

# Talking Points

## For Interviewing Dave Norman

**The Spiritual Journey**—everywhere you go, there you are. Traveling offers a chance to get away from our everyday lives and locales, but we can't get away from ourselves. What kind of spiritual journey should you anticipate as you trade the comforts of your normal routine for true tests of your courage and adaptability? A key source of drama in "Following Josh" comes from the author's confrontation with himself—with his expectations, self-image, and dreams. What kind of spiritual journey might travelers prepare for as they pack their bags?

**The Journey as Destination**—how do you balance a carefree attitude with the practical stuff of travel, like having a clean place to sleep and a safe place to stash your camera while you shower? It's a tough line to walk, between planning the spontaneity right out of a true adventure, and finding yourself hungry and homeless after dark. Josh and the author used very different approaches to embracing the journey, and balancing plans with adventure...with often-hilarious results.

**Strangers behind Familiar Faces**—do you really know the person you're traveling with? We don't know someone as well before a trip as after we've been locked in train cars with them for weeks...but what are the surprising ways we have to renegotiate friendship to make it work? Josh and the narrator's friendship before the trip was internet-mediated, but then they were thrust inescapably into each others' lives. How can we diffuse interpersonal problems before they explode, and use the challenge of traveling with a familiar stranger to make our journeys that much more personally meaningful?

**Melding History with Adventure**—how can we weave historic context into the background of our modern stories? Every traveler tells stories, from professional writers to folks who just tell tales to their friends. How can we choose the right historic and cultural details to make those stories more interesting...and truly valuable to the reader?

**Know Before you Go**—what kind of research helps you immerse yourself in a new place...and what kind of learning should you plan to do on the fly? In the time leading up to any trip, you could read as much or as little about the destination as you want. So what really helps you get the most out of your travels...and what should you plan to learn as you go?