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Get Inspired: Interview with Dave Levart – DavesTravelCorner

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Dave Levart founder of [Daves Travel Cornor](#). Started a trekking trip in Nepal in 1996, that turns out to be the change of his life. In his incident one might be turned off by travel, he decide to keep going for the next 16+ years in inspiring others. Meet Dave while he answers intense questions that will make you stop thinking and start doing.

Thank you for joining us on our “Get Inspired – Series” Dave. You are a true hero among other travellers, I admire your courage and your commitment of your journey. It’s our true honour to have you featured in our series. Let’s get started, shall we.

Tell us who are you?

At the core is my love of adventure and travel – focusing on making the most of experiences while I travel. I love exploring, meeting people, writing, using the internet and travel ties this all together for me.

Why did you decide to start this journey?

I first started traveling seriously after being inspired by a trip to Nepal in 1996; the notes from my hand written journal on that trip became the basis for starting my travel site. At the time the site was merely one page containing some links, photos and not much else. The pull of International exploration and experiencing new customs, food, cultures and regions is very strong. I love the perspective that travel gives me. Five years ago I started traveling even more – now spending 5-6 months each year abroad.



What were some of the obstacles you faced before starting your journey?

Money has always been an issue – certainly how to budget for travels. I’ve never had a conventional job in my life with a set ongoing income you could count on every month. I try to travel cheaply when I am exploring an area on my own – [couch surfing](#) has certainly cut down the cost of lodging in a number of places abroad and domestically.

And initially focusing on destinations that are: 1. cheaper to fly to from the USA and 2. cheaper to travel in – places like South America and then South East Asia. More expensive places like Scandinavia and parts of Northern and Western Europe came much later.

Another obstacle was fear of the unknown – however, this always goes away after arriving somewhere “new”.

If you could give advice to someone interested in traveling for the first time, what would it be?

For independent travelers – just do it... go and don’t try to plan out all the details! Pack light. You don’t need a large backpack or much luggage. Meet people – seek out other travelers as well as locals. Be respectful of local customs and culture.

Why did you decide to start your own website?

I have always enjoyed writing – I maintained a small personal website years ago. After returning from an inspirational trip to Nepal – I combined my love of writing with my newfound passion for International travel. I already had experience posting online through my personal website – and it made sense from a creative point of view to start a travel site detailing my experiences. I really wanted to share content that would help others in their travels. My site started out as a series of guides based on where I had traveled – how to, where to go, how to get around, what to see, etc.

What is your favourite post on your blog?

[My Personal Experience of Record Breaking Extreme Heat in Death Valley](#), probably because it is still fresh in my mind! I’ve always craved extreme heat – so when the opportunity arose I sent out a 48 hour notice to friends and family around the world. The last minute notice combined with the extreme heat is always a tough sell. This year I ended up going by myself.

What is the secret behind successful travel blogger?

First you must be endowed with a strong desire to travel – it must fall somewhere between addiction, obsession and passion. You must actually travel. Then you must be willing to put in crazy amounts of time, that no sane person would ever tackle – creating all forms of content (writing, video, audio etc), doing SEO, promotion (social media, events, contests, select guest posting, writing for others etc) and networking (online and in person) for your brand – i.e., your travel site. To further increase success, you should be comfortable promoting yourself and be comfortable speaking in public (i.e. interviews).

Eventually, if you stick with this for a number of years (most do not and or either settle down or get tired of all the work for little monetary rewards) – then more opportunities will continue to happen for you. Nothing happens overnight. At least that is my personal perspective – it is different for each person of course.

Any other websites beside DavesTravelCorner you are working on?

I am in year seven of what will be at least a 10 year self motivated project in which I am trying to visit, taste with and write about all the wineries in Napa Valley California. [The Napa Wine Project](#) - I've made well over 700 visits and reviews with at least another 200 to go! It has been a lot of work but I'm hoping something cool comes of this – my mission with this project is to continue to promote Napa as a world class wine region as well as the individual wineries, their wines, stories and history.

I also run a fan site for currently undefeated boxer Andre Ward (26-0); he is one of the top boxers in the world today – but I don't really spend that much time on this site.

How do you manage to work in so many websites and travel?

Other than giving wine tours (which ties me to a specific region) the rest of my work travels with me. My travel site can be more than full time if I let it – sometimes I need a break and will work on the wine site. Trying to manage both is certainly a challenge – I try to focus on either one or the other at any specific time, with most of my efforts going to my travel site. The travel site would be nowhere near as developed as it is now if it wasn't for a good friend who has been helping me out on the backend ever since I started the site. I also have regular contributors who contribute posts from their travels – which helps keep content fresh and updated.

How do you maintain keeping your readers interested in your blog?

I continue to try and produce quality content – ranging from guidebook type writing – to more reflective writing. The guidebook writing (how to, where, what to do etc) appeals to those actually planning their trip while the more reflective writing or posts about my trips and adventures (as well as from contributors) often appeals to armchair travelers. I hold an annual travel writing contest which generates interest as well as new content – and I am very active in several social media outlets. I encourage contributors – and they bring in their own social media networks and followers.

How do you make your income while traveling?

The majority of my income while traveling comes from my travel site – in the form of advertising. Either text links within existing articles, or guest posts or sometimes small banner ads. I also run a very tiny Internet Service Provider – and I can do tech support and general management from the road – which also earns a small income.

Tell us one of your most inspiring story?

[My most inspiring journey that turned me on to travel was a trip I took to Nepal.](#) This was the first time I had been to that part of the world and my eyes were opened to the culture, customs, and food and how people live compared to “western” societies. I saw bodies being burned along the Bagmati River in Kathmandu, experienced trekking in the world’s most amazing and highest mountains, the Himalayas and became incredibly sick and had to be carried down from those mountains. I met people on this trip who later became very good friends and who I have remained in touch with ever since.

Would you ever settle down and stop your journey? If so, Which country would you choose?

The last 8 months have been nearly non stop travel – I am currently taking a break and enjoying a relaxing summer in California (home base when I’m not on the road). I will keep traveling as long as the passion for exploration burns – this is a lifetime endeavor – I do not see myself truly settling down. But there are two places I would “settle” – that being my home state of California and the other being Thailand. Ultimately I would like to divide my time between these two locations.

What are the things you always bring with you on a trip?

For general travel, one small backpack regardless of whether it’s a cold weather or warm weather destination. If I am going to extreme cold places, in addition to what I have in the small backpack I bring an 850 down fill [Super Warm Jacket](#) which can be made quite tiny by using a compression sack.

Passport, camera, lightweight ultra book, emergency medicine and basic clothing. I don’t really need much. [Here is my pack list that I’ve created based on years of travel.](#)

What is your favourite travel gadget?

That is my [Ultra Book](#). It is so lightweight – yet has a much larger screen than my former netbook. It is my way to communicate, serves as my outlet for creativity and is what allows me to still earn income while on the road.

What are the most important things that traveling has taught you?

I have found this out on my own through a lot of traveling and overseas experience — fear is often blown out of proportion when it comes to discussing certain countries. Whether it's fear of the unknown, fear of logistics once you arrive, or fear from media reports. Even countries that are marked as "dangerous" often have certain regions that are safe to visit.

Be adventurous – try things at least once. If you don't like it then at least you know that. Get out of your comfort zone and try new foods, experiences and meet new people. Your life will be richer for this. A friend I met in college introduced me to this way of living and it has been a fun part of my travels since then. It has made for some interesting stories to!

Never judge a country based on pre-conceived notions or stereotypes built up before actually visiting that country. When you visit a country and spend some in depth time exploring, you discover the realities of the location and get to know people and often find your perceptions will change.

What is the craziest thing you did on your travels?

This would have to be mountain climbing – I love it but it has produced some memorable stories. Like the time I ended up in a high altitude pressure bag due to extreme altitude sickness on the upper slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, (two people next to me died on that trip) – pushing my limits and attempting a 6000 meter peak in Peru – falling short of the summit but climbing quite high on the mountain and glacier and crevasse climbing on Mt. Rainier. It was scary as we descended – seeing massive seracs (ice blocks) that crashed down and had obliterated our path in the snow from earlier in the day.

What is the best country you visited? Why?

I could name 20! I've been to Peru a number of times – I love the diversity in experiences there – the country offers such a wide range of outdoor experiences – from trekking, to high altitude mountain climbing, to jungles, world class rapids, high deserts and the ocean. Not to mention good food, unique historical attractions and good tropical fruit (one of my passions).

What is your favourite book?

[Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand](#) (author of [Seabiscuit](#)). If this was fiction this would be an amazing tale – but it is not. This is the true and inspirational story of [Louis Zamperini](#) – track star, 1936 Olympian and World War II hero. Louis is actually still living – he’s well into his 90’s now.

Have you written your own book?

Yes, I wrote a book called “[The Freeways of Los Angeles](#)” – this book covers all the major freeways in Los Angeles and Orange County – it is part entertaining, part historical and part obsessive. Needless to say, the audience and interest in this is very niche oriented.

Choose a movie title for the story of your journey?

Shall We Go?

Dave... You are a true hero mate, one must look up to you and what have you done, your story is inspiring. Thank you so much for participating with us on today’s “Get Inspired – Series”, I truly hope you have inspired others. There you have it folks... if Dave can, so can YOU!

Looking to find out more about Dave, check out his website [DavesTravelCorner](#) and follow him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Google+](#) and [Youtube](#) for updated news.

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Born traveller, photographer, and inspiring storyteller. His mission to travel with absolute no plans & chasing a story to inspire you to get out there and start your own adventure. Follow him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Google Plus](#) for live and updated news.