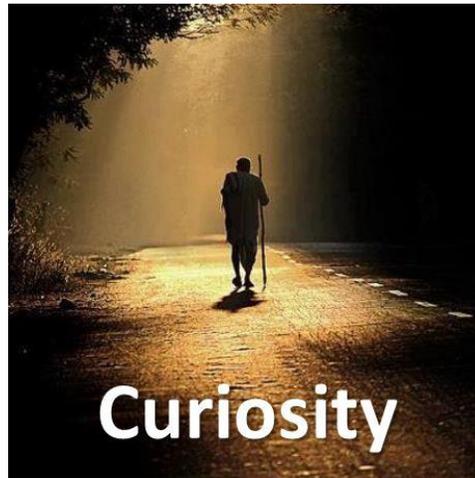


# The Traveler Within



## What Is A “Traveler Within”?

*“Travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on deep and permanent in the ideas of living.”*  
– Miriam Beard

Every travel destination, pilgrimage and trek we ever embark upon delivers us to multiple destinations, and I don’t mean one site after the next, but rather that every “site” we explore possesses a simultaneous “insight” counterpart, or what can be called “travels within.” The first destination, the exterior location we arrive at and stand upon is quite obvious, but the second, the deep insights that arise as a result of our inner travels are not so obvious.

This nexus where the outer world of sites and inner world of insights intersect is perhaps the most extraordinary “place” we can ever travel to. As Miriam Beard suggests, just beyond the joys of sight-seeing is a profound change in our ideas of living, a kind of evolving “inner-vision” of who we know ourselves to be and what our true “life itinerary” actually is.

This collection of twenty-some articles called the “Traveler Within” illuminates this extraordinary journey of inner-vision and life itinerary. First published in the colonial city of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico it is now available to life travelers of every country yet of a very special kind . . . those with a curiosity for exploring this nexus within, the paradoxically wonderful place in which the majesty of the outer world meets the mystery of the inner self.

So who are these “travelers within” and what makes them so unique? They are rare and courageous individuals who constantly venture beyond the shores of certainty and explore the mysteries of the unknown. They are enigmatic, free-thinkers and curious about life and about living life full out. Some say life travelers are restless and are born with a wayward streak. Others label them as nomads and vagabonds. And still others romanticize them as wayfarers, pioneers and “leaders of thought.” But beyond these fanciful notions one of the distinguishing characteristics dwelling within a life traveler is simple unabashed *curiosity*.

Curiosity may be a simplistic notion, but that doesn't mean it lacks character or depth. Curiosity is a natural attribute all of us are born with. Newborns are fascinated by *absolutely everything* and their inquisitiveness compels them to travel, first on their belly, then their hands and knees, and finally atop their feet and legs.

Yet as fundamental as curiosity is in our daily lives many of us lose touch with it. As we mature into adulthood our fascination with learning new things wanes and we tend to become set in our ways. There's nothing wrong with settling on certain preferences and beliefs, but when it's at the expense of our inquisitive nature we slip into apathetic disinterest, a condition in which the mystery of being alive gets replaced with the misery of merely living.

But why would anyone trade curiosity for disinterest? For one simple reason, adults must contend with something children are yet to confront; the insecurities of a mature ego. To a child, curiosity evokes an enthusiastic opportunity to learn and grow. But to the adult ego, it conjures up the risk of embarrassment and humiliation. It's important to realize that although our ego remains safe in the absence of risk, our aliveness diminishes because we've removed ourselves from discovering the mysteries of life. The poet e. e. cummings speaks of the opportunity to engage in curiosity this way . . .

*"Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit."*

While an infant doesn't necessarily *believe in themselves*, they're comfortable being who they are, just as they are without any second-guessing or self-judgment. This quality of self-acceptance must be integrated into our adult persona if we are ever to believe in ourselves.

Those who believe in themselves have moved beyond the need to protect their self-image. Rather than catering to their ego's fear of humiliation they've learned to embrace curiosity with a measure of humility. (What distinguishes *humiliation* from *humility* is the ego's propensity for self-invalidation rather than self-acceptance.)

So how do we deepen our self-acceptance and belief in ourselves? By getting to know who we are in very a specific way; not in a way others expect or want, but in a way that arises within the crucible of our own discernment. Self-belief is borne of our own experimentation with cause and effect, our own insight and discovery, and more than anything, our own responsibility for engaging in a life *we ourselves* deem is worth living, whether anyone else validates it or not.

One final thought before closing this first edition of *The Traveler Within* . . . There is a useful distinction between a *"tourist"* and a *"traveler"* I want to leave you with. A *tourist* is a casual sightseer who uses their travel itinerary to boost their ego and prove their self-worth. *Life Travelers* don't cater to their ego in this way and they're not sightseers. Rather, they're curious visionaries who engage in travel as a way to celebrate the natural world and explore the majesty and grace of the human spirit dwelling within them.

Join me next time as we venture beyond curiosity and into another compelling traveler within characteristic. Curious as to what it might be? That's the spirit!



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