

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Make America Smart Again

Jordan Ancel · Wednesday, March 9th, 2016

In a great [Huff Post blog by Brittany King](#), she hits the nail on the head about why Trump is winning: America is racist.

This may not seem like news to most people, with the rise of violent crimes and murders of non-whites—especially African-Americans and [Muslims](#)—with the rise in police brutality against African-Americans.

A good mate of mine from the UK, whom I lived with in New Zealand, offered that when he was growing up, it was common knowledge that “Americans are stupid.”

And I have to admit, I’ve known it too. Not all Americans, obviously, but enough for us to have a reputation abroad as being arrogant, stupid, loud. Again, not new news.

When I travel, I always make it a point to immerse myself in the culture, to show respect, because as a human being, why would one not?

I’m not a shrink or a sociologist, just an observer of human behavior. I always have been. And I truly think the hateful, fearful rhetoric spewed by those on the side of divisiveness (rather than unity)—whether they be citizens of this country or citizens of any other—stems from provincialism, a lack of experience, a lack of intellectual curiosity.

The only cure for ignorance is education, and to me, the best education anyone could receive is from travel.

Travel is a personal, hands-on, eyes-open way to experience people from other cultures and  religions, and just a little bit of travel can enlighten one to the fact that all people are the same.

They are kind, and hopeful, loving, joyful, they love their families, and want to put food on the table. The world and most of the people in it are beautiful, but when we sequester ourselves, *we create ideas about others*, rather than knowing the truth.

[Only 38% of Americans travel](#) abroad. And only 10% only travel frequently for business. In fact, last year, 42% of Americans took [no vacation days!](#) Sure, one can make the argument that travel is unaffordable. Yes, it can be expensive. But if you have a burning desire to see the world, [you can actually go see the world!](#) Just Google, “traveling is cheaper than you think.”

My friends Grant and Kate have been traveling close to a year now and [blogging about it](#), and the experiences they are having are absolutely incredible. They said that traveling is cheaper than living in Los Angeles.

But the problem is more systemic. We live in a culture here in ‘Murica that is all about making as much money as possible, working as hard as possible, owning as many [ridiculous things](#) as possible. These are the *antitheses* of the meaning of life, in my opinion. We were not born to just grow up and pay bills. It’s about having a **QUALITY** life, *not a quantified one*.

 When my wife, Brianna, and I were backpacking, we met a wonderful couple from Luxembourg. They were on a year-long trip—a paid vacation—and they would then go

home and return to their jobs, which were waiting for them. Luxembourg and many other countries encourage their citizens to travel.

Could that ever happen here?

Travel is THE way to truly understand other people, to combat ignorance, to quash the “Us or Them” mentality..

A huge cultural shift would need to take place. One that promotes a better quality of life! Maybe... Just maybe we’re at the very beginning of that? [One can hope.](#)

Travel. Even within this country. It’s the best education one could ever hope to receive. And it’s the best way to ensure understanding of others, which leads to tolerance, acceptance, and the dismantling of xenophobia.

Photographs by the author.

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