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Tuesday Talk with David Thompson from Dave's Travel Corner

by Wez on February 12, 2013

in [Tuesday Talk](#)

Today in the Tuesday Talk I got to talk with David Thompson from [Dave's Travel Corner](#). Travel has been a big part of Dave's life for many years, and he even started an online travel journal back in the late 1990's, which is now the Dave's Travel Corner you see today. Let's see what Dave has to say about travel, Nepal, and life.



Dave from Dave's Travel Corner meeting some of the locals

Can you tell us a bit about yourself Dave.

I crave travel and have been fortunate to have explored many countries throughout my travels. I love the unpredictability of travel and the prolific wildlife in Sub Saharan East and Southern Africa as well as visiting the Middle East, Europe, the Andes in South America – but find myself always returning to Asia, often several times a year. I'm on the road 4 to 6 months of each year – mostly abroad.

I enjoy wine – I founded the [Napa Wine Project](#) in 2006. I am trying to visit, taste with and write about every winery in Napa – having completed more than 700 to date. It is a daunting personal project – yes you can call me crazy!

I was co-founder of a solar racing team in college with a friend. That was a very cool project – we built a solar racing car from scratch – fundraising and then designing and securing all the materials ultimately producing a working vehicle.

I met my wife in Thailand in 2001 – (she now travels with me on a number of trips) she and her cousin were extremely late pulling into a bus stop and my brother and I nearly left before they arrived. We were married in Thailand in 2004, three days before the Tsunami hit. The recent

movie “The Impossible” stirred up a bunch of memories around that time – my brother barely escaped with his life, we had friends and family from all over go to the beaches after our wedding – and then we eventually visited some of the worst hit areas in Thailand just 10 days after. It was a crazy time to be here.



Dave hanging out by the river

You started your writing when you went on a trip to Base Camp Everest. I'm really interested in doing a Base Camp trip one day, so can you tell me a bit more about what it was like.

There is nothing like being surrounded by the awe inspiring beauty of jagged peaks in the world's greatest mountain range. The Everest Base camp trek brings you close to the mountain peaks without actually climbing them. The ultimate destination on this trek is Kala Patar where if you summit, you are afforded 360 degree views of these towering glacier and snow capped peaks including the grandfather of them all, Mt. Everest.

We made the trek rather quickly in about 9 or 10 days – it is recommended to take 12-14 days, adjusting more for altitude and perhaps taking some short day hikes. We flew in an old Russian military helicopter to the starting point which is the small town of Lucla. The runway (now paved) was dirt at the time and many people arrive in planes. It is a sloped runway and one end precipitously drops off a cliff/canyon. It is not a flight for the faint hearted!

There are small towns and guesthouses the entire way – and you plan your trip each day based on the next town's location. I was with a group of people from college – there were two Dave's and

we were the only one's to sleep outside in the freezing cold for several nights while everyone else was inside the relative "warmth" of the non heated guesthouses. We quickly earned the nicknames "crazy Dave's"! We made the trek later in the year and it was quite cold at night and at the higher elevations we climbed over rocky terrain with glaciers underneath.

As my first trip to some of the world's most massive mountains – everything was new and so impressive. We climbed over rope and steel bridges with icy fast flowing glacial melt rivers and sharp rocks below us, were introduced to Yaks (one broke its foot on a bridge we were on and the animal panicked), hand carved prayer rocks lined parts of the trails, we walked by prayer wheels – spinning them as we passed by, prayer flags fluttered in the breezes in the towns. Porters passed us, either barefoot or in sandals with massive packs on their back or carrying heavy loads of water.

Tengboche Monastery is one of the true highlights on the trek. It sits high on a plateau surrounded by mountains – the monks will make deep throated chants while you listen; it is quite mesmerizing.

Yes, I absolutely need to return to Nepal.



Dave outside his tent in the snow

Your website Dave's Travel Corner isn't just a travel blog, but a community for travellers. What made you want to start this website?

I started the site because of three reasons:

A. I discovered I had a passion for International travel after taking my first big International trip (to Nepal).

B. While in high school I started keeping a journal, writing poetry and writing online for a personal website – I have always enjoyed writing and the creative outlet that it provides me.

C. I have never owned a Television in my life and as a result, I think that lack of visual addiction steered me towards learning about the still young online world in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Building a travel website combined all three of these strong interests at the time. It was just one page to start – with some photographs, some notes from my Nepal trip, some badly designed graphics – it was a really a lousy looking overall design actually! There were no nice content management systems back then like there are today.

This is always a tough question, but what is the best place you've been to in the world?

If it comes down to just one place I'm going to have to choose my home state of California – the place that I have the most travel experience with and where I was born.

While I am abroad quite often and crave International travel and the experiences it offers and I have lived overseas I always return to California. It is a crowded state, the most crowded in the nation in terms of population but most people live within a fairly close range of the ocean. If you go to the north of the state or east – you find the crowds quickly disappear. I love the diversity in California both natural and cultural. In Los Angeles you have a number of communities that form the largest populations outside of their home countries. And you have everything that comes with urban environments – the vibe, the events, the creativity. We have major hubs for International industries: agriculture, high tech, aerospace, film, to name a few.

If California was its own country, it's economy would be among the world's top 10 nations.

The natural beauty is diverse and extreme – from freezing cold to searing heat and everything in between. There is the ocean to the high mountains(both the tallest mountain and the lowest point in the lower 48 states), to the deserts, to the huge Central Valley (bread basket of the state) and the world's tallest (Redwoods) and oldest trees (Bristlecone Pine) – not to mention the massive Sequoias. Our weather is also diverse, we have micro climates even within small distances.

Disneyland has an awe inspiring ride called 'Soaring over California' – you are strapped into your seat and take an aerial fly by over some of the states' most impressive offerings. It feels like

you are actually in a hang glider looking down at the attractions in real life – with seat movements and odors blown out of vents to complement certain visuals in the film.

What's the biggest lesson you've learnt from your years of travel?

That exploration is an integral part of human kind and we should embrace it – exploration and travel bring so much richness and perspective (the most important word in travel) to one's personal life. Nothing else can substitute for it, not word of mouth, television programs or the Internet. It is too bad we only live so long – I would love to see what the next few centuries bring – having increased capabilities to explore beyond our own planet is going to profoundly change our perspectives.

And perspective of course – traveling has opened my eyes to the cultures, food, diversity, natural wonders, religion and all the world has to offer, both good and bad. You can travel (physically move yourself from one part of the planet to another) but if you don't have or seek out experiences you aren't really 'traveling'. It is those global experiences that has shaped who I am and has changed my life forever.



Dave meeting new friends

Is there any advice you can offer to the fledgling travellers out there?

Don't let fear dictate where you travel – and don't let fear hold you back from making a career

break to explore the world and seek new experiences. It is easy to make excuses when you have a fear of the unknown and there is a lot of unknown before visiting a ‘new’ part of the world. With that said, trust your gut, it is the most important compass you will own – if you take the time to listen to it.

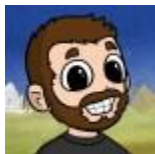
Definitely travel when you are young, find ways to do it – even if your budget is limited – or if your passion for travel is such that you need it to be a part of your daily life – explore ways that you can integrate both travel and work together. There are a handful of travel bloggers who have been able to do this – it takes a lot of hard work and perseverance, but it can be done.

Be a part of travel communities, online and in person – meet other travelers and share experiences and ideas.

Travel light – both your knees and your back will thank you when you get older. If you forget something at home or need something while abroad – many places in the world will have what you need. Most things are not more important than experiences. However, it takes some travel under your belt to figure that out.

Be adventurous – try things at least once. If you don’t like it then at least you know that. 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!

Thank you Dave for spending the time to answer a few questions for me and my readers. If you would like to see more of Dave’s adventures, head on over to [Dave’s Travel Corner](#), or you can also follow [Dave on Twitter](#).




[Nathan “Wez” Brown](#)

Wez loves taking landscape and travel photographs, and sharing these as inspiration to travel. He has a goal to visit every Hard Rock Cafe in the world and have a shot in each of them. He can also eat nearly anything, and will try most things at least once.

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[nicole @thewondernuts](#) March 21, 2013 at 5:57 am

I love his website! Stumbled on it from twitter. It’s very informative.
nicole @thewondernuts recently posted...[Should I Visit the Eiffel Tower? Yes!](#) 

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[Wez March 21, 2013 at 8:09 am](#)

Thanks for saying Nicole, I really appreciate the feedback.

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