

## CHAPTER 1

# *Why Travel?*

“I have wandered all my life, and I have traveled; the difference between the two is this—we wander for distraction, but we travel for fulfillment.”

—Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953)  
English Writer

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### THOUGHTS ON WHY WE TRAVEL

Why travel? My answer to this question has changed over the years as I travel more. In my case, the reasons have probably been similar to others’ reasons: to visit friends and family; to gain knowledge; to sightsee; to simply “get away”; to observe a historic place or event; for entertainment; to act as a travel companion. These were the obvious reasons that were top of mind when I first started thinking about why I travel. However, after more thought, the deeper answer came to me: to change the world and to change myself. Let’s examine each of these a little bit more.

First, I know you’re probably thinking “how could my travels change the world?” Fair enough question. The answer is rooted in people. To help explain what I mean, read through the scenario below.

It’s a Saturday morning and you’re debating whether you should go out for your morning cup of coffee. It’s been a long week, and the thought of going out sounds like more hassle than it’s worth so you decide to stay in and make your own coffee.

In the above scenario, you have no interaction with anyone, nobody else's day changes, and life more or less stays on track for you and everyone else.

Now let's take the flip-side of that scenario. You decide it would be good to get some fresh air so you head to your local coffee shop. On the way to the coffee shop, the driver next to you notices your car. They've been thinking about buying one just like it, and they make a mental note to get the same color as yours. A few blocks down the road, you cross a traffic meter that is tracking statistics for a new signal planned on the corner. Add one.

Once you arrive at the coffee shop, you notice someone walking their particularly adorable dog, and stop to ask what kind of dog it is. After a short exchange, you make a mental note to research that breed more, plus the owner leaves feeling good about his choices in dogs, and for being such a friendly passerby.

In the coffee shop, there's a man sitting at the front table who does a double-take when you walk in. He thinks to himself that you look just like a girl he had a crush on in high school. His mind travels back to his high school prom, and he makes a mental note to find this girl again.

The barista takes your order and is refreshed and relieved by your cheerful personality because earlier in the morning, she had to deal with a particularly difficult customer. You pick up your coffee of choice when it's announced. The person standing behind you thinks that your drink sounds delicious and makes a mental note to try it next time they order.

I could go on, but I think you get my point. You may have heard of the Butterfly Effect, or seen the movie *Sliding Doors*. This is similar. Something as simple as going out for a cup of coffee can have an impact—no matter how large or small—on

your life and the lives of those around you. Think about this next time you have an interaction with someone, whether it's in conversation or simply walking by. If a trip to the coffee shop can do this much, imagine what a trip around the world can do!

The second part of my answer to "Why travel?" involves changing myself. Quite simply, travel expands the mind. It's impossible to travel and not learn or see or experience something new and different. Many of our preconceived ideas about people, places and things are just plain wrong. When we travel, we get to experience these things firsthand, and our beliefs change accordingly. All of these new experiences get filed away in memory, get tied to emotions, and change you as a person.

Oftentimes, travel will make you realize that people are much more alike than they are different. Even though we're different in our looks, lives, languages and beliefs, at the end of the day, we all want close friends and family; we all like to laugh; we all enjoy the sun on our face after the rain; we all enjoy delicious food; we all seek approval from those we love and even from those we don't know; we all want a comfortable life for ourselves and our families.

This knowledge changed me, changed the way I saw the world, and ultimately made the world seem like a smaller, more cohesive place. Realizations like these may come immediately, or may come over time, but they are what make travel so priceless. Being a citizen of the world forces you to grow and mature, but also gives you the innocent perspective of childhood, of seeing something for the first time, even though it is already familiar.

If you're still having a hard time buying in to my "world/self changing" reasoning for travel, below are some other reasons people have traveled over the ages and continue to travel today. Some of these reasons may be the same as yours, whether obvious or not, and some may inspire new reasons. Place a checkmark next to any of reasons below that you can relate to.

### Reasons to Travel

- To look for food and shelter
- For freedom
- To start a new life
- To leave an existing life
- To visit family history
- To visit friends and family
- To conquer fear
- To risk
- To witness history
- For hobbies
- For life purpose
- To inspire others
- For seasonal work
- To see the world through different eyes
- To participate in charitable efforts
- To meet someone
- To forget someone
- To discover yourself
- For romance
- For work
- In honor or memory of someone
- To see a historical monument or place
- For religion or pilgrimage
- To find new opportunities
- To feel alive
- To try new foods
- To discover new cultures
- To learn a language

- To participate in, or observe, an event
- To act as a companion
- For adventure
- For relaxation
- For fun
- For an obligatory vacation from work
- For school
- To celebrate
- To relocate
- For inspiration
- To inspire others
- To learn a trade
- To try something different
- To see history
- To create history
- For climate
- To gain knowledge
- For the rush and thrill of it
- To broaden horizons
- To see beauty
- To see pain and suffering
- To share the experience with family
- To get away from family
- To see if the grass is greener
- For a change of scenery
- Others have told you to
- Just because (no reason at all)

I travel today because I love it. Traveling has given me a sense of the world as a larger, more diverse, place, filled with people who deal with the same desires and wants differently due to their cultural perspectives.

— Allison, 42  
French Professor

I work as a flight attendant so traveling is very much a part of my life. I took this job 20 years ago because I wanted to see the world, and that I have! In all my years of travel, I never get tired of it. There's always something new or different to see, which keeps it exciting. At the same time, however, I've noticed that people are very much the same, no matter where they're from. My job has really made me realize that we are all so much alike.

—Tasha, 45  
Flight Attendant

I love to see the world and great outdoors. I even like to do the same drive over and over, because every time it is slightly different, whether it is a different season, or different wildlife or a different time of day. I have learned that it sometimes takes several trips along the same area to notice the small and subtle things.

Through travel, I have discovered the beauty of the earth, the wonder of manmade structures and roads, and how people interact, bend with, and change the earth.

—Kalene, 19  
Student, CNA

Travel is exceedingly educational. Even those not interested in meeting new people or seeing new places will learn new things. I have learned a lot about other cultures and much about other countries and local traditions and customs through my travels. Travel can teach compassion and appreciation for all the many different social levels and variety that exists in our world.

—Norma, 86  
Retired

I'm convinced I have slight ADD so I get bored easily. I like the idea of having a new adventure, eating different foods, hearing different accents, seeing different sights.

—Tanya, 31  
Education

As Americans, we truly are sheltered. My eyes were opened WIDE when I started traveling outside of the States. I'll never forget the first time I saw a machine-gun toting policeman in Guatemala. That really opened my eyes to how good we have it in the U.S. and how much I appreciate where I live.

—Debbie, 42  
Sr. Account Manager,  
Food Industry

When I was younger, I traveled because my family or spouses wanted to. While I enjoyed it then, it's taken on a whole new level of enjoyment since I started doing it for myself. Today I travel for me, to broaden my mind, to make me a better person, to experience things I want to experience, not because someone else wants me to or expects me to.

—Marla, 69  
Retired Teacher

The world is in such a changing state at this time. There are safe places and unsafe places. The view of the American has also changed. I think it is important to not only enjoy other places but have the world meet Americans that are respectful, caring, and aware of their issues.

—Roberta, 63  
School Principal,  
Private Counselor

For me, being able to go to a new place helped me connect more to my past. It was neat thinking that I had ancestors that lived in a certain area or were involved in historic events right where I was standing.

—Jen, 17  
Student

Currently, I mostly travel for work. If it's for personal reasons, it's to get away to someplace to relax and enjoy the beauty of nature; sun, sand and surf or the mountains.

—Vickie, 49  
Regulatory Compliance

I think it's important for my children to see different parts of the world and learn about their history. My husband often travels for work and we can't go along, but while he's gone, the kids and I take our own trips around the country and around the world.

—Lynn, 35  
Homemaker

I travel for my sanity. My business is very demanding, and 18-hour days are not unusual for me. While I love owning my own business and love what I do, I simply have to get away from it sometimes. I have a wonderful staff that I can trust to handle everything in my absence, which really makes all the difference in the world. Every six months, I make it a point to get out of the country for two to three weeks. When I get back, I'm refreshed, rejuvenated, and have new ideas on how to improve the business. For other women out there who are in the same situation, on the verge of burnout, just get away from it! Traveling can and will do wonders for you!

—Aryana, 51  
Restaurant Owner

I'm from a large family, and as us kids have grown and moved away, the family has become quite spread out. While e-mail and phone calls are a great way to keep in touch, there's nothing like visiting in person. I try to visit every one of my family members at least once during the year, even if it's only for a day or two. It's my way of keeping family ties strong.

—Jamie, 30  
Veterinary Assistant

### WHY DO YOU WANT TO TRAVEL?

In the questionnaire that follows, describe why you want to travel. We will delve into these reasons later, but for now, write the first things that come to mind, being careful not to overthink or overanalyze.

#### Why Do You Want to Travel?

List five reasons you want to travel

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## WHY AREN'T YOU TRAVELING?

If you've never traveled before, or just haven't traveled in a while, what is your reason? Write the #1 reason or excuse you have for not traveling, again being careful not to overthink it. Your initial reaction to this question is probably the real answer, so write it down. Later, we'll explore some common concerns and excuses for not traveling, in order to help you overcome them and start traveling.

<b>Your #1 Reason for Not Traveling</b>

## QUANTIFY WHAT YOU NEED TO TRAVEL

This section is the first step to making travel a reality for you. The #1 reason you wrote above for not traveling is, in your mind, probably the biggest thing holding you back. We're going to start to overcome that right now.

As with any goal or obstacle, the first step is to break it into small, achievable pieces. Since your circumstances and timelines are unique to you, I will use a known variable—the structure of this book—to help you set milestones. I want each chapter of the book to serve as a milestone for you in working towards your goal of traveling. Each of the 22 chapters in this book will allow you to move one step closer towards your goal.

In the worksheet below, write what it is you need in order to travel. For example, if your #1 reason for not traveling is lack of money, your need is money. If your #1 reason for not traveling is time, your need is time. If you're afraid of traveling alone, your need is information, courage, reassurance or a travel companion. Whatever your reason or excuse, write down what it will take for you to overcome this. Try your best to quantify this need (e.g., amount of money or number of free days). Be specific.

**In order to make my travel dreams a reality, I need the following:**

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### **ACTION PLAN TO MAKE TRAVEL A REALITY**

Now that you know what you need, let's break it into smaller pieces. Again, using the chapters of this book as milestones, let's divide your need into attainable steps. In the following worksheet, write one step for each chapter that will help you achieve your goal so that at the end of this book, you will have everything you need to strike out and see the world. (If it's easier for you to measure progress in terms of calendar dates, for example, feel free to use dates instead of chapters, or whatever else works best for you.)

As an example, if my need was \$1,000 to travel, my worksheet might say “put \$45.45 into my savings account” for each chapter, resulting in \$1,000 by the time I finished this book (if you’d like, tape the money onto the page at the end of each chapter). If my need was to find a travel companion, my worksheet might say “attend a networking meeting” for Chapter 1 or “join a travel group through Meetup.com” for Chapter 2, and so forth, so that at the end of the book, I will have new friends and potentially someone to travel with.

Now fill out the following worksheet for your needs. Again, try to be specific on the steps it will take to ensure your success. If you’re having difficulty finding the steps that will help you achieve your goal, perhaps return to this worksheet after reading more of the book. In later chapters, we discuss ways to fund travel, ways to free up time, ways to find travel companions and many more creative ways to overcome traveling obstacles. It’s okay if you don’t have all the answers right now.

**Milestones**

Chapter 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 7: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 8: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 9: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 10: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 11: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 12: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 13: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 14: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 15: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 16:	_____
Chapter 17:	_____
Chapter 18:	_____
Chapter 19:	_____
Chapter 20:	_____
Chapter 21:	_____
Chapter 22:	_____

