

Tourists, Tourism and the Good Life

Philip Pearce,
Sebastian Filep and
Glenn Ross



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Preface and Acknowledgments

Most of us at least at some stage of our lives ponder over the following questions: Am I leading a good life at the moment? How could I make my life better in the future? Or later in our lives we ask ourselves: Have I led a good life and how did I define it? The special interest in this book is on the role of the tourism context in promoting the positive experiences that lead to a good life: positive emotions, engagement and meaning. Like our pondering over the good life, tourist trips can be conceived in terms of time: we anticipate positive emotions at destinations, we value being immediately satisfied and engaged at the places we visit, and we reflect back on our holidays and sometimes gain wisdom and meaning from them.

The chapters in this volume plot a pathway to understanding this very important human desire to lead a good life in the context of being a tourist and in other contexts relevant to the world of tourism. The book represents the efforts of three academics, two of whom have detailed research backgrounds in psychology and tourism, one of whom has recently completed his doctorate work on the topic. The two core aims of the book are to: 1) offer a resource of new methodological and conceptual tools for scholars and students; and 2) to orient the audience to a fresh awareness of the value of well-being ideas from positive psychology and the research field's role in understanding the good life.

A somewhat unusual feature of this book is the integrating part introductions which present lead-in comments. These are contextual statements raising issues in the whole area defined by the part titles: "Principally About Individuals" (Part I) and "Individuals and Tourism Contexts" (Part II). Chapter 1 is also preceded by its own introduction. The introductions place all the specific chapters in a context. It is recognised that a book of this sort needed this "glue" to make it a coherent and complete statement while further recognising that all topics could not be covered. The three authors worked closely and tried to achieve stylistic consistency as much as possible while completing the chapter contributions.

Professional assistance of several people is highly appreciated. From James Cook University, we would like to thank Mrs. Robyn Yesberg for her cheerfulness and administrative assistance. From Victoria University,

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We hope you'll enjoy our small contribution to the good life!

Philip Pearce, Sebastian Filep and Glenn Ross
Australia, 2010

Introduction

It is appropriate at the start of this book to introduce Generation T. Who belongs to this newly designated group? In answering the question, readers do not have to recall their birth dates or formative years but instead should reflect on the educational routes which have prepared them to read this book. The defining feature of Generation T membership is an education about tourism, tourists and related topics, which is multidisciplinary, phenomenon centred and often ahistorical. If the educational route taken has been a combined pathway mixing subjects and courses in the social sciences as well as business and marketing and also includes various liberal options then an individual belongs to the Generation T (a short description for a tourism-focussed education). If readers have studied a single discipline as a major focus of undergraduate or first-degree education—effectively a three- to four-year concentration on one way of viewing the world—then the Generation T label does not apply. Generation T membership is growing and individuals in the cohort are successfully inhabiting the academic corridors of the world's universities and research centres which contribute to the analysis and teaching of tourism.

There are strengths and limitations in the preparation of Generation T members as researchers and educators. From a positive perspective, Generation T can combine their ready access to the world's published material with the shifting dynamics of the tourism sector to establish a productive, contemporary and broad outlook. Nevertheless, an enduring difficulty can be a modest basis on which to interrogate new patterns of thought, most especially when these concepts and ideas derive from a long established discipline such as psychology, sociology, economics or anthropology.

The purpose of Chapter 1 in this volume is to provide an accessible overview of the disciplinary biography in psychology. It is hoped that by providing this background an effective and informed use of the positive psychology ideas which underpin this volume can be employed in many kinds of tourism studies. The focus is on the core psychology ideas used throughout the chapters in this book. For a reader already familiar with the intricate history of psychology, it will appear as an abbreviated account of a long journey. It may also be viewed as idiosyncratic as its purpose is

to prepare for an understanding of the roots of positive psychology rather than to record all the historical pathways. To assist readers to check the approach taken to the research provided in Chapter 1, there are some publications and Internet resources which might be particularly helpful, particularly those of the American Psychological Association (<http://www.apa.org/>) and the British Psychological Society (<http://www.bps.org.uk/>). These sources are usefully supplemented by popular books written by well-credentialed scholars such as the work of Furnham (2008) and Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008).

There are wider implications generated by the kind of review undertaken in Chapter 1 which repay some contemplation and reflection. These implications can be summarised with an alliterative trio of terms: productivity, politics and parasitism. The contrasting terms are quality, anarchy and symbiosis. The ideas constitute potential chapters in themselves, but in this context it can be simply observed that contemporary scholars are under political pressure to be productive and produce an array of publications for their careers and the status of their institutions. These pressures can result in the rapid borrowing of fashionable ideas, a form of parasitic plundering of the work of other areas. The responses to such pressures are understandable and much of the work produced in this way is still of high quality. Nevertheless, a close reading of the origin of the ideas and an effort to be anarchic in the sense of taking the time to independently assess the value and roots of the concepts offer the potential for exchange and symbiosis which reaches beyond some present achievements. Many of the historical figures in psychology discussed in Chapter 1 were colourful and independent figures finding their own way to lead the good life and flourish. If after completing this review the reader is stimulated to attack some of the original works, then there is the prospect of some surprisingly rich rewards and scholarly insights.