

Travel can buy happiness more than things can

By Deb Hopewell, *Outside*

Buying something we want but don't necessarily need brings an undeniable rush. Our overflowing closets, attics, and garages testify to the powerful allure of new toys and gadgets. But what do you think would bring more happiness in the long run: that new curved-screen HDTV or an African safari?

According to studies over the past 10 years that still keep popping up in the headlines, it's human nature to equate happiness with tangible stuff. After all, why spend your hard-earned money on a two-week trip to Bhutan when that designer living room set you bought instead will be around for years, reminding you day after day of its fabulousness?

Because all those awesome objects will never make you a happy person. The human mind has a perverse knack for ceasing to appreciate things it's constantly exposed to—even pricey things like electronics, clothing, furniture, wedding rings, you name it. On the other hand, even the anticipation of an experience, whether it's going to a concert, fishing with friends, or planning a bucket-list trip, contributes to the overall happiness associated with the actual event. Even years later, being able to casually mention that you once went skydiving in Spain wears much better than name-dropping your car or television in a conversation. Bottom line: While a trip lasts only a set amount of days, its effect on your happiness lasts a lifetime. It's a case of the cliché actually being true.

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