

Out and About

Journeys Completed or Contemplated



The author gets fitted for a khangas in a Tanzanian village.

Open Passports, Open Minds

Travel can help you realize that everyone on earth wants pretty much the same things out of life.

by Sally Macdonald

Journalist, travel writer and houseboat dweller

You have to stand on the khaki-colored beaches of France's northern coast to fully appreciate what happened there a lifetime ago.

Decades after the D-Day battle that marked the beginning of the end of World War II, my heart fluttered a little and I experienced a glimmer of the fear and dread that permeates the Normandy sand to this day.

We weren't at Normandy long, my husband John and I. Just time enough to gain a new appreciation for the grit it took 150,000 Allied forces to jump out of amphibious landing craft onto the beaches, dodge a storm of bullets from above, and climb that sheer wall to face an enemy entrenched in concrete bunkers at the top.

Travel can do that for you; make the heart change course in recognition of the courage some people must conjure up to continue on through their day.

It can make you pay attention to news that doesn't directly affect you, even years after you've gone home. It can deepen your understanding of the web of politics that complicates our world and remind you that things aren't always as they seem.

And it can help you realize that everyone on earth wants pretty much the same things out of life.

Our perspective on what happened in Normandy 71 years ago took another turn a few days later and a few miles east of the battlefield beaches, at the coastal town of Arromanches.

There we saw for ourselves the ruins of a miracle.

Only three days after the invasion began, military engineers started to assemble an instant harbor, an artificial port that had been constructed in England to be put together on the French beach. In the 10 months after D-Day, the port was used to land more than 2.5 million men, 500,000 vehicles and four million tons of supplies to reinforce the invasion.

What seemed an impossible task was simply ... done.

You don't get the enormity of the accomplishment from YouTube or a history book. You only gain a true comprehension from being right there, on the beaches.

*"To travel
is to take a journey into yourself."*

— Danny Kaye

Normandy isn't the only tourist destination that has shaken our personal perceptions of the world.

A few years ago, we traveled to Israel, mostly to see the ancient religious sites that help form the spiritual lives of Jews, Christians and Muslims.

We stayed a week on a kibbutz run by Orthodox Jews near Tiberius. There we met a woman who invited us to Sabbath dinner in her apartment in the Old City of Jerusalem, overlooking the Western Wall.

It was during Ramadan and both the Muslim side of the wall and the Jewish side were throbbing with activity as the sun set and night descended.

On the Muslim side, people poured out of the Dome of the Rock, the controversial mosque that has sat for 1,400 years on the site. The Muslims built the mosque believing Mohammed journeyed to heaven from that spot; the Jews believe their most holy temples were there long before that.

On the Jewish side that evening, uniformed soldiers milled about, smoking cigarettes and talking quietly.

Suddenly there was the pop, pop, pop of gunfire as the Muslims began to shoot rifle rounds into the air to celebrate the end of the day and the break of their Ramadan fast. On their side of the wall, the soldiers drew to unruffled attention as the air became hazy with gun smoke.

There was no violence that night. The Muslims were just celebrating, our Jewish hosts calmly

Open Passports/Minds: *Continued on page 41*



Stark-white crosses underscore the enormity of the sacrifice of troops who landed at Normandy on D-Day.



Force Majeure (2014)

A family skiing vacation turns into an emotional crisis, thanks to an act of nature and a moment of weakness. When an avalanche rolls frighteningly close to an outdoor restaurant, the husband (Johannes Bah Kuhnke) bolts the table, leaving his wife (Lisa Lovén Kongsti) and two kids momentarily alone. For the rest of the vacation, the incident — and his refusal to acknowledge it — will have a sinister ripple effect. As the episode is recounted to others at the ski lodge, we get a sense of how rarely people really see the world (let alone each other) without prejudice. Swedish filmmaker Ruben Östlund creates an unnerving atmosphere (who is that person always looking down at the family in the hotel atrium?), yet *Force Majeure* is also wickedly, subversively funny. During the film’s unexpected final sequence, one wonders whether this disastrous holiday might actually renew this family’s life. Seeing things from a new angle can set us free. (Available streaming on Netflix, Google Play, Amazon Video, VUDU.)

MUSIC REVIEWS

by Joe Rodriguez / Freelance music writer

“Cherish the music that stirs in your heart ...” — James Allen



Man in the Mirror (Single) — Michael Jackson, Bad, 1987

One of the first hits recorded by Michael Jackson that he did not write himself, “Man in the Mirror,” begins with a simple angelic synthesizer and an overly electronic piano. A major superstar at the height of his career, the singer seems to have discovered a whole new perspective on life and the changes that he needs to make as he gazes introspectively into the mirror. As he begins to understand what he needs to do to, the song starts to take on an anthem-like feel. Just when you think you have it pegged, it takes you to church with the amazing backing vocals of true gospel royalty, the Winans, accompanied by the Andrae Crouch Gospel Choir. “Man in the Mirror” helps us understand that any kind of change, big or small, starts first within yourself. Amen.



One Day (Single) — Matisyahu, Light, 2009

Talk about a unique point of view: Matisyahu is a Hasidic Jew reggae artist and rapper who preaches a message of peace, faith and tolerance. “One Day” is his request for all of us to truly be thankful for what we have, but at the same time promote and demand change in the world. Amidst war and corruption, the message is about the hope of change and how one should never lose that hope. The song transports us to a heavenly place using an airy orchestral effect, and then uses that moment to open our eyes to a new perspective. An agent of hope and change, Matisyahu sings about the great blessings he has had, but also about what makes him cry, and questions the state of the world. He uses his music to exhort us to “treat people the same, stop with the violence” and “we will all be free.” His is a truly inspired soul.



It’s So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday (Single) — G.C. Cameron,

Cooley High Original Soundtrack, 1975

When Boyz II Men covered this song in 1991, it was probably used as every high school senior class theme song until the late ’90s. What most of us don’t realize is that the song has its roots back in the ’70s, coming out of Hitsville U.S.A. (Motown). Originally recorded by G.C. Cameron, formerly of The Spinners, it became the closing track of the movie *Cooley High* — and Cameron’s one and only hit. Cameron’s original has an old-school gospel feel that’s sorely missing in the a-capella version recorded 15 years later. A dueling organ and piano intro has the listener sitting in the pews watching the choir sing a hymn just before the soloist gets up to blow your mind. The song is a reflection on the emotions we feel at times of change in our lives. Leaving home for college, getting married, having kids, moving away, and wrapping up our careers — sometimes we have to leave the past and move on which, as the song acknowledges, is a hard thing to do. It is a simple message sung with soul by Cameron, and should be considered a hidden gem in the pop music archives of anyone’s music collection. ♦

Open Passports/Minds:

Continued from page 11

explained. And the soldiers were only there in case things turned sour.

As we made our way back to our hotel later through the peaceful streets of the Old City, we talked about how anxious we had been when the gunshots started. We couldn’t tell celebration from conflict without an explanation from our hosts.

That night we learned two lessons of travel: Things are not always as they might appear. And, contrary to what news reports may lead you to believe, there’s a peaceful, everyday component in the complex relationship between Jewish Israelis and Israeli Arabs. (Ethnic Arab citizens prefer to call themselves “Palestinian citizens of Israel.”)

Another time, we went on safari in Africa, not planning to learn much about life or politics. We just wanted to observe some animals we’d seen only in zoos and circuses.

Good Enough:

Continued from page 31

With a growth mindset, you believe that your talents and intelligence are just your initial stock, and they can be invested in and cultivated. You embrace the ever-present possibility that you continue to learn, try, have setbacks and successes, and learn some more. The holy grail of the growth mindset is getting better, not being perfect or even being good. Most of us shuffle back and forth between these two mindsets based on old thinking patterns and behaviors.

Research like Dweck’s shows that greater success emerges from the growth mindset than from the fixed mindset. It’s those who keep trying who ultimately achieve their goals, hopes and dreams. To quote Alfred Binet, the inventor of the IQ Test, “It’s not always the people who start out the smartest who end up the smartest.” Instead, it’s purposeful engagement with our own capacities, with practice and persistence, which leads us to expertise and success.

Even there, things weren’t as they seemed.

Safari planners like to put a little spice in their tours. In this case, we were to spend one morning driving into the highlands of Tanzania to visit a village and talk to the residents about their business raising goats and honeybees.

As we lurched our way up the mountain, our brawny safari vehicle groaned with every pothole, and we grouched the whole way up that the animals were doing their thing on the savannah below while we were being jostled to death.

When we arrived, the “village” turned out to be a couple of houses with a small corral out back and a shed out front where the residents sold honey and chunks of goat cheese. The village women showed us how to dance their way, thatch a roof and secure a khanga, the colorful rectangle of cotton that African women wear as a skirt or shawl or use as a baby pack.

Give Growth More Air Time

How do we shift to more of a growth mindset at this point in our lives? Start by paying attention to the messages you repeat to yourself. When the fixed mindset speaks with self-doubt and the inner critic has been unleashed, try choosing different words to describe what’s working and what isn’t. Instead of the self-defeating and negatively reinforcing statements you broadcast, try adding some verbal possibility for future improvement. Instead of, “I’ll never be a good storyteller,” make a shift to, “I’m learning to be a better storyteller.”

You have a choice about how you talk to and about yourself. Your brain hears everything you say; give your growth voice more air time! Each time you try, even if you fall short of the end goal, ask yourself, “What did I learn?” Adjusting your goal from mastery to simply getting better each time you try will do wonders for your eventual success and your happiness along the way.

In my coaching practice, I love seeing my clients do just this. Chris says that math has been challenging for her but she’s still going to keep trying. Matt says he’s sad that his past art projects haven’t

And then they told us the most surprising thing:

Their enterprise was supported by Heifer International, an Arkansas non-profit that works to eliminate poverty and hunger in more than 125 countries. Families are stocked with donated livestock to raise; and, in return, they share any offspring with their neighbors.

We had donated to Heifer International before, and now we were seeing a happy and prosperous result of just such a donation.

We aren’t experts in any of these countries, their trials or endeavors.

But our visits there came with bonuses: A deep appreciation for the men and women who give their all in war; the revelation that the everyday experience of Jews and Arabs who live in Israel proper or the Palestinian territories is more complicated than any news report can convey; and sweet memories of the smiles on the faces of the women of Tanzania as we followed their lead and fastened a khanga so it didn’t fall off. ♦

been satisfying, so he’s searching for a medium that better suits him. I tell people that instead of entertaining in ways that feel overwhelming, I’m simplifying my get-togethers so I can enjoy them more. Juan is frustrated with his organizational skills, so he’s open to coaching and learning new techniques.

Most of us already do this for our family and friends. Imagine the frustrated kindergartner who earnestly tries to play the piano but says, “I’m just no good at this.” As wise elders we reply, “It takes practice, time, some patience, and a positive attitude!” That’s your growth mindset talking. Turn up the volume on that voice that says you can still learn, grow and accomplish. Armed with a solid growth mindset, new and better results can and will emerge. ♦

For more information: Dweck, Carol S., Ph.D. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House.

If you’d like to test your mindset to see how far you tilt to a fixed or growth mindset, go to Dweck’s website at www.mindsetonline.com and take the short free assessment.