

Lack of travel takes its toll on our mental health

As part of our series "[Safe Travels](#)", we provide answers to the most frequently asked questions related to travel during a pandemic. This time, in addition to practical knowledge and facts, we want to present the topic from the psychological point of view and answer the question - does lack of travel affect the psyche and well-being?

To make our material as reliable as possible, we invited to the interview an expert - Ewa Tylman, International Coach Federation certified coach and mentor with over 20 years of experience in working with corporate and individual clients.

We encourage you to read this inspiring interview.

eSky: Does travel have a positive impact on our wellbeing?

Ewa Tylman: For mine, certainly. Since I was a child, I was used to travelling. My parents fostered my curiosity to learn about other cultures, rituals, communing with nature, the art of communication, often using sign language, thus teaching me creativity, courage, self-confidence and curiosity about the new. I was therefore in a way programmed to travel to a new place at least once a year. The very thought of planning such a trip already filled me with positive energy.

My husband and I have been on a lot of self-organised trips over the past 40 years, starting with a trip to the Peloponnese in a small fiat, and ending up in Venezuela years later. For me, every trip is pure joy, like that of a small child who is waiting for something exciting and can't wait to embark on an adventure. Travels tear me away from routine, from responsibilities, from running, they give me the feeling that maybe something else is worth doing. Travel - it's a holiday, and for me it's a gift that I eagerly look forward to!

What makes you happier when you travel?

I feel that breaking out of a sense of obligation makes me free and therefore fully open to experiencing the new with all my senses - I smell new smells, touch different structures with my fingers, taste new foods, listen to different sounds, absorb new surroundings and feel free and happy.

How has the pandemic affected our mental health?

In my work for the past few months, I've seen quite a few problems both related to relationship crises, declining form in managers and depressive states. There is also a high level of anxiety about one's health and the health of loved ones.

I only meet with a few clients in person. The rest I work with remotely. I notice how much I celebrate every "live" contact, every direct relationship. Recently I organised a business meeting for five people, with the appropriate precautions (everyone had a separate seat). Everyone wanted to sit at the communal table, everyone wanted to see their neighbour's "full" face. The meeting lasted much longer than we all anticipated. Listening and hearing improved, there was absolute attentiveness to each other, kindness, initiative, presence "here and now".

It seems to me that some of us have begun to appreciate the simplicity of life, or predictability, which makes us more willing to open up to new challenges.

How to deal with emotions in times of pandemic?

I myself have someone to draw from - my mentor is my 94-year-old mother. She lives alone, on the 3rd floor, without a lift. For her, life is about movement and independence. Of course, I support her, but I don't take away her freedom. Mum reads the press and watches TV



programmes very consciously, doing a "detox" where she feels an excess. She repeats - the most important thing is not to panic, to live consciously, with trust in yourself and your body, which tells you a lot.

I cope by combining work with breaks to move outdoors, in a group of people close to me (including my coach), talking about current experiences that change us. The great joy that recharges my batteries is my grandchildren. Every year we organise family trips with our nearest and dearest. We are currently planning new ones.

What emotions arise in us when the planned thing does not happen?

Our children are in such a situation. I liked that they went through the first phase of formalities with great understanding. It was worse later when the promises of the tourist office began to fall by the wayside, and thus the credibility of the organisers declined.

What is healthy, however, is that regardless of the official procedure, they plan their next trips, releasing positive emotions, because life goes on. I myself teach others that what lies ahead is much more important than dwelling on the past. My small and big clients prepare trip proposals and put them to a family vote. Beforehand, they decide together on the criteria for the trip. It's a great activity - I've seen many great presentations highlighting attractive places and local points of interest, not forgetting the cost of the flight and the stay itself. The important thing is to have the will not to give up on your dreams and to step outside your comfort zone. This helps me.

It is said that travelling, and especially relaxing by the sea, allows us to take a break from the excess stimuli we have on a daily basis. How do we cope with this during a pandemic?

A very pertinent question. From my perspective, the key issue is purpose - answering the question "Why am I doing this?". Equally important is awareness - do I want to or do I have to? We have different roles in life that come with different privileges and responsibilities. Unfortunately, quite often we over-impose too much burden on ourselves because we think it's the right thing to do or because someone expects us to do it, rather than doing what objectively needs to be done for a change and as a result, we "cut corners" chasing lost time. Our head quite often produces excess because we think more does better.

My rule of thumb - I want, I can, I will, or I don't want, I don't have to, I won't. It's the art of choices, it's living in harmony with myself and my opinion. Then it is easier to build relationships with others, avoiding unnecessary overload.

Someone once wisely said about information - it's worth seeking out the tried and tested, the good and the useful, and currently a diet of information won't hurt. Experiencing life is, of course, about variety and a multitude of stimuli, but it is worth remembering that we are also affected by it. Even in such an unusual situation as a pandemic.

Travel and depression: is it possible that previously frequent travellers may experience sadness as a result of depression?

Of course. In the current climate, regardless of age, many vulnerable people are feeling sad, lonely, lost and cut off from their previous mode of functioning. Many of my clients at this time of year have travelled to warm countries to bask in the sun. Some of them have been in Dubai for a few days.

Others are either passionately watching movies about interesting corners, planning upcoming trips, or have made the decision to rent houses in places that are interesting to them. Interestingly, there are amateurs who decorate their rooms with wallpaper with palm trees or waterfalls as the main motif. Still, others reminisce about previous trips by watching videos or photo albums. Either way - the sadness appears.

Ewa Tylman - Certified Mentor and Coach with many years of experience in working with corporate and individual clients. Experienced manager working for 20 years on high managerial positions in insurance, medical, cosmetic industries and her own business. As a Coach and Trainer, she worked, among others, for Aviva, Mercedes-Benz, Grupa Pracuj, BNP Paribas Real



Estate, Cegedim, Bankier.pl, Polo Market, Post Meridian, Whites, Artworks, Supradent, Nuvalu, Panoptikum.

If you want to know more facts about travelling in the age of pandemics, check out [the other articles on Safe Travel](#).

Does this article have the information you were looking for? [Yes](#) | [No](#)

