

HOW A PERSONAL JOURNEY CAN BENEFIT YOUR FUTURE CAREER

Summary: Find out how to explore the world without undermining your potential career opportunities.



Question: I am planning to take a year off after graduation to backpack my way around the world. At 21, this is my last opportunity to explore before committing to a career. However, I have been advised that this will substantially undermine my ability to gain meaningful and profitable employment. What would you advise?

Answer: Determine if the benefits of this type of travel opportunity outweigh the additional challenge of conducting a job search after a year's break. If you do decide to go, recast your adventure as a "learning and development opportunity."

Based on well-documented accounts of countless others before you, a year of travel on the heels of graduation has the potential to become a journey of self-discovery. Although you shouldn't obsess about every move you make on your travels, it will be well worth your while to approach your journey as a pilgrimage rather than a party.

While you are soaking in the sights and sounds of every new culture, consider the benefits of your enlightenment to potential employers. According to Mark Twain, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness." Your ability to contribute and flourish in a diverse work setting surely will be enhanced by your travels to foreign lands.

Flexibility is another likely byproduct of travel beyond your home shores, as you surmount obstacles like being stranded alone in a train station, trying to communicate in the local language and dealing with the lack of available drinking water. Given the potential for personal learning and growth, your travels may set your job search back a year but catapult your readiness for employment in complex organizations that welcome a global perspective, resourcefulness, and adaptability.