

Emotional Intelligence and storytelling, hopeful skills to inspire the tourism industry and independent travellers to evolve in a more sustainable way.

How might we increase human awareness regarding the impacts of their travel behaviours on themselves and their surroundings, so we can keep the benefits of international traveling and respect the capacity of resilience in the areas?

Historically, travel was a luxury. However, today the barriers to travel are lower than ever before. The evolution of a collaborative economy in key countries, the growth of disposable income and the rise of the middle class has made overseas travel affordable. Also, in emerging markets, new rules regarding immigration and vacation and falling costs of transportation create new ways to travel. The number of individuals moving across the globe is on the rise.

In 2016, there were 7.6 milliard people on the globe, of which 24% travelled. The Worldwide Organisation of Tourism reported that the number of international tourists reached 1.2 billion in 2016 and predicts an increase up to 1.8 billion in 2030.

In cultures such as United-Kingdom, Germany or France, international travelling is part of the lifestyle, becoming a necessity where the Millennial generation is in search of unique experiences and authenticity. Nowadays, new traveller profiles entered the market such as China, India, adding new interactions and movements of populations. Some tourists consume local resources like a product in a supermarket. Others approach services as they would in their home country without being aware or refusing to be aware of their own influence, sometimes consciously and with good intentions.

In countries where tourism is a major economic pillar, we can see social, economic and environmental imbalances appear. Over-tourism triggers tensions due to a lack of emotional intelligence, social and cultural awareness (chosen or due to lack of knowledge), engaging in unadapted behaviours and negative impact on the quality of life for locals in tourist destinations.

This is a paradox. Knowing that today it is easier to access instant information via the Internet including pictures and videos, in English and most world languages, this seems to be a curious situation. The visitor should be even more prepared than ever and aware of the challenges of cross-cultural communication. The interactions and relationship between the host and the visitor have simultaneously grown more layered and intimate than the previous generations (ex. Airbnb, live like-a-local experiences). It can be difficult to identify accurate information on which codes of conducts to adopt in a world where we are over-connected and everyone can create and share their own content. So, how might we increase awareness to reduce the negative impacts of tourism in the destinations (environment, economy, social) while offering the best life experience and interactions for the local population as much as the tourist?

Trying to answer this question, I started a personal journey with the purpose to find sustainable solutions. The world became my laboratory for social experiences, in search of inspiration. I have been working on different projects with a focus on sustainable tourism. (Attachments 2A & 2B). The process I have applied for gathering case studies is experiencing, prototyping and collaborating. I believe in real-life experiences, going out of your comfort zone, learning by trying at least once, reserving judgement. (Attachment 3)

When completing my Master's degree in geography, land planning, sociology I used to believe the external resources (politics, education, legislation, etc.) were the factor that could provide solutions to the problem. (Attachment 1) Based on this

assumption, I worked with public authorities and a private engineering company, using urban planning, land settlement strategies and marketing strategies (branding) as tools to reduce the impact.

Three tools have been recognised as a major in the visitor journey and as solutions :

- Governance via the stakeholder actively involved, including the government (Marketing, legislation, politics, financial resources, etc.)
- Communication, using word of mouth, ambassadors and online communities in the visitor experience, (Attachment 5)
- Mobility (including a transport or not) being part of the basic definition of travelling, to an international scale the transport industry has a key role over the movements that can be useful

Those solutions using extrinsic resources showed their roles in reducing the impact of tourism. However, in 2013 my first experience abroad and in 2014 working in the tourism industry for the Chiltern Tourism Network (UK) opened my mind to a new approach even more human-centred. I started questioning the world I am living in and the sustainability behind the interests of those resources. From 2015, I wondered if it was possible to reduce the impact of tourism by changing my own behaviour as an individual; using emotional intelligence. Why? A personal experience triggered this new approach, noticing that everybody thinks about changing the world but few think about changing themselves first.

In January 2017 I started a project based on Experience Once in a lifetime. I made the hypothesis that by living by the motto " Be the change I wish to see in the world" (Mahatma Gandhi), I could empower myself by inspiring others, leading by example using Emotional Intelligence. My goal is to inspire others to challenge themselves, to find fulfilment in their world, live their life fully in a purpose to travel in a more sustainable and respectful way. I immersed myself in new cultures, travelling with and like other travellers in Europe, Morocco Thailand and New-Caledonia and living with local families and working in the tourism industry in France, UK, Australia, Canada and New-Zealand. (Attachments 2a & 2b)

Being closer to both the life of the visitor and the hosts, I experimented and analysed the impacts of my own changing behaviours in the tourism ecosystem (on myself and my surroundings). I also gained a better understanding of the impacts of tourism and immigration on the local Indigenous people (Kanak communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Maasai communities). The value of this experiment has been to connect with the environment and human stories from all over the world. Trying to understand how individuals or communities adapt to the evolution of tourism and globalisation has been revealing. I discovered inspiring strategies to adapt and reduce the impact of tourism in those areas but also that emotional intelligence and leadership in the tourism industry should be tested.

As humans, we are naturally egocentric, curious, in constant search of feeding our needs while processing a wide range of emotions to reach the top of Maslow Pyramid. The initial mindset and the reason(s) of the departure influence the whole experience being a major vector of the impacts on his way as much as in the destination. (Attachments 4 and 5) Ask yourself why you travel ? What is your intention behind your vacations and breaks? How can you prepare for your next holiday?

We cannot change anybody but we can influence each other. In a strategic way, as professionals, we can have the most influence while the person is preparing her journey. That way we can seek for information around the intentions and the context of the departure, we can support her during the experience and help her to anticipate the way back home going back to a daily routine. Psychologists found that the emotional boost a vacation provides lasts about three to four weeks after we return to work. A post-travel strategy is as important as the preparation and the experience itself. Professionals of tourism

should follow up with the customer experience even after their return to their home country. The challenge is to support people to keep the boost generated by the vacation to benefit their daily lives, avoiding post-travel melancholy.

Today, my beliefs have been transformed. The characteristics of our inner human (self-awareness), using emotional intelligence and human collaboration/cooperation are as powerful as extrinsic ones. A synergy between the two, using external strategies and collaboration between the government, businesses and the local populations could increase human awareness around the codes of conducts to adapt to international tourism of scale.

The overarching idea is to use an approach where communication (using emotional intelligence and storytelling), legislation, collaboration, lay the foundation. On these pillars rests the idea of enhancing a destination so that the area is enticing to both live and stay in. That way, the destination has both the local population and tourists as consumers of goods and services. The local population attracts external visitors for authentic experiences in the collaborative experience economy. It is possible to identify key of those destinations through the “most livable cities in the world” ranking system. It is a sustainable approach to developing tourism.

It is important to recognise the governance and interactions in any system to identify what humans can have control over (their own personal behaviours and awareness) and what they can't, such as the environment (ex: weather). The process being exposed, each human can make a contribution to reducing the impact of tourism in his or her own sphere of influence. Each action counts. If each of us looks into ourselves first, expanding our awareness, we could change the world with a little push from external resources.

The new problem statement is globally based on the visitor journey to an international scale focusing on how we can create human self-awareness. (Sociology, Emotional intelligence, mobility, wellbeing, innovative education in the tourism industry)

How might we increase human awareness regarding the impacts of their travel behaviours on themselves and their surroundings, so we can keep the benefits of international traveling and respect the capacity of resilience in the areas? How can we use travelling as an experience toward growth and wellbeing when international travelling might be endangered?

I would like to engage further research around the notions of “Transformational tourism” (Yvette REISINGER), sustainable mobilities, Emotional Intelligence in the tourism industry and how to increase human well-being by injecting the positive boost of travel in people daily lives.

How to process ? In all my projects I use design thinking (Attachment 6)

Data gathering would be based on primary and secondary research, then real life experiments. By prototyping and trying some of the following projects, the research and knowledge could go forward. The following actions toward sustainable

tourism could be collaboratively developed and tested to extend the research as external resources to influence the travellers to look into themselves.

- I believe in EDUCATION : using gamification, storytelling / immersive experiences to influence and connect people with themselves, with others and with nature. Develop travel- coaching support in companies to support travellers to anticipate the return into their daily lives, keeping the boost of travels. (The Hero's journey)
- I believe in LEADERSHIP "Leading by example" using Emotional Intelligence. Form tomorrow leaders and professionals linked to the tourism industry / customer journey to use Emotional Intelligence to influence the visitors.
- I believe in COMMUNICATION, LEGISLATION and COLLABORATION using design thinking, immersive and Human centred actions. Involve natural influencers (bloggers) and the local population to be the ambassadors of their destinations and toward sustainable tourism.

Nowadays I support two innovative projects. Together we prototyped and experimented two social experiments ideas to gather data :

- With Samantha CEO, life coach, from The Self Club, we use play "Playground for adults" as a tool to form tomorrow leaders using real life experience and emotional intelligence. This project is also a way to create self-awareness, meaningful connections between international communities living in Melbourne and a way to boost people lives in a positive way. Those leadership courses could be duplicated to the tourism industry.
- With Sahil Garg, environmental engineer, we are looking to develop a social experiment involving educating international travellers and students to live sustainable lives. We are working on a project to organise a 3 days journey where we would show people how to travel and live in a more sustainable way. (Sustainable travel (organise the journey and anticipate their way back in their daily routine keeping this travel mindset), Sustainable mobility, self-awareness (meditation), human collaboration, waste and food management, etc.)
- I would like to use those resources to see if it is possible to develop a campaign going further in that direction.

ATTACHMENTS

**ATTACHMENT 1 : How to reduce the impacts of tourism ?
Process, evolution of my approach and mindset during the journey.**

How might we increase human awareness to reduce the negative impacts of tourism in the destinations (environment, economy, social) while offering the best life experience and interactions for the local population as much as the tourist ?

STAGE 1
I used to believe the **EXTERNAL** resources (the power of politics, education, law, etc.) as being the most powerful factors to bring solutions to the problem.

STAGE 2

From 2015, I started to wonder if it was possible to reduce the impacts of tourism by changing my own behaviours as an individual; using emotional intelligence. **(POWER FROM WITHIN)**

In January 2017 I started a project based on Experience Once in a lifetime. I made the hypothesis that by becoming " (be) the change I wish to see in the world" (Mahatma Gandhi), I could empower myself inspiring others. My goal is to inspire others to challenge themselves, to find fulfillment in their world, live their life fully in a purpose to travel in a more sustainable and respectful way.

STAGE 3

Emotional intelligence a hopeful skill to inspire the tourism industry and the travellers to evolve in a more sustainable way.

Today I believe in the power of **INNER HUMAN** resources, using emotional intelligence and human collaboration/cooperation as resources as powerful as **EXTERNAL** ones. A synergy between the two, using external strategies and collaborations between the government, businesses and the local populations could increase human awareness around the codes of conducts to adopt to an international tourism scale to reduce the impact of their own behaviours on themselves and their surrounding. *"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito."*- Dalai Lama

Each human INTERNAL resources can be as powerful as EXTERNAL ones using an emotional intelligence approach.

ATTACHMENT 2A : I lived with and like a local to have a better understanding of the tourism dynamism and impact(s).



Kenya (2015):

I participated on a project toward developing an interpretation centre adding value to the Massai culture in a purpose of developing tourist awareness regarding this population.

Thailand : 2017 (2 weeks) Observations and understanding of the evolution of the Thai people facing increasing tourism. First experience as a female solo traveller to identify the challenges linked to this practise. I lived like and with backpacker, going with the flow. I also discovered the power of storytelling, social medias and the facebook communities in the tourism industry.

England 2013 - 2017 (4 years on and off)

First immersion in a foreign country as an expat to learn english discovering the english culture by living in an english family and working there. I understood the challenges of being an expat and international travelling.

Volunteering for the Chilterns Tourism Network for their e-marketing strategy, finding solutions to develop the destination awareness to attract Londonians. I offered a marketing strategy developing a territorial brand concept. I also helped for a market research regarding the potential development of hiking events in the area discovering the power of activity events part of the tourism industry.

As a freelance, I worked for the King Arms Hotel in Amersham processing a market research about business travelling/conferences. I also helped for their e-marketing strategy.

France : As tourism engineering consultant I worked on different projects to :

- develop sustainable motilities and slow tourism (ex: hiking, cycling) associated to national labels of quality
- reduce the impacts of tourism and develop the local experience using mobilities (transport) and new infrastructures as a way to spread the flux of tourist increasing the customer and local people life experience. (Urban planning, landscaping, structuration of the local offer, etc.)

I also worked as a visitor experience specialist in a visitor information centre managed by a governmental body, allowing myself to have a better understanding of the visitors profile and attempts.

Canada 2018: (6 months),

working for the Banff Lake Louise Tourism as a Visitor Experience Specialist I analysed another profile of visitors (Americans, Chinese). Learnt more about the power of emotional intelligence (EI) in leadership and the system of a visitor centre as a private organisation. I experimented using EI as a new way to give the best experience for each visitor in times of crisis (fire, bear attacks, accidents, etc.). I also observed how this area try to adapt to reduce the impact of tourism in this international well-known destination and how social medias such as Instagram can bring negative impacts to a destination.

ATTACHMENT 2B



New-Caledonia 2017 : (2 weeks) I had the chance to be introduced and experience the Kanak tribe lifestyle. That way, I developed my awareness around the impact of tourism and also the French colonisation on those communities. I interviewed Caldoche and french expats to get their own perspective around the New-Caledonian situation.

New-Zealand 2018-2019 (6 months); I lived in a shared-house with kiwi people where we hosted international travellers. The interactions and viewpoints were insightful. I also experienced the power of being a "travel coach" (life coach for travelers) and not just a travel consultant. I was working for Picton I-Site as a travel consultant allowing myself to approach new profile of tourists (cruise ship) and understand new ways to manage a visitor centre. I carried on experiencing emotional intelligence to organise the visitors experience and deal with times of crisis. I also got some insight from NZ tourism strategy to reduce the impacts tourism (Tiaki Promise, local regulations,etc.) and their way to collaborate and include and add value to the Maori culture. (Te papa museum)

Australia 2017 - 2020 (more than 1.5 years) First working holiday visa. Australia being the first destination to go for french people for their first working holiday visa, I knew I could find them easily to understand them better. Also Australia having an immigration strategy around the holiday makers. I wanted to understand new ways to regulate tourism.

I lived in an Australian family and worked for outdoor shops (Mountain Design and Fjallraven) approaching the travellers coming to Oz and going to Europe, helping them to gear up. It was an opportunity to try new ways to influence the visitors in a retail context, using Emotional Intelligence (EI) techniques helping them to prepare their adventures. I also discovered leadership using an EI approach.

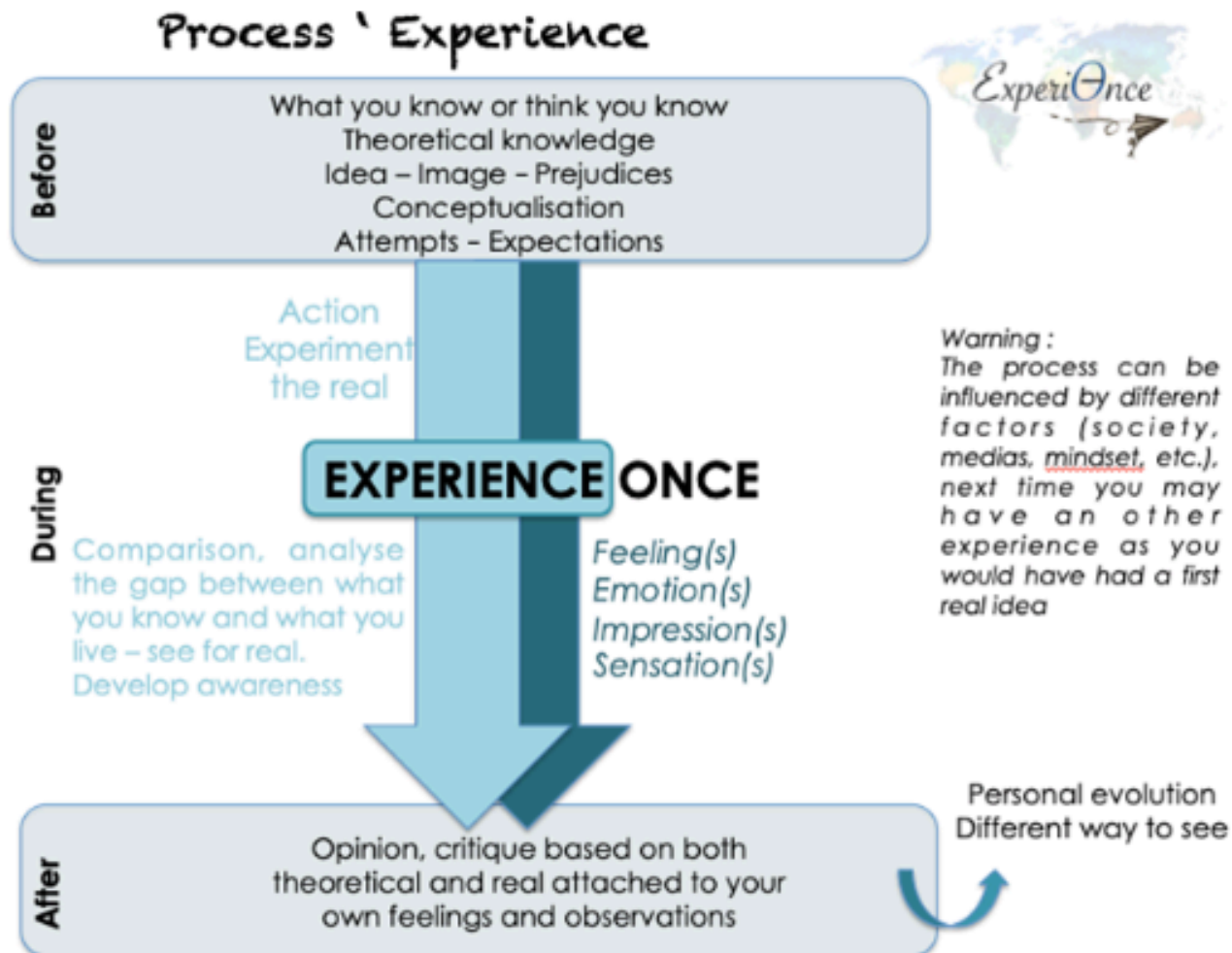
Using Facebook communities, I greeted new backpackers in Melbourne organising day activities. I lived with and like them to understand them better but also to see the influences of becoming a travel coach (life coach for travellers) as being an expat or international student has its challenges that we are often unprepared for.

I experienced trekking the Overland Track in Tasmania to understand what are the influences of making pay a track to regulate the number of people in an area as a way to reduce the impacts on the environment. I also analysed all the system associated to this approach.

I went on a 4 months road trip around the country, travelling with two strangers met on a Facebook community. On the way analysing their behaviours and the influences of my own behaviours on their experience and their evolution. I took the chance to interview the local population to have their view around the independent travellers (backpackers). I interacted with aboriginal people in Cooper Piddy / Ayers Rock/ Alice Spring to understand their view and approach regarding tourism and see how Australia integrate them.

Nowadays, I experiments solutions to inject the spark that we have while we travel in the daily routine to avoid post travel depression. That way, with some collaborators I organise innovative social events to connect international and local people to increase awareness of the impacts of human behaviours and interactions with S. SACCHI from The Self Club.

ATTACHMENT 3 : The role of "experience" in a personal journey

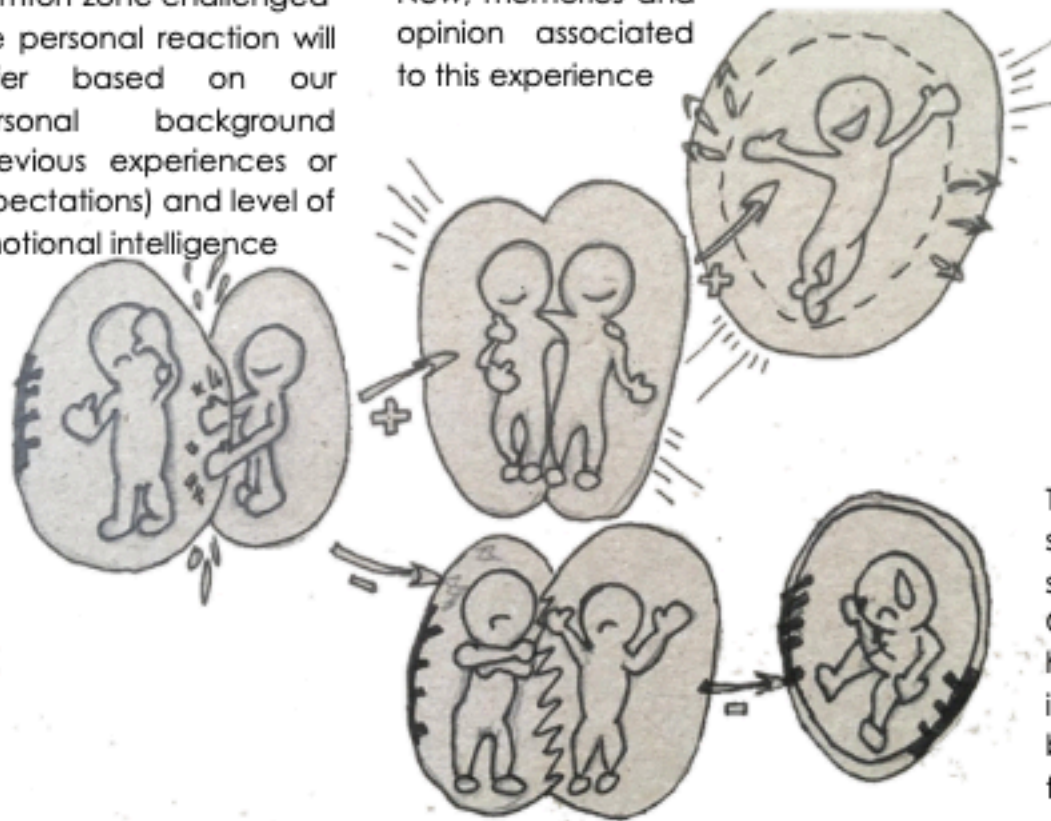


Source : Delphine GIMAT

Attachment 4 : Travelling is all about experiences, emotions and the level of emotional intelligence of people you interact with on the way.

Comfort zone challenged
The personal reaction will differ based on our personal background (previous experiences or expectations) and level of emotional intelligence

Positive experience
= positive emotion.
New, memories and opinion associated to this experience

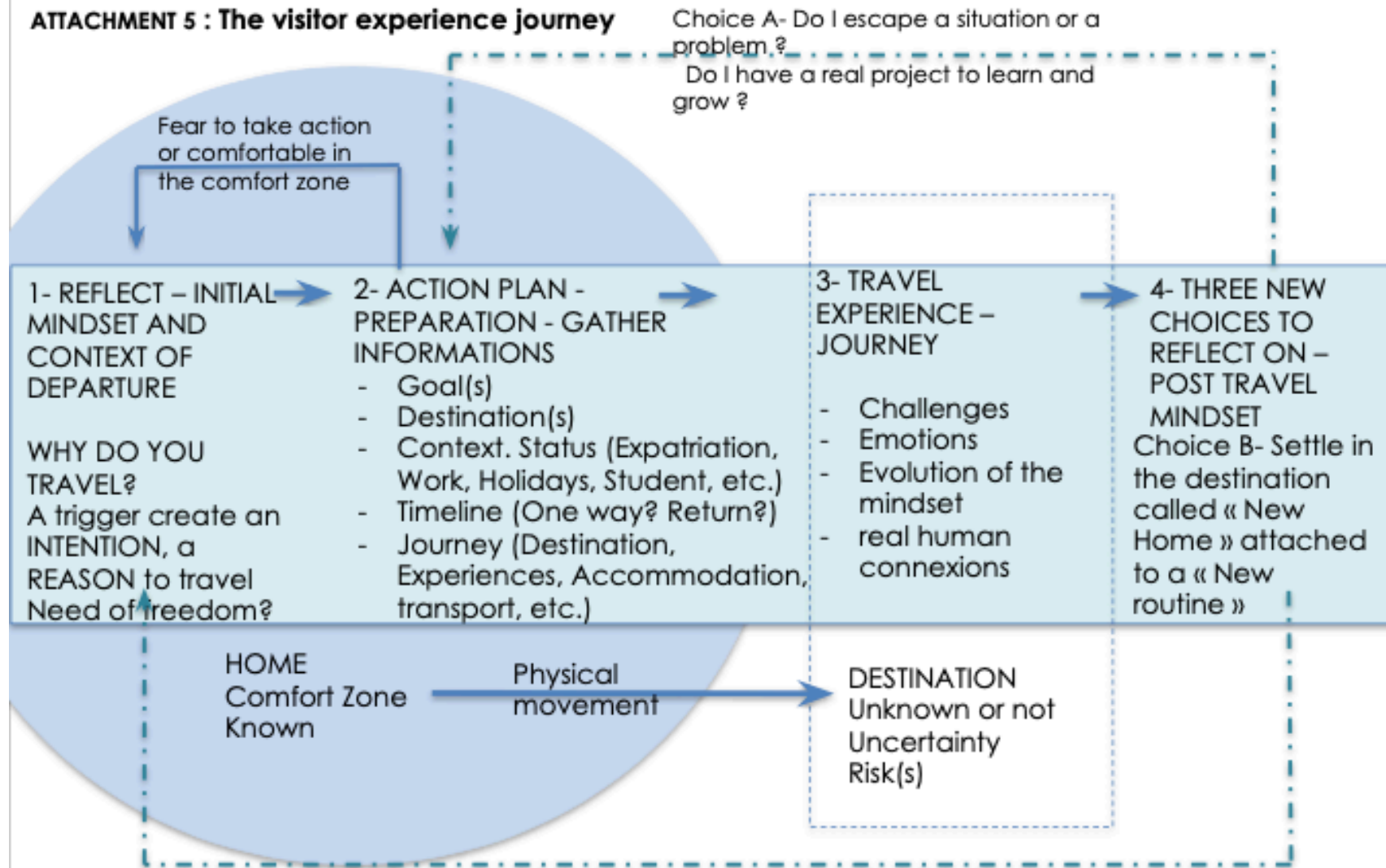


Negative experience
= Negative emotions and the opinion associated to this experience will also be questioned

Positive extension of the comfort zone and mindset. The self-satisfaction increase the traveller becomes a storyteller sharing his experiences to others.

The comfort zone stay the same or reduce and can add some protection or fears. Confidence can decrease however using emotional intelligence, it is possible to bring a new perspective to the experience, learning and growing from it.

ATTACHMENT 5 : The visitor experience journey



Choice C -Return at the initial point. Time to REFLECT again and make a bilan of the experience. Is there a gap between the expectations and reality ? is there a the gap between who I was and who I became? How to use what I learnt? How to keep the sparks and emotions I had while I traveled ?

Source : Delphine GIMAT

Attachment 6 : Design Thinking approach

