is good. You must understand this to have a relaxed and enjoyable life. Change is good. Change is what makes us grow and evolve. The key to survival is to adapt to change. Survival of the fittest is a quote by Darwin

that has often been misrepresented. It is not the fittest that survive but those who are most adaptable to change.

This is the one skill I have learned through traveling that I embrace and relish the most. I love change. I thrive on it. In fact, I think this is why I love travel so much. Because when I travel, every day and every moment is different. I am living in a constant motion of change and this is the true nature of life. This is why I feel like life flows for me when I travel, no matter how many challenges are present.

I abhor structure. I abhor sameness. It is when this comes into my life, that I feel dead inside and as if I am not living. Craig and I raise our child in a somewhat orthodox manner. Society always blows the 'children need structure' horn. I'm not good with structure so my daughter doesn't stand a chance. My question is why do they need structure? What is this teaching them? How is this helping them, from an early age, to adapt? Instead it is teaching them that they cannot operate in life if they do not have a set way of being and acting.

Kalyra is very adaptable. She is relaxed, friendly, happy, healthy, and smart. I'm not saying this to gloat but just to make a point that a flexible life that rides on the motion of change is not a bad thing. Kalyra, in her short 3 years, has moved internationally twice, and is used to people coming in and out of her life (life is transient, things come and go, gotta learn how to let go). We never have a set time for dinner, or sleep (although we do have a basic schedule), and if things happen then so be it, we roll with the punches. So many parents run their family by the minute. And they go into major flusters when things don't go according to plan.

Let it go. Go with the flow of life. If you don't do this you are denying life and you are not trusting in it. Remember this too shall pass, and everything will work out in the end. Trust in that. Jump in the boat and let the river take you where it will always end up.

How much easier is life, when you let life take control? It is so much more fun as you get to enjoy more of the ride. I know those who relish structure

are now fainting at the thought and are now closing this book. Trust me- change is like a chocolate mud cake, drenched in chocolate sauce with vanilla ice cream on top, it is sooooo good.

Adapt, go with the flow of life, and enjoy the ride

16. The Only Way to Find the Answers is to Ask the Questions



One of the most empowering tools you hold is the ability to ask questions. If you don't know the answer, ask the question. You'll never know otherwise. You might not get the answer you wanted, but you'll get the truth. You may not even get an answer and sometimes that is the answer.

If you ask the question, the wheels in motion will be put into place for you to find the answer. You'll start looking for it, and you'll be open to listen and receive.

As a traveler, you are always asking questions. "What is this called? How do I get here? Why do you have this custom? How much? Where's the nearest? How do you say...?" You soon become very good at asking questions. You soon start to realize how powerful they are and you learn not to be afraid to ask a question. Many people don't, as they fear this may reflect badly upon them for not knowing the answer. I'd rather know the

answer, so I ask eternal questions (tends to drive Craig crazy when he's watching the football and I want to understand the game)

Question everything. **Why? Why not?** Learn these two simple questions and use them often. Don't settle until you find the answer that suits you and your life. On our blog we promote the idea of living life out of the box. For us this does not necessarily mean living a life of travel, which some could perceive as living life out of the box.

Living life out of the box **means living life by your own standards, on your terms, and following your own dreams.** Society too often tells us how we should live and even how we should think. Many people blindly accept this as truth without ever first questioning what it means. Society tells you to go to school, study hard, get a good job, marry, get the white picket fence, save for your retirement and then play in your garden when you're done. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with people choosing to live this kind of life, as long as they actively choose it instead of passively going along for the same ride their parents took or the friends they grew up with.

Craig and I, through our travels have discovered that a life like this is similar to being confined to a box; there is limited room for growth or diverse experiences. Once you break free from the box, you are able to question more, and discover for yourself what is true for your life and so live according to those values.

For me, I could never let my experience in life only be of the one small town I grew up in, a small dot on our beautiful planet. Growing up, I was told what to think and believe. I always grew up questioning this ***"Why? What about how others think? Why is this way better and theirs not?"*** These were only questions I could answer by getting out of the box and seeing for myself. It was these questions that eventually set me on the discovery path of travel.

Now that we have a child, we always receive comments from well meaning friends and family that we should be at home, raising her in a neighborhood so she can form solid friendships. My answer to that is

“Why? Who says that this is the best thing for her?” Why should I do what you say? Why is that relevant to me? Why is this the truth? Could there be another way?

I don't accept what anyone says unless I have first questioned it and discovered the truth for me- and that is living life out of the box.

And then the other side of the coin to is when people tell you that you can't do something. The question to then ask is **Why not?** Recently, I decided that I was going to apply to be a train driver. My mother was horrified, “It sounds like it would be great for Craig, but I don't think for you love. A pregnant woman driving a train probably isn't a great career move.” To which I replied “Why not?” I won't allow any rigid cultural or societal expectations from preventing me to try something new.

Working on a pearl farm, with a bunch of very tough, Aussie miners, was not what society deemed appropriate for a woman either. But I asked “Why not? Why couldn't I do it.” And what an experience it was when I did. Despite the hard, physical labour it created for me a memory, of a unique and fun time of my life that will stay with me forever.

Question everything Why? Why not?

17. Silence and Stillness is a Friend



Dodgy Rodger was a wise Irish friend of my best friend, Bec, and I. He worked down the cobblestone road from our restaurant at the Quay Bar in the Temple Bar district of Dublin. We became great friends and spent many a sunrise drinking Irish coffee in illegal drinking cafes, talking about life and motorbike adventures through South East Asia. (There is always a way around the Irish drinking curfews.)

Two pieces of his advice that have always stuck with me is, 'be careful what you write down because once its written you can never take it back.' This was after our flatmate wrote some harsh words to us via a letter, and we were attempting a reply. Thanks to Roger our written reply never came, and we sorted the issue out peacefully enough through our spoken words.

The second piece of advice, which was more of a statement, was “People who talk constantly have nothing upstairs. They need to fill the spaces with words. Don’t talk so much and allow yourself space to be silent and think.”

I know this statement may sound quite mean and harsh, implying that people are stupid, but his words did make a valid point with me. **Silence and stillness is a friend and not to be feared.**

Many people talk incessantly, not because they are stupid, but because they are afraid of nothingness. Maybe they are afraid to be alone with their mind, because it ticks incessantly and terrifies them with their fears and insecurities.

Your mind can be a very scary thing. But you don’t need to talk it away; you need to learn to control it. The best way to do this is through silence. The silence allows you the opportunity to watch your mind. You can watch the thoughts as they enter in and out constantly and you can see just how much power these thoughts are having over your life. Once you see this you can learn how to change it.

The silence that may arise between the conversations with a friend may be considered awkward and so one party hastily rushes in to fill the space with meaningless conversation-conversation that does not serve a purpose.

Silence is meant to be part of the conversation; it is where the conversation comes from. The silence is the moment you have to absorb the connection you have with the other person and ponder what they are saying. It is the moment for you to think carefully about what it is you are going to say next.

Make room for silence and stillness in your relationships, it will help to strengthen them. There will be less likelihood that your friend sitting across from you will be saying in their mind, *“When is she just going to shut the hell up. What is this nonsense he keeps dribbling anyway?”*

Swinging in a hammock in Thailand and listening to the waves close out the day, taught me the value of stillness and silence. The silent stillness gave me the opportunity to absorb my day and to think about how incredible my life was and how magical the planet is. It allowed me space to dream about my future. I crave that Thai hammock almost daily.

It is through the silent stillness that your higher self is able to talk to you and guide you in the best direction you need to be going. How can you hear these guiding messages if your life is constantly filled with noise? **Go to the stillness and rest in its power.** Listen to the calming sound of your breath and find the still place that many refer to as being Nirvana. When you are silent and still, you can hear the message and you know what to do.

Rest in the power of stillness and just be

18. The only place where life exists is NOW. Live it!



Life is not present in the past. The past is dead energy. Life is not present in the future, as it doesn't exist. The only place life exists is NOW. This very second. Travel puts you in the place of Now very easily. There is so much change happening when you are traveling, so many new things to become aware of and experience that you are constantly living in that place of now.

There would be no point spending all that time and money to go on a round the world adventure if you spent the whole time mulling over your past and trying to change it or planning and mapping out your future. You'd miss out on everything. The thought world serves no other purpose then to distract you from experiencing life now.

Life is power and from that power everything comes. To tap into that powerful energy you need to be awake. Leave the past in the past; take

with you only the lessons that you can use for now. Forget about your future; let the now take care of it for you. If you live in the present, you will learn all you need to know to prepare you for any future that comes along.

When you are present in the now, you are very capable of dealing with any problems that come your way. Remember what your teacher used to say as you stared out the window in class, thinking about your plans for the weekend. “Pay attention. Jimmy. Focus on the now so you can learn.”

Eckard Tolle, writes about this truth in his book “The Power of Now” and a “New Earth.” **All you need for an empowered life exists NOW.** Hold onto and use that power by living in the present. It is the **only** place where life exists.

Live in the Power of Now

19. Enthusiasm, Joy, Awe and Gratitude are our most Powerful Emotions



Travel allows you to see the magic of life around you. When I was traveling I was constantly in awe; this is part of the rush that keeps travelers going back for more. Awe is an extremely powerful emotion. When you are in awe of things you are saying that **you recognize and appreciate something that is so much more powerful than yourself**. You don't need to understand it you just need to make the comment "Wow, that was awesome!"

Travel is a process of continual learning and trying new things. With this comes amazement. You learn things you never knew before and we become like that 2-year-old child we once were, who used to sit and stare at bugs all day and be in awe of their spindly little legs scurrying across the concrete.

When you live from these higher states of emotions great things are naturally attracted to you. I think everyone would agree that when you are traveling, no matter how you define this to be, you experience high levels of joy and enthusiasm. This is why we find it so hard to return home because we feel as if returning to the sameness of our lives cuts off our ability to feel this joy and celebrate life with the same enthusiasm and awe.

Even though travel presents many challenges and tribulations, it is incredibly difficult to feel depressed or sad. These are dis-empowering emotions. They don't uplift or inspire your life in any way shape or form.

Enthusiasm and joy bring lightness to your life. It is your greatest gift to God. Living through these four emotions says to our higher power- **I love this life you have given to me. Every moment is full of magic and beauty, I want this for everyone, and I just want to experience more of it.**

When you live through these emotions, your ability for inspired creation is so much higher. Your ability to embrace others and share the joy is increased. And your ability to deal with problems is much better, as you see it as just another thing to be in awe of and grateful for.

Living from these states increases your energy vibrations and this is what attracts good or bad into your life. **The higher your energy vibration, the better the things that will come to you.** Think about the last time something really great or really bad happened to you. I bet you could match the outcome with the state of your mood at the time. They rarely are out of sync with each other.

Dr. Eckart Tolle. And Dr. Wayne Dyer talk a lot of this concept through their writings. I highly recommend you take a trip to the local library or bookstore and read their empowering work to see for yourself just how the magic of this thing called life works.

Live with Passion and Gratitude

20. God exists everywhere



This is a topic I always feel nervous talking about as I think it is such a personal relationship each person has with the divine. But I have put it in here, as it is a truth I learned through travel, and it just might help those who have questions they are struggling to find the answers to. This just might be the truth that helps them walk on a new path of discovery for themselves.

I am a deeply spiritual person and I believe there are many paths to God. I don't believe in religion. No one can tell me where I find God or how to worship him/ her. That is my personal relationship with the divine.

I grew up Catholic and found myself sitting on the pews every Sunday in a dark, cold building reciting words and prayers that held no relevance or meaning for me. I questioned what this all meant and asked why would

God be here? I felt it was a betrayal of God to continue to sit in a place worshipping in a way that was not me, and in a place that I found cold and meaningless. So I searched. I looked at others way of finding God and found many similarities and differences, but yet still none I could relate to.

Through my personal questioning and travel experiences, I learned that **God is in me; God is in you; God is in everything.** When I recognized the true omnipresence of God, I understood that I could talk to her and praise him whenever and wherever I please. **And when I know that the divine is present everywhere, it helps me to be kinder to others and to myself, and to be more respectful of the Earth.** When I know that God lives in me, I can use that power to **live up to my potential and live my purpose.** I am never separate from Her and He is never separate from me.

I think when you travel you discover that by living each moment in the present you are actually living with God. You are **saying Yes to life.....** and that is all God really wants us to say.

Namaste



