

Chapter 12

The Authentic Tourist: A Journey Through Africa in 2030

Kilimanjaro and the African plains are icons of this fascinating continent and two of the main reasons for people to visit, but with the drawbacks of high temperatures, lack of a good transport infrastructure and uncertainty about security. Africa in 2005 was very different from the Africa of 2030. Siubhan Daly is a 28-year-old singleton from Northern Ireland taking a three-month sabbatical backpacking trip through Africa. Having watched programmes about the continent on the Discovery Channel, Siubhan became fascinated by Africa and had long wanted to visit. Her holiday began in Madagascar. The island has protected conservation status because of the low numbers of lemur monkeys and in 2015 the government introduced a US \$2000 ecological tax to help pay for both tourism development and conservation measures in a balanced way. Siubhan was on the island for three weeks to help a local lemur sanctuary with the project, for which she paid a charity US \$10,000 for the privilege.

Madagascar's strict policy on the ecology and sustainable tourism has meant that the island has maintained the viability of its local species and landscape compared with other countries in Africa, which have suffered from massive over-development as a result of allowing tourism to expand without putting ecological safeguards in place. The price of success in tourism has resulted in the despoliation of tourism icons, such as Kilimanjaro. Siubhan watched a television documentary about how the area around the mountain had been over-developed with pathways, souvenir shops and a funicular railway which spoiled the landscape and damaged irreversibly the fauna, flora and ecology of Africa's most famous mountain. The idea behind the scheme had been to make the mountain as accessible as Table Top Mountain near Cape Town. However, the magic of Kilimanjaro had been the remote wilderness and isolation, which was lost when the mountain became a mass tourism destination, accessible to everyone. The Government had

thought that mass ecotourism was the answer to regeneration — but once you introduce the mass, the magic is lost.

Upon leaving Madagascar, Siubhan flew to Johannesburg to begin an overland South East Africa adventure covering South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia with Southern African Drifters, one of Africa's leading, overland adventure tourism operators. The journey across the Mpumalanga region of the Blyde River Canyon was magical and in the South Africa Kruger Park Siubhan saw the 'big five'. She went snorkelling in the India Ocean off Mozambique and was bitten by lots of mosquitoes on Lake Malawi. The trip finished in Livingston, the adventure capital of the region, where Siubhan tried her hand at white-water rafting and bungee jumping. The trip with the drifters meant sleeping under canvas with like-minded travellers and sharing the cooking and daily chores. Overall, Siubhan wishes she could stay longer, but work beckons.

Siubhan's travels through Africa in 2030

Introduction — An Authentic Experience

Several themes occur within this scenario. Siubhan is a wildlife tourist, taking a career break, combining a tour in Africa with a search for new and meaningful experiences. She is staying longer and going 'deeper' than most tourists. This is what many tourism experts call authenticity!

As the experience economy matures, it evolves into authenticity because consumers search for real experiences rather than 'products' which are manufactured (Pine, 2004). There is a growing desire to find experiences and products that are original and real, not contaminated by being fake or impure. This trend away from impurity, the virtual, the spun, manufactured and the mass-produced in a world seemingly full of falseness needs further explanation.

The great writers, Plato (Guthrie, 1987), Dostoevsky (Stuchebrukhov, 2004), Freud (Gertner, 2000) and Baudrillard (1983) have all explored the concept of authenticity in order to understand its meaning in people's lives. Wilmott and Nelson (2003) have identified the complexity of consumerism, with consumers seeking new meaning, consistent with Maslow's self-actualisation concept. Initially, people are concerned about wider issues such as the environment, animal rights or Third World hunger. The movement to self-actualisation is a search for a deeper meaning and finding a sense of worth beyond material possessions. It is a fulfilment of self which moves beyond goods and services and on to experiences. At one level it results in increased spending on holidays, eating out, the theatre and so on. But it also includes special experiences such as white-water rafting or spending a weekend at a health spa. Thus, authenticity has emerged as a selection criterion for Siubhan when she made her decision on where to go on her holiday.

The desire for new experiences which are truly authentic and meaningful has resulted in more people — like Siubhan — taking a career break to travel through

Africa or to undertake a similar adventure; it has become a mainstream activity. Career breaks are gap years for adults, a chance to take life by the scruff of the neck and give it a shake, to take a pause for breath, to grab an opportunity to fulfil a lifelong dream. Whether they are young professionals or baby-boomers in their fifties, more and more people are taking time out to travel the world in an authentic way. Actor Ewan McGregor stepped off the Hollywood set to embark on a 20,000-mile tour around the world on a motorcycle. According to Mintel (2004d), the age groups that are more likely to undertake this kind of adventure are 25–34 year olds and 35–44 year olds, influenced largely by affluence and a desire for something more ambitious.

Today, career breaks or sabbaticals are seen as respectable. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) survey of employment trends (Hindle, Bindloss, Hargreaves, Kirby, & Nystrom, 2006) showed that a quarter of firms offered their employees the opportunity to take a career break and over a third of Britain's high earners had considered or were actually taking a career break (amongst those under 34, the percentage was nearly half). Today, people no longer live to work, but rather work to live. Many adventure travel operators such as www.trailfinders.com or www.exploreworldwide.com offer trips of up to 28 weeks exploring continents, although these holidays can be broken down into shorter periods. People can spend months travelling through Africa or opt for just 3 weeks in one particular country. Another way to have a meaningful experience is to take part in a volunteering holiday and this sector has had a significant growth in the past few years. A number of organisations such as www.changingworlds.co.uk offer placements for 3 to 6 months, working in schools, orphanages or charities in countries such as Chile, India and Tanzania. Other organisations such as www.conservationafrica.net arrange for people to become involved in a wide range of conservation and research projects on game reserves in Southern Africa.

Trends that Will Influence the Authentic Tourist

What are the trends which will shape people's desire for an authentic experience? The tourist in 2030 is better educated, more sophisticated, has travelled the world, is concerned about the environment and wants a better quality of life. These facts lead to the conclusion that they have a desire for 'real' experiences rather than something false.

Nine trends which will shape the authentic tourist have been identified from the scenarios (Table 12.1) Let us look at the evidence, make assumptions and draw conclusions about the future.

Trend 1: A Global Network

'It is not what you know but whom you know' — that is the classic saying about how to get on in the world. Today, people, unlike previous generations, are free to choose connections and influences (whether the democratisation of the family, the phenomenon of blogging, the exponential rise of email or the establishment of personal

Table 12.1: Trends shaping the authentic tourist.

Trend 1	A global network
Trend 2	Ethical consumption and volunteering
Trend 3	The affluent consumer and the desire for new experiences in faraway places
Trend 4	The educated consumer
Trend 5	The role of the media
Trend 6	Individualism
Trend 7	Time pressures and authenticity
Trend 8	Busy lifestyles and getting away
Trend 9	Our affection for wildlife

contacts). Today there are fewer social boundaries. Technology has revolutionised personal communications and produced a global network knowledge society. Travel and the Internet have brought new tastes, interests, awareness of new ideas and destinations. Long-lost friendships are rekindled on www.friendsunited.com. Openness and transparency have become the norm. Technology has become an enabler. The desire for human contact is as strong as it has always been (Brass, 2005). The consumer is very much part of the global network society.

Trend 2: Ethical Consumption and Volunteering

There are very few markets in the United Kingdom not affected by the trend in ethical consumption. Wilmot (2003), in his book, *Citizen Brands*, recognises that the more affluent consumers (who are also better educated and more concerned about the environment) are turning to ethical consumption as a means of contributing to society, which results in the development of citizen brands, where the good of society is at the heart of the brand. One of the best examples of this has been the rise of Fair Trade over the past decade (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006). Growth in the number of products under the Fair Trade label, which was launched in 1995, has stood at between 40 to 90% per annum. The brand has expanded from one kind of coffee to 250 foods, including fruit, juices, vegetables, snacks, wine, tea, sugar, honey and nuts, all sold at a premium price. By using the principles of ethical purchasing and citizen brands, individuals contribute to the society they live in. This movement towards ethical consumption is accompanied by a trend of inconspicuous consumption where consumers do not broadcast their personal success by ostentatious display. In line with this change in consumerism, volunteering is re emerging as a tourism experience, whether helping in a lemur sanctuary in Africa (as in Siubhan's scenario) or walking the Great Wall of China for AIDS research, or using a gap year to help build houses in Thailand. In this chapter, we observe the issues of sustainability and community involvement as a manifestation of ethical consumption.

Trend 3: The Affluent Consumer and the Desire for New Experiences in Faraway Places

According to the CIA, by 2020 the world GDP will grow by 50% (Hutchings, 2004). Such a forecast puts to bed the myth of economic decline, as hypothesized by a number of economists (Yeoman, 2004b). In the UK household disposable income has grown threefold in real terms between the early 1950s and 2000. This is an annual average increase of 2.5% per annum. This increase has had a major impact on the material aspects of people's lives; not only have televisions, telephones and washing machines become the norm, but now consumers have an increasingly large proportion of their discretionary income to spend on holidays, well being and leisure activities. Luxury, once for only the minority, is now a mainstream phenomenon. This accumulation of wealth means that consumers are constantly searching for self-esteem and self-actualisation because they perceive that they have all the material goods they need and their basic requirements have been met. The consumer focuses their expenditure on goods and services which will improve their quality of life and enhance their sense of self.

Therefore, as the experience economy grows, consumers devote their increasing wealth to travel and tourism products. According to research by the Future Foundation, expensive holidays in faraway places are now perceived by consumers as the No.1 ultimate experience (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006). As the experience economy matures, a trend is identified whereby consumers search for and buy a real experience rather than something that is false, fake or manufactured. And so the consumer, in choosing a holiday, searches for a destination that offers a sense of real place — hence Siubhan's journey through Africa.

Trend 4: The Educated Consumer

Across the world, levels of educational attainment are improving, especially in higher education. In 2004, 2.2 million of school-leavers in England and Wales went on to higher education, compared with 0.7 million in 1970 (Yeoman, 2004). Education is a key driver in authenticity because the educated consumer is more discerning, affluent and sophisticated in the choices they make. In the scenario about Siubhan, it is shown that she is knowledgeable about Africa and wildlife.

Trend 5: The Role of the Media

The media has a substantial influence in determining holiday destination choice. As today's consumer is less influenced by overt marketing such as above-the-line advertising than previous generations, destination-marketing organisations have turned to other media to plug the gap, whether product placement in films or setting

up information tours for journalists in the hope that they will write a positive story for a travel magazine or Sunday newspaper supplement.

Research by Thomson Holidays (Glover, 2004) suggests that 80% of UK consumers plan holidays to a particular destination after seeing a location on the screen. Films such as *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter* and *Cold Mountain* act as virtual brochures, inspiring consumers to make a pilgrimage to the places featured. The opportunity to capture this market was exemplified by the See American campaign, which was based upon the promotion 'you've seen the film, now visit the set'. With the advent of a digital society, specialist television channels such as the Discovery Channel allow consumers to indulge their interest or hobby, such as wildlife or finding out more about a destination featured.

A digital society does not mean, however, that the guide book is dead; far from it, in fact, as our interest in culture, better-educated consumers and an increase in travel has resulted in a boost in sales of travel books over the past 5 years (Moss, 2005). Travel guides such as *Lonely Planet* are no longer about travel on a shoestring, but have become major influencers of destination choice. The typical reader of *Lonely Planet* is between the age group 18–34, educated to degree level, has strong opinions about social justice and world peace, and regards travel as a culturally valuable stage on life's way. 80% of *Lonely Planet* readers are single and 72% are female (hence Siubhan's profile). *Lonely Planet* travellers are ethical purchasers, who are savvy and knowledgeable about the world. However, they do not wear hippy-style clothing and ethnic jewellery of 1960s; they are more likely to be armed with an iPod, a photo mobile and a state-of-the-art digital camera.

Trend 6: Individualism

Linked to the trend of increased affluence and luxury has been a shift towards individualism in which the consumer searches for products and services which meet his or her individual needs. In addition, this is related to the trend of the diminishing role of social and mutual institutions, thus encouraging a decline in deference to authority and a growth in self-reliance. The impact of new media technologies and globalisation raises awareness of new communities and connections. The combination of these trends provides a melting pot from which people can draw their identity. This helps lower the barriers to people developing their potential and allows them to be exposed to a greater variety of options. As the consumer faces complexity of choice and markets become more fragmented and individualistic, so identity will still be derived from the family and place, as well as from lifestyle choices, specific brand affiliations and niche interests.

Authenticity becomes the expression of a person's individualism through the achievement of self-actualisation. This could express itself through participation in volunteering and contributing towards society. This trend of seeking self-actualisation is also illustrated in the scenario by Siubhan's undertaking work in the lemur sanctuary.

Trend 7: Time Pressures and Authenticity

Gazinta is a term coined by the American economist Burns (1993) to describe people's desire to maximise the efficient use of their time. He argues that time has become a more precious commodity as affluence has increased and as opportunities have increased and horizons have broadened. The law of *Gazinta* states that people are encouraged to sample a range of activities and to gain satisfaction from them rather than devote themselves to just one or two experiences. However, while in particular the portfolio of activities and leisure activities has grown, there are still only so many hours in the day. Many leisure venues have broadened their offer to the consumer so that a wider range of activities is presented under the one roof. For example, shopping centres have cinemas and cinemas contain cafes; pubs offer television viewing, food, quizzes and live music. On the other hand, according to a research by the Future Foundation and VisitScotland (2005), people will increasingly want more natural, authentic activities to operate as 'time spaces' in their lives. In effect, people's leisure portfolios will incorporate a wide range of 'short-burst', simultaneous or integrated activities alongside spells of, less hectic activity indulged in over a longer period of time, which can be described as 'time oasis leisure'. Climbing a mountain may be perceived as an example of a short-burst activity but once the climber reaches the summit the tranquillity of the authentic landscape becomes a person's time oasis.

Finally, there is the prediction by Naisbitt (1982) who said that 'the more our lives are steeped in technology, the more people will want to be with other people at movies, museums and book clubs'; hence the importance of authenticity as a means of escape.

Trend 8: Busy Lifestyles and Getting Away

Ulrich's (1983) stress reduction theory, a psycho-evolutionary model, emphasises the role of natural settings in generating psycho-physiological recovery from stressful experiences associated most often with contemporary urban environments and lifestyles. It has been found in studies that natural environments and areas such as national parks act as stress reduction models because participants in the studies viewed such environments as peaceful, tranquil and serene and as places for respite and relaxation. Hence, Siubhan's career break is an opportunity to de-stress in a natural environment away from a hectic lifestyle.

Trend 9: Our Affection for Wildlife

There seems to be a natural affinity between man and animals. Studies by Brodie and Biley (1999) found that the presence of animals instigate enhanced relaxation within their human companions, which explains why, for some wildlife tourists, just being in

the presence of animals is sufficient to satisfy their needs. The great fascination of wildlife has for some tourists may reflect the influence of the interaction humans have with animals, especially when close up — touching, observing behaviour and even talking to them. Humans bond with animals through emotional attachment; animals are pets and companions in the home or they may have an aesthetic appeal — young animals in particular are often described as ‘cute and cuddly’. People are always interested in attempts to save a whale marooned on a beach and stories about cruelty to animals frequently appear in newspapers, both tabloid and broadsheet. No wonder Siubhan is interested in caring for the lemurs.

Even politicians have used animals in order to connect with people. Consider Richard Nixon’s use of his dog, Chequers, in his broadcast to the American people after being accused of corruption. It is reckoned that Chequers’ presence helped sway people’s opinion towards believing in Nixon (Woestendiek, 2002).

Why Is Authenticity an Important Tourism Concept?

Brass (2006) uses the term ‘authenti-seeking’ for consumers searching for authenticity in a range of products, services and experiences or looking for it within themselves. This trend presents an opportunity for tourism in Africa, because going on holiday is now perceived as the No. 1 luxury experience (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006) and those who go holiday identify an authentic cultural experience as being the most important aspect of it — and this applies across all age, gender and socio-demographic groupings (Brass, 2006). This authentic experience is about avoiding areas and activities where there are many other tourists, indicating a desire to explore the untouched and unexposed. Authenticity is the enjoyment of the tranquil luxury of an unspoilt environment; the difference between the over-development of Kilimanjaro and the untouched beauty of Madagascar.

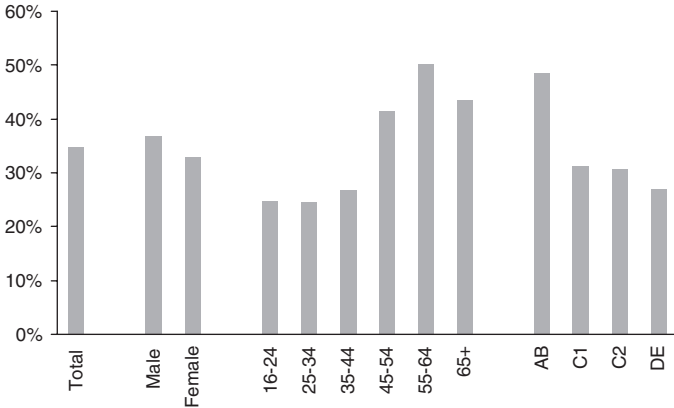
As we see in Figure 12.1, this trend is high amongst socio-economic grouping AB and the older generations, perhaps emphasising their world-weary cynicism about the unoriginal, which is less obvious in the not-yet-jaded younger generations. In terms of activities, the appeal of outdoor holidays and activities is on the rise, whether walking, camping or trekking. The phenomenal increase in the popularity of caravanning holidays over the last 5 years is a reflection of the lure of freedom and the open road. As a result of recent changes to the law regarding accessibility to land in the United Kingdom and a greater awareness of health issues, there has also been a rise in the popularity of outdoor holidays, as highlighted in Figure 12.2.

Additionally, hiking and nature-based activities are associated with the appeal of the outdoors. The Ramblers’ Association is experiencing a rapid rise in its membership, especially amongst the 20–30 age group, and this suggests that singletons are looking for a social network to become involved, a network that is supportive and provides a community environment that counteracts the perceived negative affects of a networked society and globalisation. Extreme sports are also becoming mainstream activities because rising income levels have led to improved

Avoiding tourists on holiday by gender, age and social grade

Proportion of people who agree that when they go on holiday they try to avoid areas and activities where there are lots of other tourists

"How much do you agree or disagree with this statement ... When I go on holiday, I try to avoid areas and activities where there are lots of other tourists?"



Source: 'Changing Lives'/nVision
Base: 1,414 adults aged 16+, UK, 2005

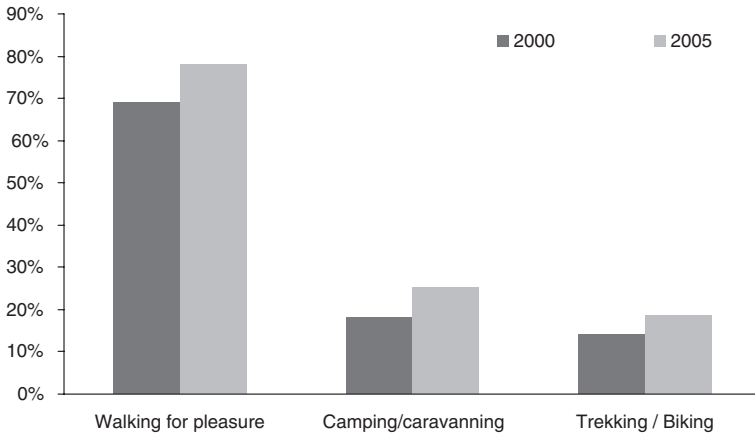


Figure 12.1: Avoiding tourists.

Doing various leisure activities at least once a year

"Which of these best describes how often you do each of the following activities ... take a long walk for pleasure / go camping /caravanning / go trekking, or cross country mountain biking?"

*Data is 2003-2005



Source: 'Changing Lives', nVision
Base: 1000 adults 16+, UK, 2005



Figure 12.2: Activities on holiday.

accessibility to niche activities and driven tourism activity towards less-conventional experiences. This trend is pushing the boundaries of activity tourism to a stage where experiencing raw, unadulterated and unmediated thrills is the objective for the consumer. To a certain extent, this trend has a *carpe diem* about it; people are packing more in because of uncertainties associated with their lives. Yet, at the same time, people seem to undertake these activities within a secure and safe environment, hence the term 'safe adventurism' (Page, Bentley, & Walker, 2005). This certainly points to an opportunity within the market for operators to offer thrill-providing, original experiences without the attendant risks of going it alone.

The popularity of independent travel has increased considerably over the past 10 to 15 years (Mintel, 2005e) and, at the same time, expedition travel has become popular. For example, www.drifters.co.za provide overland tours covering the South East of Africa in a converted Mercedes Benz lorry, in which tourists participate in a holiday, just like Siubhan, venturing off the beaten track, viewing wildlife, sharing in the chores and sleeping under the stars. Other companies, such as www.greenforce.org, organise environmental holidays in several countries, focusing on wildlife conservation, with projects ranging from tracking elephants to diving for coral reef off the Tanzanian coast. Overland trips in Africa are proving popular at present, as result of the heightened profile of Africa and the rise of interest in ethical consumption.

Boyle's (2004) appraisal of authenticity indicates that tourists are searching for a connection with something that is real, unsullied and rooted within the destination. Authenticity has to connect to the destination and to be placed in the community, hence the importance of community-based tourism through which the benefits go back into the community. Carey (2006) of Tourism Concern notes that sustainable tourism is tied up with authenticity; he states that, when sustainably developed, tourism can create many social and economic opportunities for the destination community.

'Tourism can be a powerful tool of development, but its potential can also be wasted. Too often tourism enterprises see each other only as competitors and end up frustrating visitors. Every destination talks about quality and exceeding visitors' expectations, but what is the spark that transforms a destination into something remarkable? It is the destination that has pride in itself and its people and is passionate about celebrating its heritage, its food, its landscapes and its people. Of course, authenticity does not guarantee sustainability, but without the celebration of "local distinctiveness" it is just "another resort".

Carey (2006)

Authenticity and sustainability go hand in hand where communities build a tourism product which belongs to their community; for example the Kawaza Village tourism project in central Zambia where tourists can stay in an authentic African village, learn about environmental issues, collect wild honey and find out about apiculture (Schlesinger, 2006). Each evening, villagers and tourists gather round a

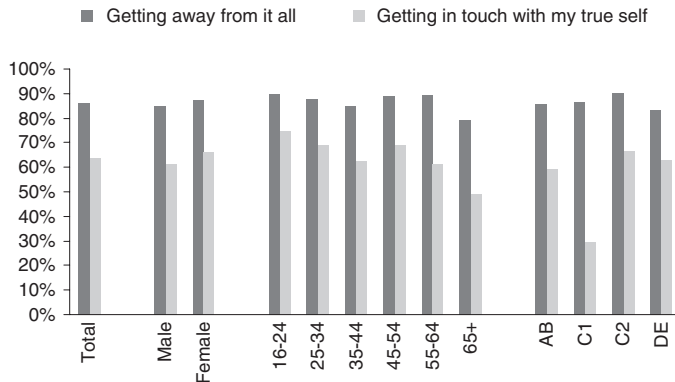
campfire, tell stories and dance. The Kawaza tourism project allows tourists, who would normally stay in a nearby safari camp, to meet the real African people. Each tourist makes a minimum donation to the project of US \$15 for a day visit or US \$45 for an overnight stay. All the monies raised are used for a number of community projects, such as the employment of teachers in the local school or jobs for the village people. The village has everything from an entertainment manager to local dance troupes for the tourists. This concept is repeated all over the world, with specialist travel operators such as www.exploreworldwide.com or www.exodus.co.uk promoting themselves as sustainable tourism operators — where sustainability has become a key driving force in shaping tourism demand.

Sustainability, according to Brass (2006), is authenticity linked to goodness, and exploring one’s inner potential is another aspect of authenti-seeking — that of searching for a non-material, authentic and deeper experience. According to research by the Future Foundation (Brass, 2006), an increasing number of people are undertaking activities which incorporate the creation of something new, for example learning new skills or even going back to traditional activities and putting a modern, techno-friendly twist on them. Learning new skills is evident in the rise of activity learning holidays, such as painting or bird-watching or attending a book festival to hear a reading by the author himself. Most important of all, holidays have become a means of escaping from everyday life (Figure 12.3) and getting in touch with one’s true self.

Interest in getting away from it all and getting in touch with my true self by gender, age and social grade

How interested people are in holidays where they ... get away from it all and get in touch with their true self

“And generally speaking while you’re on holiday how interested are you in ... getting away from it all or getting in touch with my true self...”



Source: 'Changing Lives'/nVision
 Base: 1,414 adults aged 16+, UK, 2005



Figure 12.3: Getting away from it all.

Holidays provide the right environment for these kinds of unmediated experiences; the idea that 'it's just me and the mountain' and, of course, for some people, the great outdoors has that strong spiritual dimension which satisfies an inner need. The Future Foundation has, since 1983, been asking the question, *If you had just one wish, which of these would you choose?* This question was asked in 2005 just after the seventh July London bombings and over 35% of people still considered their greatest wish to be to fulfil themselves, up nearly 20% from 20 years ago.

As we can see in Figure 12.4, people seem respond to this inner desire in various ways, whether experimenting with yoga, climbing a mountain or trying a new sport such as bugging. For others it is simply a case of seeking spirituality or a religious meaning.

The desire for spirituality is a growing phenomenon in which people wish their lives to have more of a spiritual content, more of a sense of purpose. This seeking of a sense of purpose explains the spirituality through which we search for the opportunity to contribute to society.

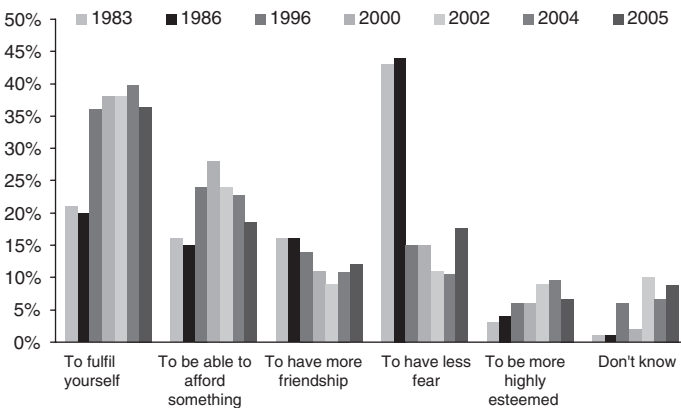
In tourism terms this could be a trekking holiday, raising money for cancer research or helping out in a lemur sanctuary, as illustrated in the Siubhan scenario. Hence, as we have already observed, sustainability extends into 'volunteering', 'community' and 'ethical consumption'.

This search for a sense of purpose is explained in Maslow's hierarchical need for self-actualisation (Maslow & Lowry, 1999), which is associated with American

Choice of wishes

Proportion who chose a main wish from a list of five given options

"If you had just one wish, which one of these would you choose?"



Source: 'Changing Lives', nVision/Taylor Nelson Sofres
 Base: 1288 adults 16+, UK, 2005



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Figure 12.4: Choice of wishes.

television's Dr McGraw's (2004) definition of authenticity as: 'The authentic self is the YOU that can be found at the absolute core: it's the part of you that is not defined by your job, or your function, or your role. It is the composite of all your unique gifts, skills, abilities, interests, talents, insights and wisdom. It's all your strengths and values that are uniquely yours and need expression, versus what you have been programmed to believe that you are supposed to be and do'.

Concluding Remarks

The cornerstones of authenticity are quintessentially linked to Boyle's (2004) writing about authenticity. So, to conclude, authenticity should be:

- *Ethical* — An authentic experience should be founded on the principles of community involvement, sustainability and ethical consumption.
- *Natural* — Tourism should be a natural phenomenon, which is pure and not tainted nor manufactured. Natural tourism products are those which are quintessentially associated with the destination or region.
- *Honest* — Be honest with your visitors; the tourism industry should not promise something which can not be delivered or produce something tainted by falseness that will spoil the authentic proposition.
- *Simple* — An authentic experience should be simple to understand and something in which the visitor can see the benefits. The more complicated the experience, the more unbelievable it will be. As the world is full of complications, an authentic experience should be simple and pure and consumed in an inconspicuous manner.
- *Beautiful* — Authentic destinations have a beauty about them, whether a magnificent view which creates a sense of place, or the feeling that the experience cannot be copied because it belongs in that place and only there.
- *Rooted* — Authenticity has some sense of past which is rooted in the destination or community.
- *Human* — A human experience is something that is living and people-focused. This means that the tourist wants human contact which is local and real.

The important message in all of the above is for us to understand how this trend is developing and whether it will last. Some years ago the psychologist deGrandpre (2000) forecast that, as the world emptied of reality, we would see hyperactivity, depression and violence. As this analysis shows, this is far from the case. Rather, we are heading towards a vision outlined by Nozick (1989), who said; 'In a virtual world, we'll long for reality even more'.

This is surely an opportunity for Africa's tourism industry — especially for those providers who are trying to be authentic and appeal to visitors whilst also undertaking niche marketing. Will it last? It will! As long as technology and virtual life continues to develop at the pace they are maintaining at present, the need for human contact and for traditional activities will increase. As consumers become even

more empowered and cynical about fake promises, they will continue to seek out the authentic in their own way.

For African countries to accurately position themselves with an authentic proposition, their tourism industries need to emphasise the attributes of honesty, natural, ethical, human and real, as Boyle (2004) discusses. This means that Africa must not patronise visitors with tokenism, for example when talking about green tourism and sustainability. Destinations must be seen to contribute some genuine benefit to the community and to make their offering personal and human. This means involving the tourist and community groups in promoting the destination and products through innovative methods that are seen as original and un-phoney.

A destination founded on authenticity needs community involvement and a strong brand proposition in which the brand equity of authenticity is positioned. Tapping into the visitor's desire for an authentic experience means harnessing the consumer's creativity to constantly enhance and refresh the experience and the product offering.

If all else fails, consider what the marketing guru Godwin (2005) said: 'Authenticity: If you can fake that, the rest will take care of itself'.