

# The Traveler Within



## Exploring The Terrain of Transformational Travel

*"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man."*

– Heraclitus

Traveling is far more magical than anyone who isn't an avid adventurer can possibly imagine. Exploring new and unknown destinations is not only enchanting, it's liberating and depending on the degree of one's introspection it can be life changing and transformational. Let's explore this intriguing notion of "transformational travel."

Like so many words that have lost their original meaning due to misuse, the essence of *transformation* is often misunderstood. "*Trans*" means "*to crossover, beyond or through*" and "*forma*" means "*form or substance*." Rather than traveling exterior landscapes, transformation is a journey through the substance of our inner terrain, beliefs and emotional selves. Most people associate transformation with exactly the opposite by assuming it has to do with exterior makeovers such as weight loss, improved physical appearance or an updated wardrobe.

True transformation is about an "inner crossover" in which we move beyond our self-imposed limitations, predictable behaviors and unexamined beliefs; emotionally charged terrain that keeps us from experiencing a fulfilling life. This crossover is about accessing a superlative aspect of our nature that transforms us from the inside out and encourages us to become the best human being we can be.

One way of understanding this crossover is to relate it to the powerful shift that takes place for those who have nearly lost their lives or have lost a loved one. The result, after the grief dissipates is a profound sense of gratitude for being alive and often the desire to share the transformation with others.

Transformational travel isn't for everyone however. Only those who are willing to venture into regions of the unknown should consider the trek; *everyone else enters at their own risk*. The reason for the "travel warning" is that the requirement for exploring the unknown within us is that we must be willing to walk away from our known self, the predictable "I" we've spent our entire lives believing ourselves to be.

And the greater risk yet is to lose control by discovering that who we really are is not a separate individual identity at all, but rather a shared presence of dynamic change and interconnection with everyone and everything around us. Heraclitus in his quote points to this dynamic nature in that *we are never the same person*, that just as a river constantly flows with different water, so to do we change and evolve as we traverse through the journey of life.

So how do we go about embarking on transformational travel and accessing our dynamic nature? A first step is to explore the notion of being a "shared presence" by dismantling the illusion of separation between yourself and others. You can experiment with this by making intentional eye contact and leading yourself into a deeper shared connection with "strangers" you encounter on a daily basis. As you make eye contact, greet them with an open heart and a genuine warmth. But don't just exchange hellos and engage in a warm-fuzzy-stare-down. For a brief moment during eye contact make a point to *see yourself through their eyes*.

This transforming activity requires a bit of imagination, but those who try it report they get an uncanny glimpse of themselves *as others actually see them*. To see ourselves from outside our own ego filter is an essential practice if we are to venture into our unknown terrain and make contact with our dynamic nature. But what will you actually see if you try it? Might you have to face negativity or judgement from people? I don't think so. I suggest to you that there is a greatness, a beauty and a kindness within you that perhaps you don't always allow yourself to see or experience, but others can instantly spot it if you are willing to let your guard down and travel with them into some "transformational terrain."



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