

**Exploring the World and Meeting Its People**

# **A Couple's Survival Guide To Overlanding**

**Douglas & Stephanie Hackney**

**[www.HackneysTravel.com](http://www.HackneysTravel.com)**



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# Bona Fides

- 44 countries, 6 continents
- Travel by foot, dugout canoe, scooter, rickshaw, automobile, motorcycle, overland expedition vehicle, bus, helicopter, plane, train, sailboat
- Full-time, overland living
- Lessons learned from our experiences and other overlanders



Learn more about us on our  
web site  
[www.HackneysTravel.com](http://www.HackneysTravel.com)



# The 3 Ms

- Money
- Murder
- Me



# Money

- It costs less to overland full time in developing countries than to live in the U.S. or western Europe
- Costs vary widely
- Most overlanders live on \$500 to \$2,000 per month

**Background costs are killers  
(insurance, storage, etc.)**



# Murder

- The world is a very safe, warm and welcoming place
- The world is generally safer and less violent than the U.S.

**You will worry about safety and security the most prior to departure and the least while you are out there**



# Me

- Yes, you can do this
- Overseas overlanding is generally pretty easy, in some places, very easy

**Your biggest challenge is looking back at you from the mirror**



# Safety and Security

- Discuss your limits
- Respect the limits
- Safety and security are always trump
- Gut instinct rules!

**Your definition of relative safety and security will change over time**



# The Gut Rule

- The ultimate trump card
- Can be challenging
- No quibble, no discussion, no debate
- No proxy vehicle for unresolved relationship issues
- Even the slightest little tingle

**Everybody Bails – NOW!**





# Important Processes

- Talk through scenarios
  - Separation
  - Ditch bag / bug out
  - Medical stabilize to extraction
  - Daily life: markets, ATM, etc.
- Practice scenarios
  - Satellite phone, EPIRB, etc.
  - Know your gear - crosstrain



# Health

- Health issues for one affect both
  - Proximity to healthcare resources
  - Ability to participate in activities, eat “local” foods, etc.
- Be realistic about health impacts on proposed destinations / methods / timelines
- Be honest about and aware of the stress health issues place on each of you and your relationship



# Children

- Highly recommended!
- Travel is very conducive to children's self-confidence, self-esteem, independence, capability, leadership, language skills, etc.
- All the logistics are possible (education, health, etc.)

**Some of the best children we've ever met were full time travelers.**



# Trial / Testing

- Travel
  - Start small, local, short term
  - Test methods: group, friends, solo
  - Test destinations: rural, remote, urban
  - Test lifestyle: everyday activities, space utilization
- Platform / method
  - Rent and learn
  - Fail fast



# Intermission and Exit

- Prior to departure
  - Establish and agree on concept
  - Define and agree on criteria
  - Define and agree on method(s)
- If the intermission or exit bell rings
  - No debate
  - No questions
  - No regrets



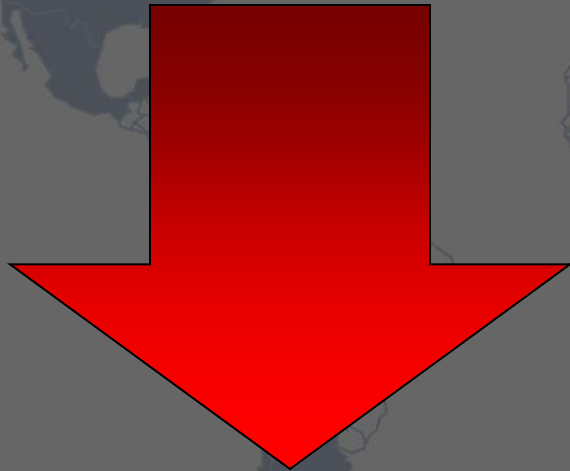
# Stress Realities

- Travel can be stressful
  - Personally
  - As a couple
- Travel can be rewarding
  - Personally
  - As a couple

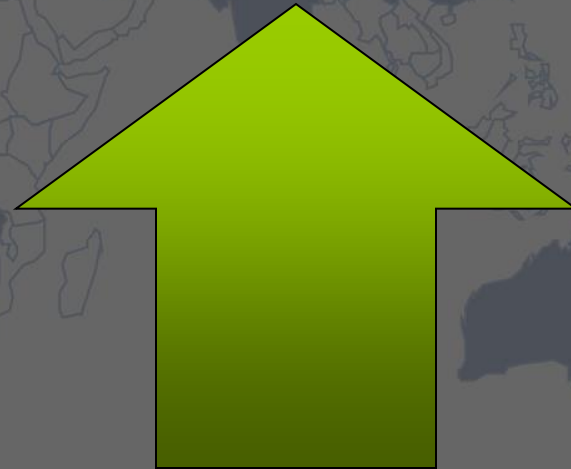


# The Goals

Maximize Rewards



Minimize Stress



# Typical Stress Factors

- Her

- Children
- ***Emotional Isolation***  
(Friends/ Family)
- Loss Of The Nest
- Personal Safety & Security
- Female Health

- Him

- Logistics
- Finances
- ***Vehicle***
- Technology
- Spouse Safety & Security





# Stress Relievers

- Communication
- Empathy
- Understanding
- Support
- Validation
- Loyalty
- Respect
- Physical Activity
- Conjugal Relations



Can Be Very Challenging When Driving Through This...



# Communications

- Know your styles
- Know the basics
- Workshops / seminars / retreats / books / videos
- You will need this skill – while under stress
- Be specific when speaking
- Try to improve every day



# The Three Most Important Words

**I Am Sorry**



# The Next Three Most Important Words

**You Are Forgiven**



# He Thinks / She Thinks

- Shelter – “We’ll find a place.”
  - Him: Wild/dry camp – 70% of the time
  - Her: Hotel to hotel – 70% of the time
- Route – “We’ll find a way.”
  - Him: Go Where No Overland Expedition Vehicle Has Gone Before
  - Her: No roll angle greater than 3 degrees



# Manage Expectations

- Address Fears
- Be Honest
- Be Fair
- Be Open
- Communicate

**Revisit Expectations Often**



# Define Roles

- Determine individual strengths / weaknesses
- Discuss prior to departure
- Test roles during lifestyle trial
- Revisit regularly
- Be adaptable and flexible
- Respect each other's roles

## Cross-Train Roles



# Define and Express Needs

- Unique needs for each individual
- Shared needs
- Compromise needs

**Unmet Needs Will Sabotage  
Your Journey**





# Common Priorities for Segments/Countries

- Establish couple priorities
- Establish individual priorities
- Prioritize within available resources (time, money, health, etc.)
- Maintain flexibility

**Prime Territory For Simmering Resentments**



# Compromise / Flexibility

- Expectations
- Goals
- Time
- Destinations
- Mode of Travel
- Priorities
- Commitments
- And, that's just the beginning...



# Personal Keys To Success

- Personal Space
- Personal Quiet
- Personal Time
- Personal Interests
- Personal Communications
- Personal Rewards

**Must Be Happy Yourself To Be A Happy Partner**



# Tourism vs. Travel vs. Life

- Very important to discuss and understand your perceptions of these concepts
- Tourism is not travel
- Travel is not Overland Living
  - Traveling through an area is not the same as living in an area for a time
- Full-time overlanding is full-time living

**Each Mode Has Different Goals,  
Experiences And Outcomes**



# Cultural Goggles

- Other societies have different norms, customs, practices and standards
- Some are diametrically opposed to yours
- You cannot fully learn about others unless you can set aside those differences and look at them without the filter of your cultural goggles

**Your preconceptions, biases and deeply rooted expectations can and will color and shape your experiences – it's up to you.**



# Cultural Gender Identity

- Gender-dominated and / or defined societies
- Acceptance of other societies' ideals / standards / requirements
- Gender-specific behavior
- Gender-specific requirements

**Both genders must be on board – this is not only a female issue / challenge**



# Female Gender Identity



# Re-entry

- The ship will come ashore
- When it does, you will both be different people
  - Individually
  - As A couple
- When it does, everyone else will be different too
  - The world keeps on turning





# The Simple Things

- Learn from others
- Take time off
- Celebrate
- Rituals
- Be Here Now – Live in the moment
- Be nice to each other



# The Most Important Things

## Doug's

- Establish and pursue common goals
- Take responsibility
- Maintain honesty and integrity

## Steph's

- Respect
- Communication
- Happiness...it's a choice and it's your responsibility



# The Three Golden Rules of Travel

## Doug's

- Don't #&%@ with the locals
- Always remember you are a guest - act accordingly
- Don't be stupid

## Steph's

- Trust your gut
- Be respectful at all times
- Focus on where you are - not where you are going



# Learn More

Details on the lessons in this presentation  
and more are available at:

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