

Traveler Interview

Wednesday, March 19, 2014
7:59 PM

Introduction

I have spent a fair amount of time asking myself questions about the meaning, message, impact and various other aspects of long-term travel. In doing so, I have gradually developed a curiosity regarding how others answer such questions. From this curiosity spawned the Traveler Interview, a structured enquiry into minds and experiences of other travelers. This article is a summary of the responses I received, and the conclusions I have drawn following my analysis.

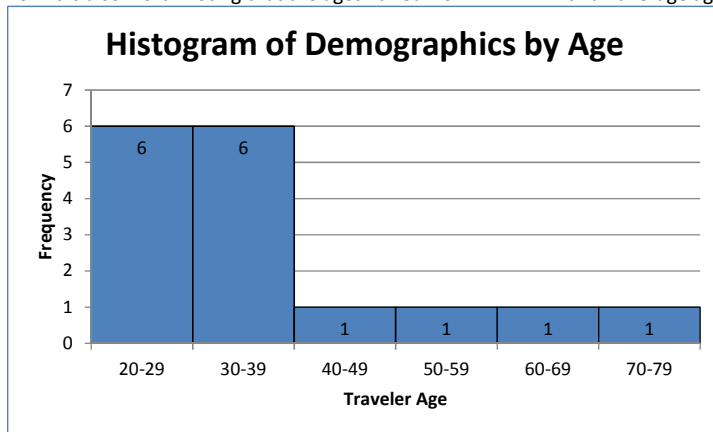
All data was gathered from March 28 – June 6, 2012 in the form of a traveler interview.

Participant Demographics

The study was conducted with responses from a varied set of ages and backgrounds which has been summarized in the following charts and graphs:

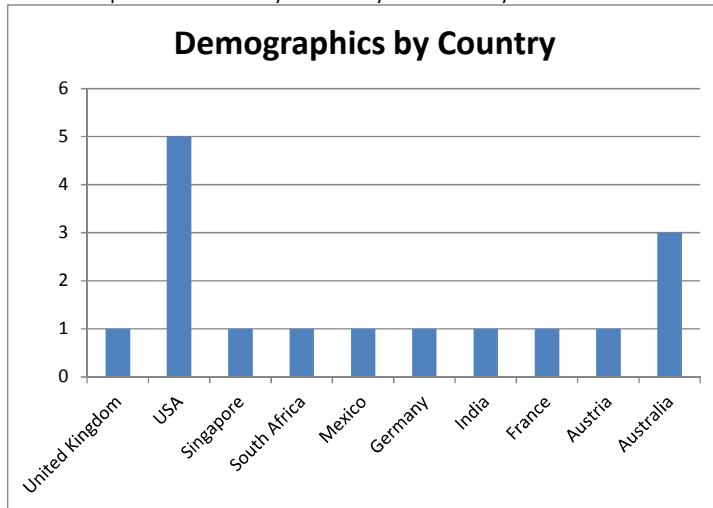
AGE

Here we note that the majority of travelers participating in the study were in the age range from 20 – 40. It is also worth noting that the ages varied from 21 – 71 with an average age of ~33 years old.



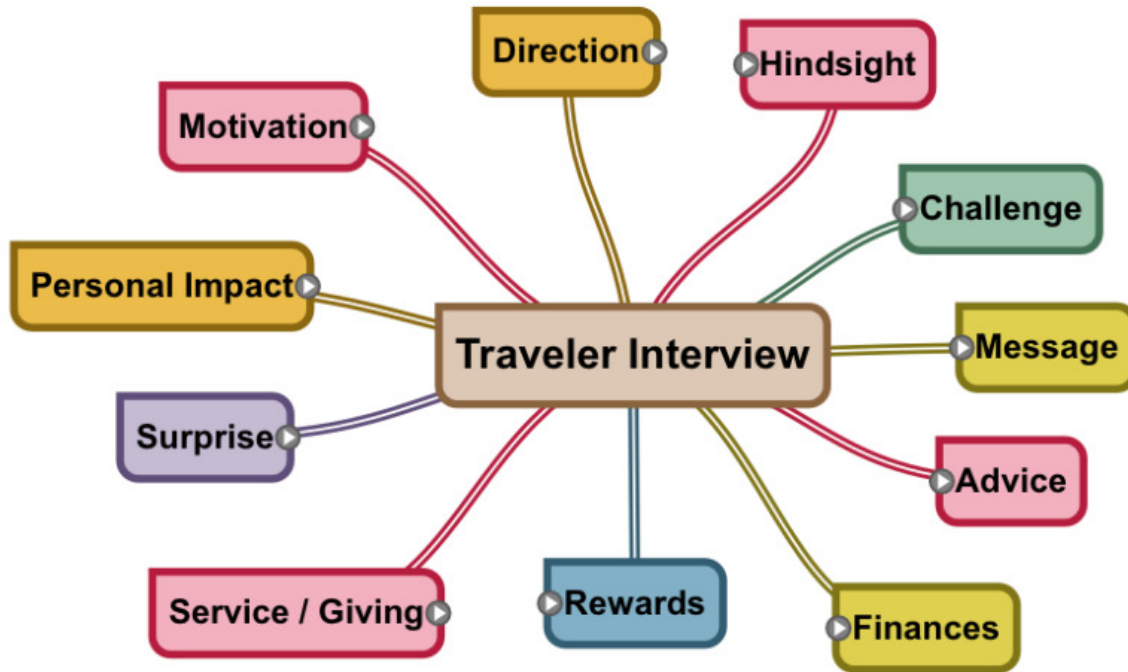
COUNTRY

The participants came from 10 different countries as shown in the graph below. In this graph we see that the responses of the study are heavily influenced by the USA and Australia.



The Traveler Interview

The interview was broken into the following categories, each category composed of a single question.

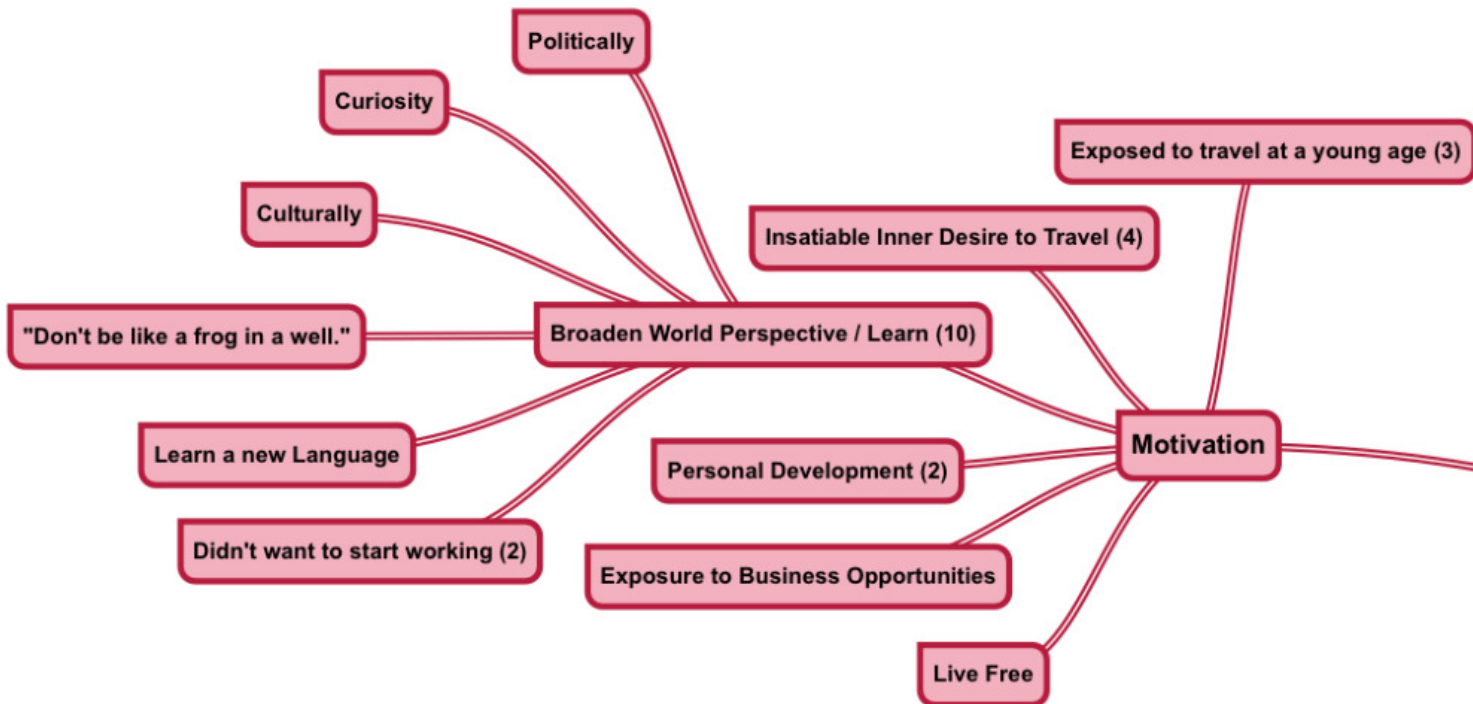


Content Analysis

To perform my analysis, I found it easiest to visually take in the information available by capturing the essence of each answer, and representing the responses on a mind-map.

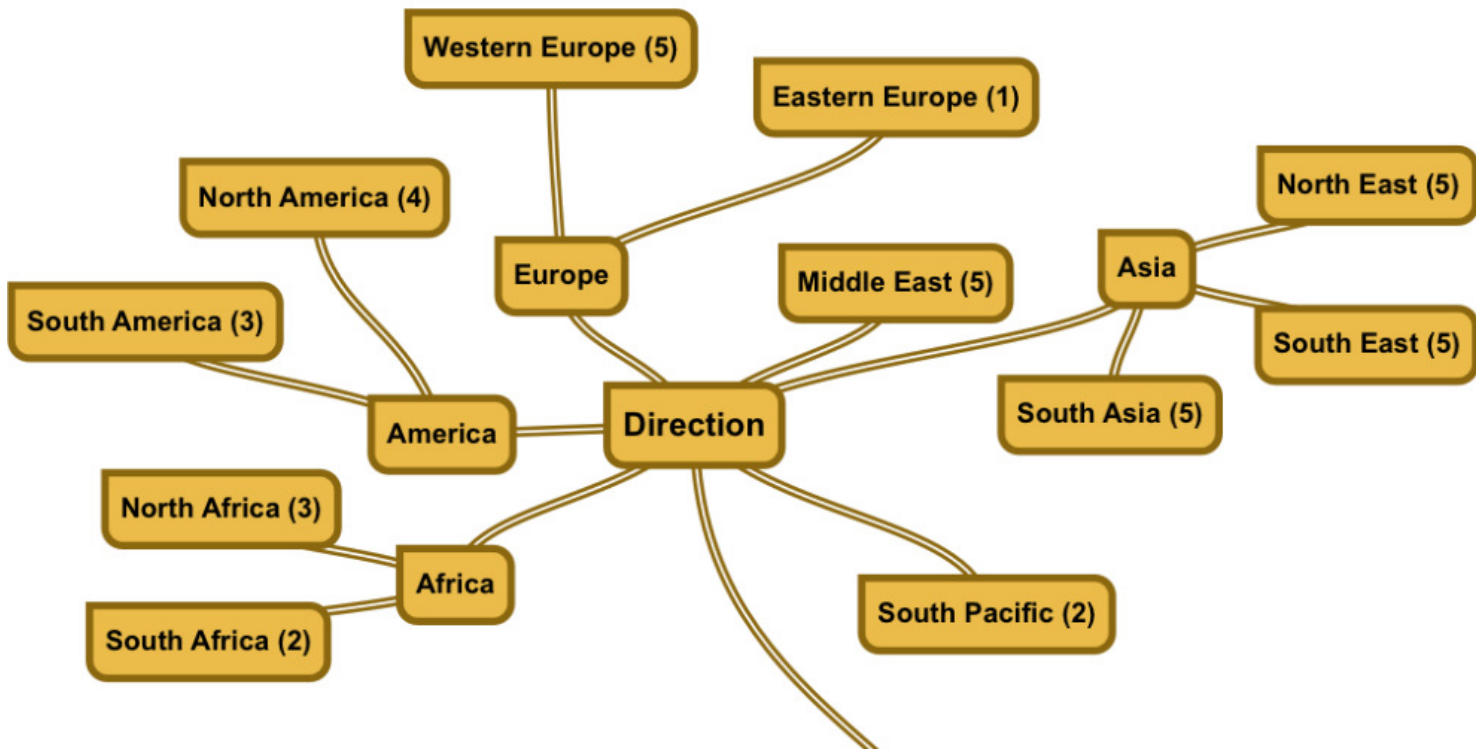
Motivation

What made you decide to travel?



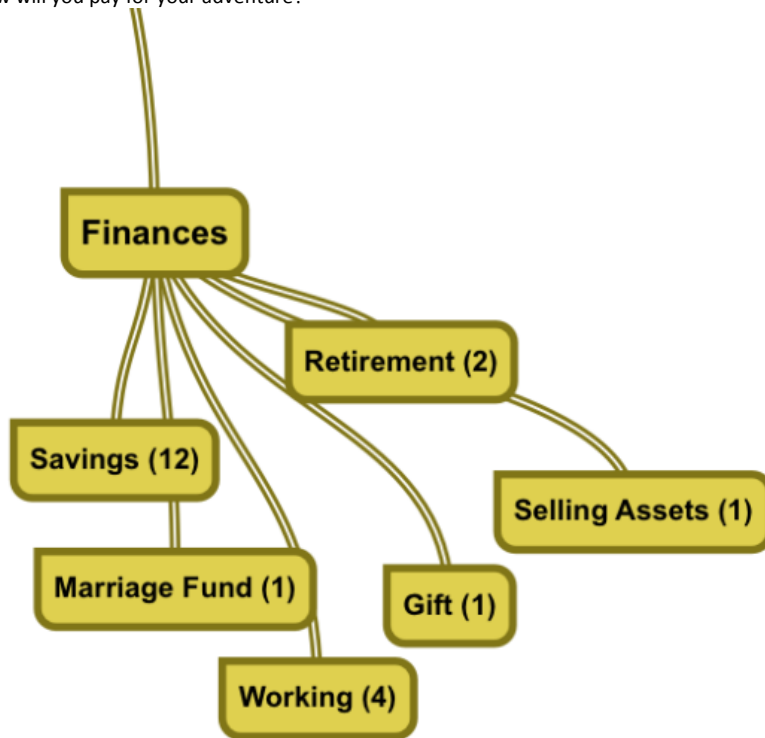
Direction

Where will you go?



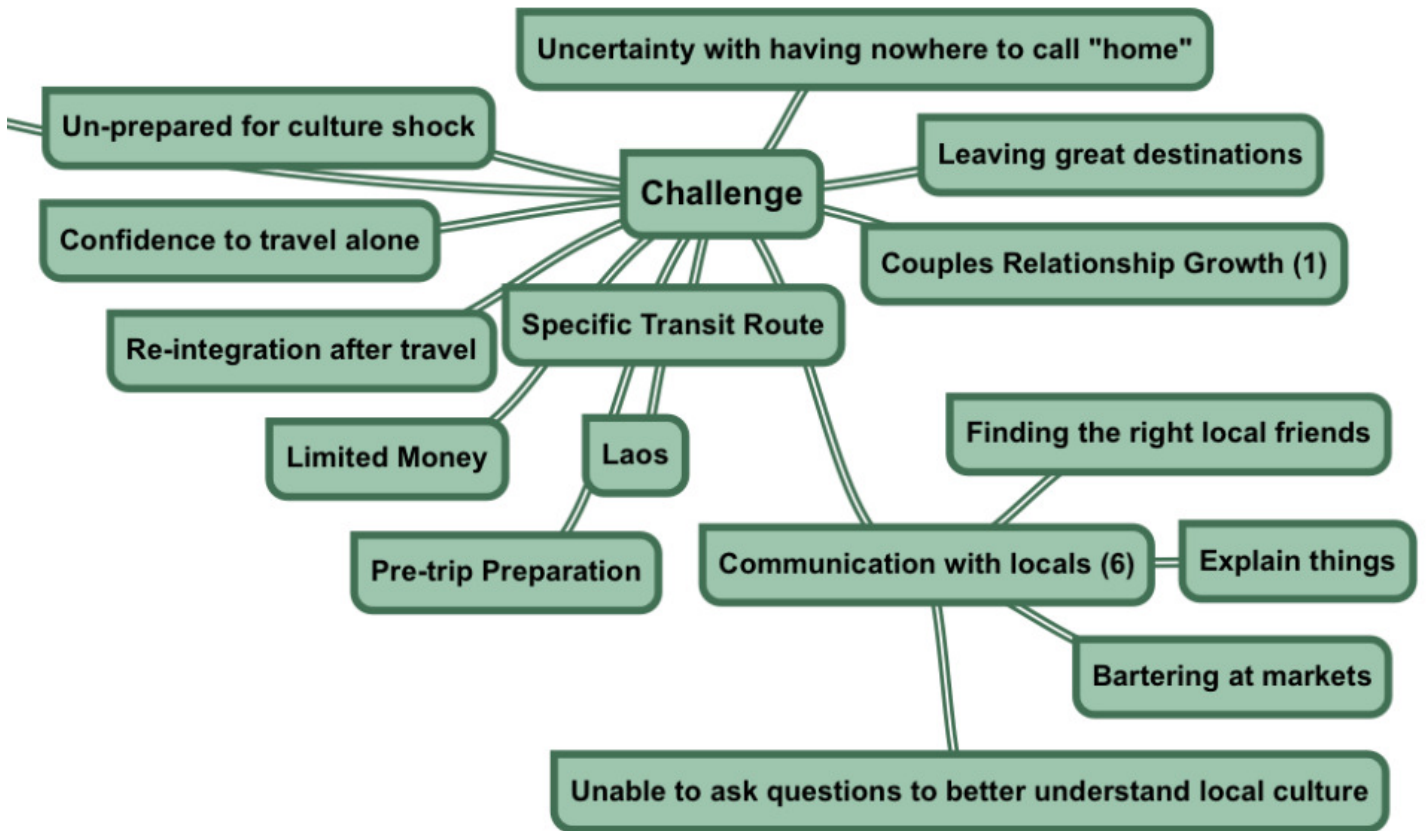
Finances

How will you pay for your adventure?



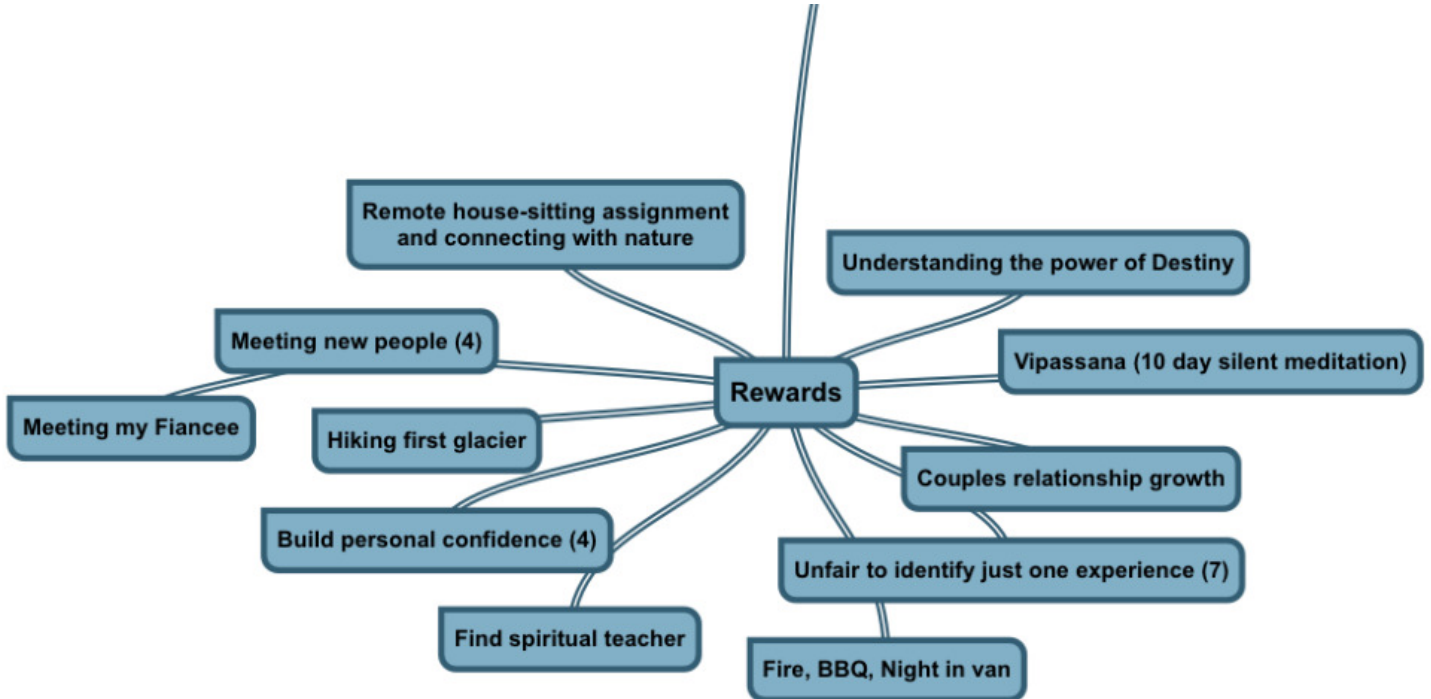
Challenge

What has been your biggest challenge so far?



Rewards

What would you say was your most rewarding experience?



Surprise

What have you found to be your biggest surprise?



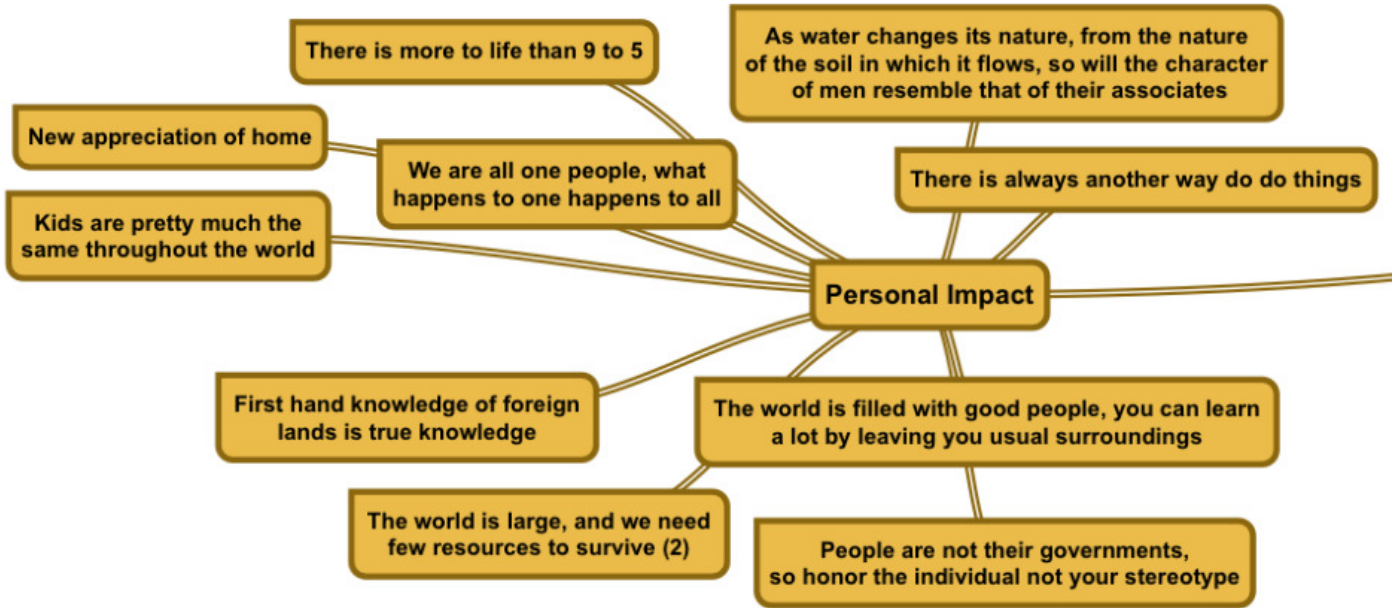
Advice

What advice would you give to someone considering long term travel?



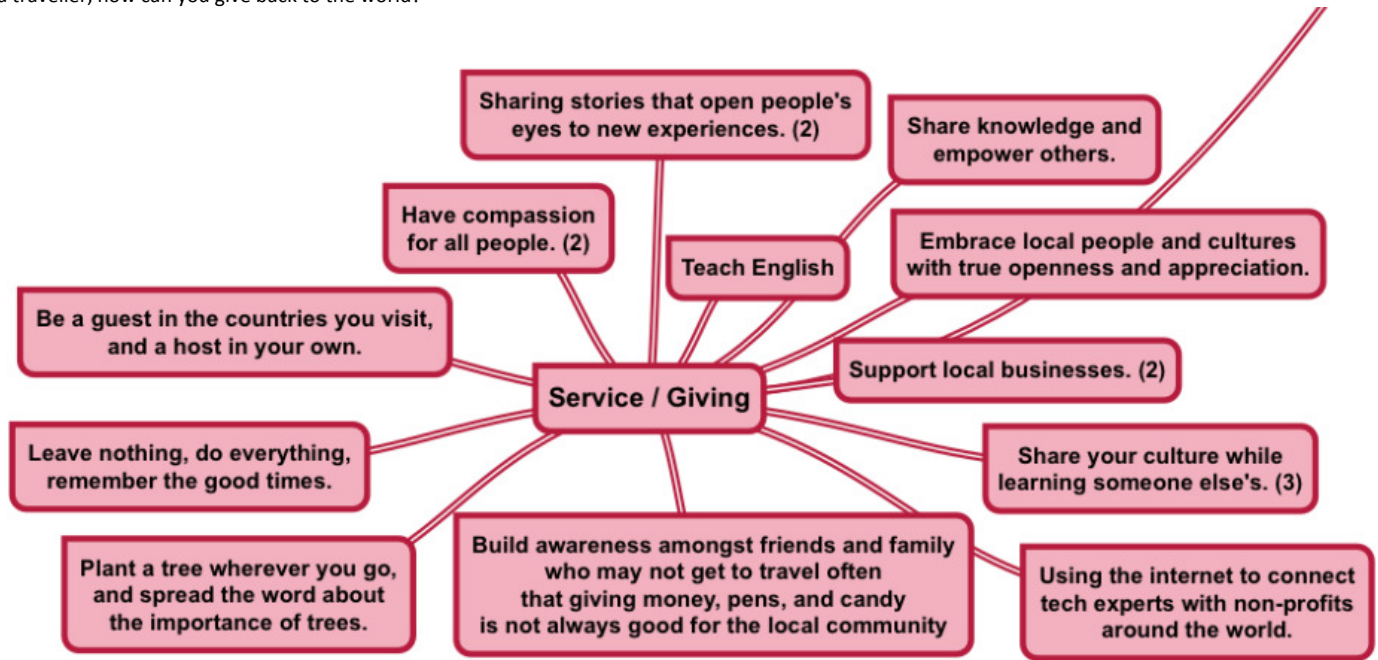
Impact

How has your travel impacted your thinking about the world?



Giving / Service

As a traveller, how can you give back to the world?



Hindsight

If you could change one thing about your trip so far, what would it be?



Message

What is your message to the world?



Conclusion

People are motivated to travel all over the world. Some are in search of unique adventure, while others pursue personal heritage and spiritual teachers. The people interviewed in this study are primarily motivated to travel by their own curiosities about different cultures, languages, political systems, and business opportunities. The general consensus is that you learn a ton through exposure to new places, and this learning later results in powerful personal growth.

Most people interviewed conceded that savings is a primary source of financing their adventure; although some are working, and others have received the generous gift of a traveling sabbatical.

The interview responses strongly suggested that the biggest challenge encountered while traveling was communication. Further, most long-term travelers agree that there is no single favorite experience, because each experience is special for unique reasons that combined make the adventure, and form the person you are (or become).

Surprises on the road varied wildly from being drugged to simple generosity. I think my lesson here is to simply observe how strongly our preconceived expectations affect the experiences we cultivate while on the road.

Our experienced long-term travel interviewees found consensus in advising others to pack light, and have a plan that includes going slow and being flexible with your itinerary.

The primary service that most travelers actively engage in is dissemination of information. Quite simply sharing your culture with others, and other cultures with your friends, family, and acquaintances was

identified as a high value service that participants most frequently provided.

In the end, I am happy with the outcome of this exercise, which served to satisfy my curiosity. Now I know how others answer these questions.

I want to thank all of those who took the time to complete the interview. I also want to encourage readers of this post to actively engage with those participants who are keeping a blog. Here are links to others content:

- <http://darshana-seeing-understanding.blogspot.com>
- <http://easternearthlingadventure.blogspot.com>
- <http://jetvibe.blogspot.com>
- <http://www.housesittingtravel.com>
- <http://honeytrek.com>
- <http://roseandjerome.wordpress.com>
- <http://escapedmarbles.wordpress.com>
- <http://www.dioenglish.com/space.php?uid=37356>