

❖ **Fallingwater**



*A house built in 1939, near Pittsburgh, USA. Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright*

## ❖ Abraham Lincoln's letter to his son's Headmaster

*The Letter:*

*"He will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just and all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel, there is a hero and for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader. Teach him, that for every enemy, there is a friend.*

*It will take time, I know, but teach him if you can, that a dollar earned is of far more value than five found. Teach him to learn to lose and also enjoy winning. Steer him away from envy if you can, and teach him the secret of quiet laughter. Let him learn early that the bullies are the easiest to defeat.*

***Teach him if you can, the wonder of books, but also give him quiet time to wonder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun and flowers on a green hillside.***

*Teach him that it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him that they are wrong. Teach him to be gentle with gentle people and tough with the tough ones. Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is getting on the bandwagon. Teach him to listen to all men but teach him also to **filter all that he hears on the screen of truth** and take only the good that comes through.*

*Teach him if you can, how to laugh when he is sad. Teach him that there is no shame in tears. Teach him to scoff at cynics and to be aware of too much sweetness. **Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders, but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul. Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob and to stand and fight if he thinks he is right.***

*Treat him gently, but do not cuddle him too much because **only the test of fires makes fine steel**. Let him have the courage to be impatient and the patience to be brave. Teach him always to have a sublime faith in himself because then he will have a sublime faith in the mankind.*

*This is a tall order, I know – but see what you can do. He is such a fine little fellow, my son."*

## ❖ Christopher Hitchens – On ‘ why and how religion poisons everything ’



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sD0B-X9Ljs>

*Watch the YouTube video of talk given by Christopher Hitchens at Google. Don't miss the Q&A session.*

*Christopher Hitchens, the British American author, speaker, journalist, literary critic and provocateur par excellence passed away in December 2011. An original thinker, who was absolutely fearless in pursuit of the truth – a man who had deep understanding of science, philosophy and literature , a speaker and a debater with unbelievable swagger. Always controversial – you may not agree with all that he says and you may not like the way he says it, but there is no doubt about the fact that he will make you think deep and hard about some of the most important aspects of human life !*

## ❖ Why We Travel : Excepts from an essay by Pico Iyer

We travel, initially, to lose ourselves; and we travel, next, to find ourselves. We travel to open our hearts and eyes and learn more about the world than our newspapers will accommodate. We travel to bring what little we can, in our ignorance and knowledge, to those parts of the globe whose riches are differently dispersed. And we travel, in essence, to become young fools again -- to slow time down and get taken in, and fall in love once more .....as one Harvard philosopher wrote, "to escape into open solitudes, into aimlessness, into the moral holiday of running some pure hazard, in **order to sharpen the edge of life**, to taste hardship, and to be compelled to work desperately for a moment at no matter what."

.....We travel, then, in part just to shake up our complacencies by seeing all the moral and political urgencies, the life-and-death dilemmas, that we seldom have to face at home. And we travel to fill in the gaps left by tomorrow's headlines: When you drive down the streets of Port-au-Prince, for example, where there is almost no paving and women relieve themselves next to mountains of trash, your notions of the Internet and a "one world order" grows usefully revised. Travel is the best way we have of rescuing the humanity of places, and saving them from abstraction and ideology.

.....Thus travel spins us round in two ways at once: It shows us the sights and values and issues that we might ordinarily ignore; but it also, and more deeply, **shows us all the parts of ourselves that might otherwise grow rusty**. For in traveling to a truly foreign place, we inevitably travel to moods and states of mind and hidden inward passages that we'd otherwise seldom have cause to visit.

.....We travel, then, in search of both self and anonymity -- and, of course, in finding the one we apprehend the other. Abroad, we are wonderfully free of caste and job and standing; we are, as Hazlitt

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puts it, just the "gentlemen in the parlour," and people cannot put a name or tag to us. And precisely because we are clarified in this way, and freed of inessential labels, we have the opportunity to come into contact **with more essential parts of ourselves** (which may begin to explain why we may feel most alive when far from home).

Abroad is the place where we stay up late, follow impulse and find **ourselves as wide open as when we are in love**. We live without a past or future, for a moment at least, and are ourselves up for grabs and open to interpretation. We even may become mysterious -- to others, at first, and sometimes to ourselves -- and, as no less a dignitary than Oliver Cromwell once noted, "A man never goes so far as when he doesn't know where he is going."

.....So travel, for many of us, is a quest for not just the unknown, but the unknowing; I, at least, travel in search of an innocent eye that can return me to a more innocent self. I tend to believe more abroad than I do at home (which, though treacherous again, can at least help me to extend my vision), and I tend to be more easily excited abroad, and even kinder. And since no one I meet can "place" me -- no one can fix me in my rsum --I can remake myself for better, as well as, of course, for worse (if travel is notoriously a cradle for false identities, it can also, at its best, be a crucible for truer ones). In this way, travel can be a kind of monasticism on the move: On the road, we often live more simply (even when staying in a luxury hotel), with no more possessions than we can carry, and surrendering ourselves to chance.

..... It's as if you are in love .....For if every true love affair can feel like a journey to a foreign country, **where you can't quite speak the language, and you don't know where you're going, and you're pulled ever deeper into the inviting darkness, every trip to a foreign country can be a love affair, where you're left puzzling over who you are and whom you've fallen in love with. All the great travel books are love stories, ....** and all good trips are, like love, about being carried out of yourself and deposited in the midst of terror and wonder.

And what this metaphor also brings home to us is that all travel is a two-way transaction, as we too easily forget, and if warfare is one model of the meeting of nations, romance is another.

All of us feel this from the cradle, and know, in some sense, that all the significant movement we ever take is internal. We travel when we see a movie, strike up a new friendship, get held up. Novels are often journeys as much as travel books are fictions;

.....So travel, at heart, is just a quick way to keeping our minds mobile and awake. As Santayana, the heir to Emerson and Thoreau with whom I began, wrote, "**There is wisdom in turning as often as possible from the familiar to the unfamiliar; it keeps the mind nimble; it kills prejudice, and it fosters humor.**" Romantic poets inaugurated an era of travel because they were the great apostles of open eyes. Buddhist monks are often vagabonds, in part because they believe in wakefulness. And if travel is like love, it is, in the end, mostly because it's a heightened state of awareness, in which we **are mindful, receptive, undimmed by familiarity and ready to be transformed**. That is why the best trips, like the best love affairs, never really end.



**About 'Treasures':** This is a compilation that I put together every month – of things that I have found to be beautiful, interesting, meaningful and insightful. I sincerely believe that the joy from these things multiplies when they are shared and discussed with others who also appreciate them. So do let me know how you find these treasures. Do also feel free to share them with others who you think will find them meaningful. Drop me an email if you want to add someone to the 'circulation list'

And most importantly, do share your treasures with me too! – Shailesh.

All the editions of Treasures can be found at: <http://shaileshdeshpande.blogspot.in/>