

EXPLORER



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Travel Like a HERO

A Guide to Embarking on Your Own Hero's Journey



Explorer X: How to Travel Like a HERO

About Explorer X

The Transformational Travel Council (TTC) defines Transformational Travel (or TT) as “any travel experience that empowers people to make meaningful, lasting changes in their life.” Transformational Travel is not limited to any specific destination or experience, but is rather an approach, ethos, and mindset. It’s a commitment to embark with intention, embrace the call to adventure, and return with the promise to put your insights into action.

Explorer X is the first tour operator entirely rooted in the guiding principles set forth by The Transformational Travel Council. We carefully choose destinations based on personal experience and share our accumulated travel wisdom throughout your uniquely immersive journey. Impeccably designed travel is the means; the end is helping you tap into the transformational power of travel to have experiences that will resonate well beyond your return. With that in mind, we design every trip so that it has the potential to be life-changing for you. How? By collaborating with you and by integrating TTC's Guiding Principles into our travel design process.

Throughout your Journey, we'll support you as you travel to get the most out of your experiences. Your job is to seek out a variety of adventures, activities, and interactions that will both challenge and support you on your path towards a more meaningful and powerful travel experience. Together, we can change the world!

The Call to Adventure | Pre-Departure

Reimagine Travel

Approach your journey as a means to a greater end, instead of an end unto itself. Being open to change and using your journey to grow, learn, and create positive change creates a far more meaningful experience than one designed around merely enjoying the moment.

Have Purpose and Set Intentions

Start by considering the purpose of this journey. What calls you to this adventure? What would you like to accomplish? Why? Prepare by considering what actions and choices will allow you to pursue that purpose. Set intentions for how you want to approach, engage, and react to the wide variety of experiences and situations you will find along the way.

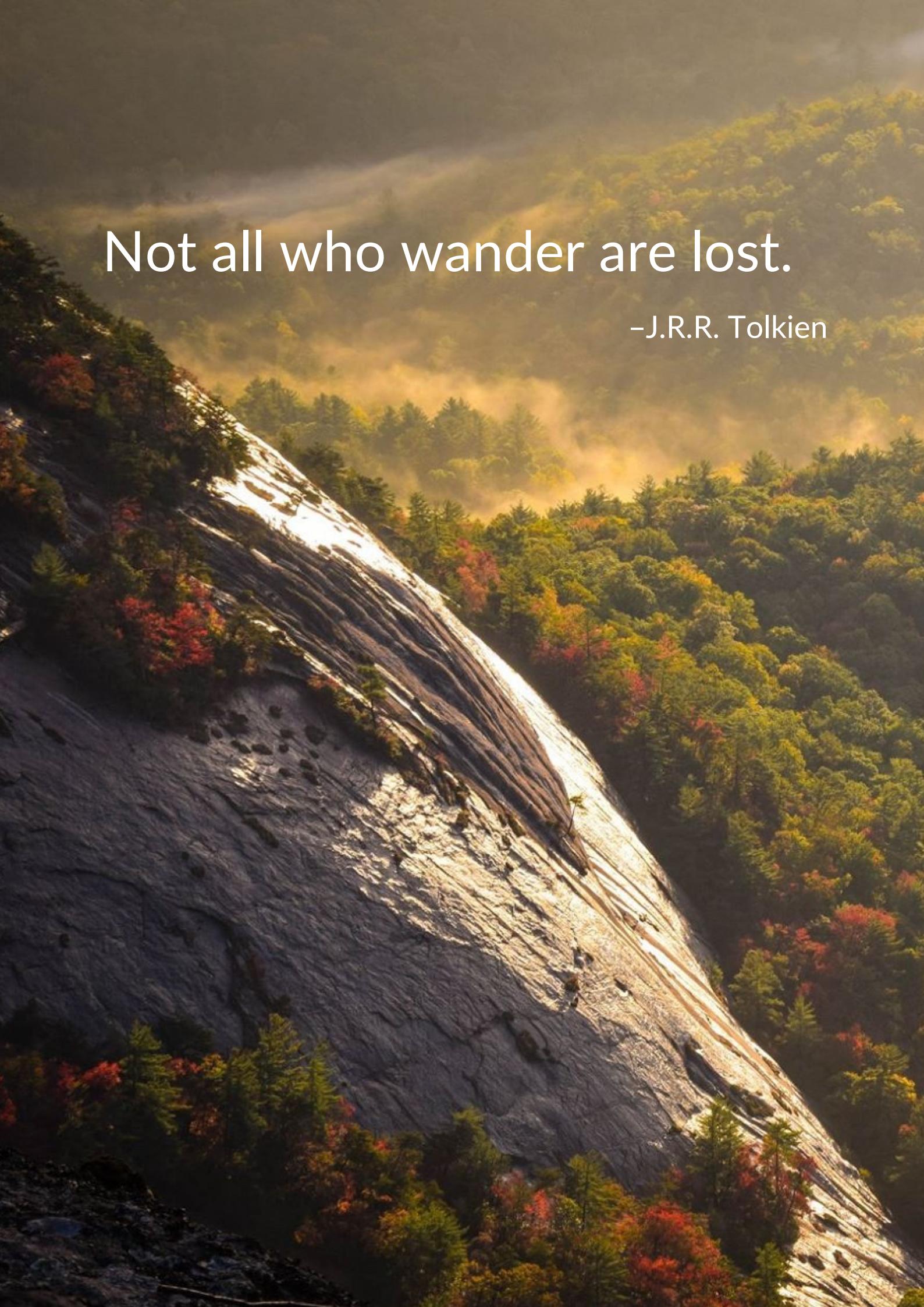
Disconnect to Reconnect

As you prepare to begin your journey, let go of all the external constructs of self. Often our identity becomes wrapped in the demands of our daily life, but travel gives us an opportunity to shake that off and expand out into the world. Leave behind anything you do not truly need, travel light, and be open to rediscovering what is important. Reconnect to your core self in the freedom of travel.

The Journey & The Road of Trials

Travel in HERO Mode

Travel like a HERO: With Heart, fully Engaged, with steady Resolve, and completely Open to the experience. Having Heart is to care about yourself, others, and your destination. It's being vulnerable and real in order to connect and being humble enough to be a steward of the places you have the and/or drinks. Whenever possible, we try to include opportunities for meeting a local expert in a field of interest for our travelers who can provide insights particular to their passion.



Not all who wander are lost.

-J.R.R. Tolkien

How to Travel Like a HERO

Travel with Your Lights On

While you seek to learn, grow, and change YOUR life, aim to positively impact the many people, places, and environments you encounter along the way: Through meaningful cultural interactions, sharing perspectives with others, being an ambassador of your own culture while learning from others, and constantly making choices that positively impact the local environment and economy, your Journey can have a deeper and more powerful transformation than your own personal growth.

Embrace Ritual & Ceremony

Integrate both ritual and ceremony into your travels. For example, take time every morning for meditation; when you arrive in a new destination, do something special to honor your arrival ... and do the same upon departing, thanking the people and place for the gifts it has bestowed.

Spend Time in Nature

The scientific benefits of spending time in nature are well-documented: Creativity and imagination spike, stress lowers dramatically, and our sense of connection to self, others, and the natural world are multiplied exponentially. We encourage and support X travelers in using this time in nature for conversations, meditation, personal reflection, and/or journaling.

Challenge Yourself w/ Exciting Physical Activities

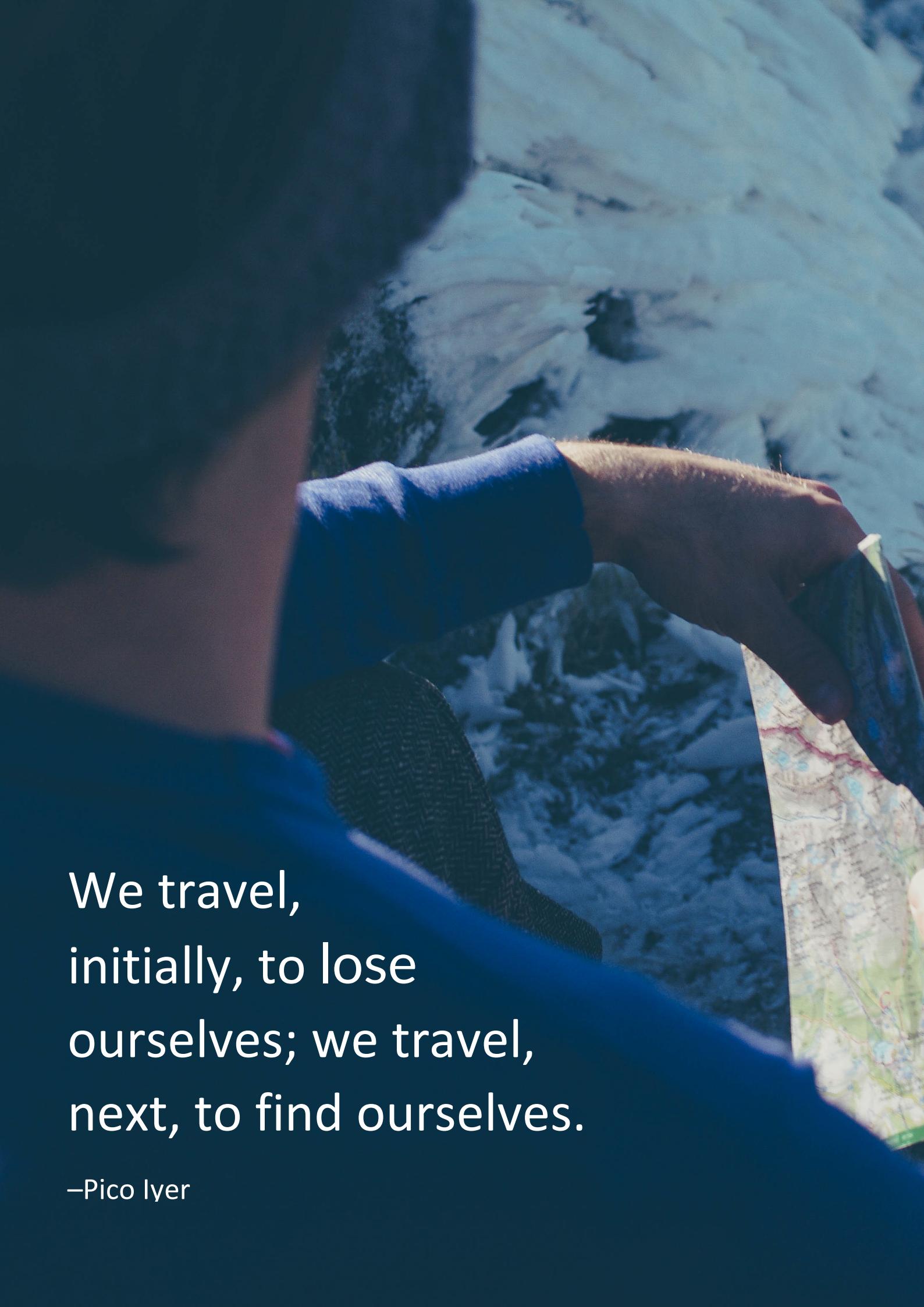
Adventures such as hiking, rafting, kayaking, climbing, and biking not only serve to push physical, mental, and emotional comfort zones but also provide opportunities for shared, lived experiences when traveling with others, which can often become the keystone for conversation, reflection, and changing perspectives of self.

Have Meaningful Conversations

Whether with local people, your guide, and/or with fellow travelers, sharing thoughts, ideas, experiences, and perspectives with others is a sure-fire way to expand our horizons, challenge ourselves mentally and emotionally, and confront beliefs or fears that may be holding us back from fully engaging in life or our travel experience. These conversations often take place over meals

Connect w/ People & Place

Choose an unfamiliar place and connect with what makes it special. Explore the good and bad alike to grasp the real beauty and complexity of a place and its people. Embrace the obvious differences but celebrate the similarities you share as human beings. Nothing has the potential to challenge preconceived notions of how things "should be," push our mental boundaries, and ultimately shift perspectives like learning about and immersing ourselves in another culture. Engaging in local activities, spending time in the local market, and enjoying a meal or cooking class with locals can provide powerful insights into life in that destination and oftentimes inspire and invite us to reflect on and reconsider our own culture and worldviews. Accept invitations but don't overstay your welcome. Stay open and allow your opinion to be changed. Stay respectful and polite. Help where you can, but don't be in the way. Talk less, listen more. Stay open to make new friends and shift the standard definition of friendship; every person you meet, no matter how short the encounter is, was meant to happen, so learn from the encounter. Be grateful: It's a privilege, not a right, to travel. Say Thank You! a lot ... even better if you can do it in the local language!

A photograph showing a person from behind, wearing a blue jacket, looking down at a detailed map of a region with green fields and red roads. They are traveling by train, as evidenced by the window frame and the blurred landscape of hills and trees outside. The lighting is bright, suggesting daytime.

We travel,
initially, to lose
ourselves; we travel,
next, to find ourselves.

—Pico Iyer

How to Travel Like a HERO

Carve Out Time for Exploration, Wandering, & the Emergent

Many of the most powerful and life-changing travel moments are unplanned, organic, and emergent moments that result from exploring on our own. While guided experiences add critical layers of context and information, carving out time for our travelers to wander local markets, meet local shopkeepers, dine at local restaurants, and simply let the emergent nature of travel work its magic is paramount on any Explorer X adventure.

Take Time for Personal Reflection

Taking time out to reflect on, process, and begin to make meaning from one's travel experience is a critical step in the transformation process. As Kolb mentions in his Experiential Learning Cycle (see Theoretical Foundations), we must have an opportunity for Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization (meaning-making) if we are to begin Actively Experimenting (i.e., applying what we learn to creating new beliefs and behaviors). Every day, travelers should have some time – even just an hour or so in the morning or afternoon – for reflection and introspection.

Prioritize Health & Wellness

Make choices that support your wellness as you travel. Eat healthy, local foods. Exercise daily. Take time for meditation. Remember that a HERO needs his/her strength to face their challenges and slay their dragons. In addition to time for reflection, many travelers who explore with us enjoy other wellness activities such as yoga, running, strength training, and other forms of exercise. Not only is it critical to keep our HEROs mentally sharp on their journey, but also to keep them physically active and engaged so as to ensure that the body is primed for their adventure. Carving out time for a workout and/or including demanding physical activities is a great way to accomplish this goal!

Seek Out Multi-Sensory Experiences

We aim to include experiences that engage all of the senses: Taste, touch, sound, smell, and sight ... and perhaps our most important sense, our 6th sense of intuition, when we listen to our bodies and hearts and souls. Listening to a local concert, indulging in a particularly amazing culinary experience, pampering travelers with a massage or spa treatment, and having them spend time outdoors immersed in the many sights and sounds Mother Nature has to offer all deepen the travel experience.

The Return of the HERO

Reflect on Your Adventure

Just as you took time to reflect on your experiences throughout your Hero's Journey, be sure to take time after returning home to continue processing all that you experienced along the way. Reflect on who you met, what you did, and what you learned on your adventure. Use your journal to capture your thoughts and emotions upon returning home. What seems different now? What's changed for you? What perspectives of self and others may have shifted? And what are you going to do about it?

Take Action

Now do something with all of this insight, wisdom, inspiration, and clarity! Commit to making a change, sharing it with others, and following through. Whether it's something small or something grand and sweeping, use the inspiration and insight discovered during your travels to create a positive impact on your life, and the world around you.

How to Travel Like a HERO

Transformation can be anything from making major life changes to simply opening yourself up to new ideas or hobbies, connecting with other cultures, or becoming more socially or environmentally conscious in your everyday life. It's up to you how far you want to go, and we'll be there to encourage you along the path. Let Explorer X be your partner and guide to help you find meaning in your journey and inspire personal growth. That collaboration begins well before we dream up an itinerary and lasts long after your jet lag fades. We're in it for the long haul, and the more we get to know you, the better we can surprise, delight, and challenge you in your adventures.

If you think adventures are dangerous, try routine; that kills you far more quickly. –Paulo Coelho

