



Authority Magazine

Travel and Personal Growth: Michael C Higgins On Why & How Traveling Can Help Us Become Better Human Beings

An interview with Maria Angelova, CEO of Rebellious International



Author Michael C. Higgins, PhD

Respect for other cultures' food & drink — Food and drink is at the heart of other people's cultures. Through travel, I have learned how to develop a palate and appreciate the finest wine and food the world has to offer.

Thankfully, the world is open for travel once again. Traveling can broaden our horizons and make space for people to become more open-minded. How can travel give us the opportunity for personal growth? What are some ways that travel can help us become better human beings? As a part of our series about “How Traveling Can Help Us Become Better Human Beings”, I had the pleasure of interviewing Michael C. Higgins, PhD.

Michael is a multiple award-winning author, photographer, wine expert and the publisher of Flying Adventures magazine. For more than 20 years, he has participated in many unique travel experiences, indulging in exclusive culinary affairs, getting pampered in highly luxurious destinations and jumping into the wildest of adventures. He is also the author of the Exploring Wine Regions book series, a one-of-a-kind series that incorporates the beauty of a quality coffee table piece, an inspiring wine education, spectacular photography and an elaborate travel guide. A sought-after expert in travel, food and wine connoisseurship, Higgins has been featured by national and international media publications including Forbes, Departures, The Chicago Tribune, Decanter, The Vancouver Sun and more. As a private pilot, travel enthusiast, and food and wine lover himself, Higgins continues to live the story he’s been sharing for decades.

Thank you so much for joining us in this interview series! Before we dive into the main focus of our interview, our readers would love to “get to know you” a bit better. Can you tell us a bit about your childhood backstory?

That’s a gigantic question and there are 1 million things to say! Simply, I grew up in Southern California in a middle-class family.

What or who inspired you to pursue your career? We’d love to hear the story.

No one in particular inspired me to pursue my career. My career has always been changing and developing as time goes on. I love running businesses with creativity and art involved. Currently, I publish books because I love, travel, food, wine, people, and cultures.

I have more than twenty years of experience participating in some of the most extraordinary experiences: from pruning vines, picking grapes, working alongside winemakers, to participating in blind tastings, food and wine pairings, judging Cru Bourgeois wines, and sharing many meals with world-renowned winemakers, over countless hours, discussing everything wine. My time in wine regions adds up to thousands of days and counting. After years of publishing a travel magazine with food and wine articles in every issue, it was a natural step for me to write and publish books that focus on wine regions and all of their travel, food and wine experiences.

None of us can achieve success without some help along the way. Was there a particular person who you feel gave you the most help or encouragement to be who you are today? Can you share a story about that?

No one has helped me achieve my success. I am a self-learner and I figured out everything I have needed to be able to move forward.

It has been said that sometimes our mistakes can be our greatest teachers. Can you share the funniest or most interesting mistake that occurred to you in the course of your career? What lesson or takeaway did you learn from that?

In my opinion, I don't think that "sometimes" is the right word. We all make mistakes, and we can make them on a regular basis too. If we learn from them, we continue on to be better people and succeed as a result.

Can you share your favorite "Life Lesson Quote"? Why does that resonate with you so much?

Without integrity, nothing works. This is just simply true. We need to have integrity with everybody and every organization in order to have successful relationships.

What are some of the most interesting or exciting projects you are working on now? How do you think that might help people?

The most exciting project I am working on right now is the Exploring Wine Regions books.

The series combines wine education, an insider's travel guide, breathtaking photography, and personal commentary to offer a comprehensive guide for wine, food and travel. Everything is taken from my experiences to show you how to enjoy the same unique adventures. Each book represents numerous months on the ground, in the trenches, of each wine region. Tens of thousands of photos were taken, hundreds of wines were tasted, and extensive amounts of wineries were visited. In the end, you get insider tips on where to go, where to stay, where to eat, and most importantly, how to find the wines you love.

Right now, there are 3 books in the series: Argentina, Bordeaux and California. My next book, which will be published later this year is Mexico. After that is Greece.

OK, thank you for all of that. Let's now shift to the core focus of our interview about travel and personal growth. Let's dive deeper into these together. Based on your research or personal experience, why do you think travel can lead to personal growth? Can you share a story?

Travel is huge for personal growth. Travel introduces us to different cultures, people, foods, wine, etc. which can help expand our horizons and learn new skills.

Through travel, I have been able to build businesses, experience incredible wines and cuisine, visit beautiful landscapes and meet incredible people. This has helped me become the person I am today.

A recent survey from Psychology Today showed that over 80% of participants found that travel helped them with problem-solving or decision-making. Why do you think this is true for so many people?

Exploring new and different ideas from other cultures is ideal for new problem-solving methods and decision-making opportunities.

Do you think travel enhances our mindfulness, optimism, or sense of gratitude? How? Can you please explain with an example or story?

Yes. If traveling does not engage appreciation, a person should stay home.

Surely not everyone who travels automatically becomes an exemplar of human decency. What are a few reasons why some people completely miss out on the growth opportunities that travel can offer?

They miss out because they want what they have at home and not want to learn about other people and their culture, foods and wines.



What are your “5 Habits You Should Develop In Order to Make Travel Into An Opportunity For Personal Growth?”

1. Open-mindedness — Being open-minded is essential to learning other people's cultures.
2. A Sense of Exploration — Exploring the places you visit allows you to learn about the world and discover how other people live.
3. A Desire to Learn — We grow by learning new things, things that we are not exposed to at home.
4. Respect for other cultures' food & drink — Food and drink is at the heart of other people's cultures. Through travel, I have learned how to develop a palate and appreciate the finest wine and food the world has to offer.
5. A willingness to share — As I travel to different areas, I deeply educate myself to be better able to share my knowledge and personal experiences with others in a concise and meaningful way. My goal is to inspire others to join me in my adventures around the world and experience the unimaginable.

We are very blessed that some of the biggest names in Business, VC funding, Sports, and Entertainment read this column. Is there a person in the world, or in the US, whom you would love to have a private breakfast or lunch with, and why? He or she might just see this, especially if we both tag them :-)?

Joe Dispenza

How can our readers further follow your work online?

ExploringWineRegions.com
Instagram.com/ExploringWineRegions
Facebook.com/ExploringWineRegions
X.com/pilotmichael
Instagram.com/in/pilotmichael

Thank you for these really excellent insights, and we greatly appreciate the time you spent on this. We wish you continued success.

Link to article: medium.com/authority-magazine/travel-and-personal-growth-michael-c-higgins-on-why-how-traveling-can-help-us-become-better-c35ad609d2ff