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TWO LAPS AROUND THE WORLD
Tales and Insights from a Life Sabbatical
by Bob Riel

Sabbaticals aren't just for academics anymore. That's what Bob Riel and his wife, Lisa, decided when - after being married for a year - they took time off from their careers and embarked on a round-the-world journey, intent on having an adventure before starting a family. Then, two-and-a-half years later, when the children hadn't arrived and the travel bug hadn't left, they decided to set out on another voyage to resume their sabbatical experience.

These journeys are chronicled in Riel's book, *Two Laps Around the World: Tales and Insights from a Life Sabbatical*. During their travels, the couple faced the shock of a terrorist bombing in Egypt, met a Turkish carpet dealer who trained acrobatic pigeons, discussed life with Masai tribesmen, drank tea with Beijing rickshaw drivers, learned about Buddhism from a monk in the Indian Himalayas, visited a Japanese family whose mother thought she knew them in another lifetime, and watched the sunrise from a boat on the Ganges River and from atop Mount Sinai.

The tales are lyrical and humorous, but the book has a larger message, which is that many people could use time off from the everyday rigors of a job in order to have new experiences, ponder their goals and return to work with renewed energy and ideas. As Riel writes: "In our society, this concept tends to be relegated to the confines of academia, with most people either never contemplating the option or at least pushing off the possibility to their later years. But many individuals could benefit from a sabbatical."

Two Laps Around the World is also a testament to the possibilities of travel, as Bob and Lisa's explorations grew into a series of Life Lessons and Global Rules that will inspire reflection. For example, after some time to think during these journeys, the author realized that his life and his goals seemed to cycle through periods of about seven years each. Thus was born Life Lesson #1: "Our life as a whole can best be understood as a progression of smaller lives." Similarly, a series of encounters with world religions led to Global Rule #3: "Religions are different because cultures are different, but at heart they are all seeking the same thing, which is an understanding of the transcendent."

Two Laps Around the World is a captivating memoir about one couple, one life sabbatical and two adventurous and insightful journeys around the planet.

About the author

Bob Riel is a writer and consultant who specializes in cross-cultural and travel subjects. He maintains a blog about these topics, called *Travels in the Riel World* (www.rielworld.com), and has researched and written more than 70 country-specific training manuals about cross-cultural business topics. His writing career began as a newspaper journalist and he has a master's degree in political science from Boston College. Bob currently lives in Arizona with his wife, Lisa, and son, Brady.