

# India Will Change Your Life

by Janice Green, Dan Levesque on August 05, 2019



## Jan:

A few weeks back, Dan posted about [the good, bad, and wish we didn't miss of India](#). We thought this was an apt time to reflect on India, because our two year anniversary of leaving India just passed.

For us, a lot has changed in two years. We left India thinking that we may never return, and now we know that there is no way we can not go back. To me, India is a place that gives and takes. It's a place of the highest highs and the lowest lows. India is a

juxtaposition between the old and the new, the rich and the poor, the good and the bad... You get the picture. Everything in India is juxtaposed.

I left India exhausted. Just straight up burnt out, physically exhausted and dirty, and mentally drained. But I also left India with a deeper connection to myself, to Dan, and to this vibrant new world we had been exposed to.

If I could go back to India—and I will—it's not about what historical sights I would see, what cultural festivities and customs I would bear witness to, what food I would delight in—no, for me, it's about *what I would feel*. Before embarking on our trip to India I remember having a deep knowing that I needed to open my heart and embrace India like an old friend. But in practice, on the ground I wasn't able to.

India and I had an awkward way of dancing around each other. What do I mean by this? I mean India zigged when I zagged, India pushed me too hard before I was ready, and at times it didn't push me hard enough. I can attribute this dance to where I was in life, and I think that's all part of the beauty of India. In retrospect India was telling me to slow down. To stop. To ponder. India was telling me to let go of my long held fears, my traumas and my preconceived notions about the world. To. Just. Be. To accept the dirty, the ugly, the difficult, and to rejoice in the beauty of confusion, uncertainty and uncomfortable surroundings.

It's actually really interesting how different my reflections are than Dan's. I'm someone who sees things as I feel them—and with an innate curiosity. I'm ever curious about the way that people live, what they eat, how they function; often down to the smallest details that leave Dan scratching his head when I voice my thoughts. I have a desire to understand, to feel and to connect on a transcendent level with those I meet. But sometimes, I'm nervous too. I don't always know how to bridge those gaps, and to truly embrace culture or humanity as it is. I'm still learning how to do this!

## **Dan:**

The thing I keep coming back to when I think about India is how at peace I/we felt in the Himalayas, when we spent [10 days in McLeod Ganj](#). While we were able to find moments of peace in other parts of India too, something about the Himalayas just creates this feeling of serenity and acceptance with where you are and what you're doing.

I agree that one of India's lessons is to force you to open up and embrace the experience. While in India, there's a feeling that you're just *there*, being in it—you can't get away from it, you can't go around it, you can only go deeper into the experience.

For me, the unexpected lesson was that the willingness to open up and experience India was something we needed to be able to do together. Travelling as a couple adds a whole new level of complexity to any travel experience. It's not enough if one person likes one place or if one of us is happy doing one thing but the other just isn't that into it. There are always compromises to be made, but the holy grail is being able to do things together that we both enjoy

When we can both fully enjoy what we're doing in the moment and feel centered and at peace with where we are, that's where our most memorable experiences together come from. This is the feeling we're always chasing on our travels. This was easier to do in Thailand and Vietnam (maybe because we've been there multiple times and know what to expect), but it was **more difficult to achieve that unity of experience in a place like India**. One of the reasons we want to go back to India is to challenge ourselves again, in new ways and with new perspectives.

The amount we've grown since our trip to India (and in many ways because of it) really changes our perspective in hindsight. Maybe we weren't quite fully prepared for India at the time we went, but it turned out to be **exactly what we needed at that point in our lives** for a variety of reasons. Maybe that's just what India does for people—and that's why we feel like we *need* to go back one day.



*Picture of us at the Taj Mahal just after getting engaged.*

## **Jan:**

We reflect on India a lot—and it only gets easier, yet harder with time (see, juxtaposition again!). Next time I go to India it will be with a truly open heart, a deep sense of trust, and the intuitive knowledge that real connection comes when you let go and allow yourself to breath in, exhale, and sink into the insanity. So, for anyone heading to India soon—I urge you, let go. India will force you to be in the moment, and if you can't be in the moment you will not derive all of the blessings that India has to offer you.