

DEREK SIVERS

ARTICLES:

TRAVELLING JUST FOR THE PEOPLE

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When I was 21, I moved to New York City.

An old friend travelled many hours and came to stay with me for a couple days. It was his first time in New York.

I said, “Do you want to see the Statue of Liberty? Empire State Building? Central Park? A Broadway show?”

He said, “I don’t care what we do. I just came to see you!”

I said, “Ha ha. Very sweet, but no, seriously. What would you like to do for the next couple days?”

He said, “Dude. I’m serious. I really don’t care about any of that stuff. I came here to see you, hang out with you, talk with you. That’s honestly the only reason I’m here. You don’t have to take me anywhere or show me anything.”

It was one of the most touching moments in my life. Someone spent hundreds of dollars and days of their life to travel to an exciting place, not to see the place, but just to see me.

...

Many years later, when I ran a music distribution company, I became wary of meeting people, because I (wrongly) thought that everyone wanted something

from me. So I started travelling secretly. I went to many countries without telling anyone and without meeting anyone. I would walk around and experience the landmarks, food, museums, and events, but barely speak unless necessary.

One day, after a month in India, I decided to cautiously break my rule, since it was my last day before flying back to America, I thought even if someone wanted too much from me, I would escape the next day. So I emailed a musician in my database that lived in Kolkata, and asked if he was free to meet up. He came to my hotel and graciously walked me around Kolkata for most of the day, teaching me so much about his home town, so many insights into culture and life. Also, people kept asking him for his autograph. That was [Amit Chaudhuri](#). I didn't know he was a famous author.

When I think back to that month in India, **I remember almost nothing but that conversation**. Landmarks, food, museums, and events are a blur, but one [interesting conversation](#) can linger in the mind forever.

Sometimes we connect with a place, but usually we connect with people. **Yet people connect us to a place.**

So, learning from my past mistakes, now **my main purpose of travel is meeting people**. When they offer to take me to the landmarks, I say, "I don't care what we do. I just came to see you!"

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