

Perfection is a value that many people want to achieve, or even have. In any field, at any age, regardless of gender, skin color or even religion, every individual would like either to be perfect or to perform a perfect act. This value is therefore an ideal perception of something. Perfection, often defined as absolute fulfillment, embodies an aspiration deeply rooted in human nature.

The notion of perfection has many meanings, extending across the fields of philosophy, art, morality, science and many others. Throughout the ages, thinkers have debated its nature, asking whether it is attainable or merely an abstract ideal. Quality can be seen as something beyond limits, defying human limitations, or as something impossible, condemned to the confines of imperfect reality.

In our culture, perfection is therefore perceived as abstract and subjective...

This value is not confined to one area: it can be associated with work, sport, art, but also with personal tastes such as food, music, colors etc... And even with more advanced subjects such as politics, economics etc...

In our case, we'll be looking at the field of foreign travel. In an increasingly globalized world, going abroad has become a common experience for many people, whether students, professionals or simply individuals in search of adventure. Going abroad undeniably offers a multitude of enriching opportunities. It's a chance to discover new cultures, master foreign languages, develop intercultural skills and open up to different perspectives. What's more, it can represent a personal challenge, a stimulating adventure that fosters individual growth and self-building.

However, behind this idyllic façade often lie challenges and difficulties. The experience of immersion in a foreign culture can be disconcerting and sometimes trying. Language barriers, cultural differences, social isolation and practical problems can all be obstacles to overcome. What's more, the very idea of perfection can be subject to subjective and varied interpretations. What may seem perfect to one person may be very different to another. If, as Salvador Dali said, *"Il ne faut pas craindre d'atteindre la perfection, vous n'y arriverez jamais."*, can we consider that going abroad can be described as perfect?

First, we'll focus on the positive and enriching aspects of this experience, then the slightly more negative points, with the challenges and limitations associated with this experience, and finally we'll conclude by saying that perfection is not something that really exists.

Firstly, we can indeed call going abroad perfect. Moving to a new country is an incredible and unforgettable experience.

Discovering new cultures, new ways of life, new specialities etc... But for some people the reasons may be different.

For expatriates, the benefits are many and varied. There is an ever-increasing number of career opportunities abroad. People often decide to leave to find a job that, in relation to their qualifications in a specific field, enables them to increase not only their career but also their salary. In particular, this enables them to considerably expand their professional network abroad, creating even more opportunities for the future. And finally, still on the subject of work, many expatriates decide to move to another country because the salaries are more advantageous.

But it's not just for these reasons that expats find living abroad so perfect. It also enables them to expand their social circle and meet new people. Indeed, whether it's with other expatriates, colleagues, neighbors or locals... etc., these can be moments full of happiness and memories.

These relationships can be enriching, they can make a person grow and they can last over time.

Expatriation can be a good way to start a new life, to write a new chapter in one's history or to become a new person. In other words, for some people, moving to a foreign country is a way of learning a new language, learning more about certain cultures and ways of life, and then doing the same. The language is learned through regular exchanges with the locals. Progress is therefore obvious, rapid, natural and lasting, and learning is more natural and fluid than in a classroom or on a website. An expatriation offers the opportunity to discover a new country and its culture, to broaden one's knowledge, but also one's more general view of the world. The expatriate is confronted on a daily basis with other ways of life, and the differences can be considerable for diverse destinations. Gastronomy, lifestyles, customs, music, literature and cinema are just some of the facets of a country that can be discovered while living there.



So it's fair to say that expatriates enjoy a wide range of benefits, and can consider their stay to be perfect.

People who decide to travel abroad can also say that their stay is perfect. These people often leave, but not for the same reasons. It's often for a short time (usually no more than 2-3 weeks) and to have fun. When we plan our vacations, we want them to be perfect, every moment spent there to be unforgettable and wonderful, whether with family or friends.

First of all, vacations are synonymous with mental and physical rest. After a long period of work, stress and pressure, getting away from home is a good way to regain your strength. It allows you to escape from your daily routine.

Secondly, travel allows you to create new memories, learn new things and discover new landscapes. Indeed, when you're in an unfamiliar environment, you tend to be more attentive to what's around you, but also to remember what you discover. All those new things we're going to be able to explain when we return home, everything we'll be able to remember for the rest of our lives. Seeing new landscapes, mountains, beaches, squares, monuments and even the practices of the country you're visiting is an unforgettable and, above all, rewarding experience.

Travelling with family or friends is also an excellent way of creating memories and strengthening relationships. Sharing moments and discoveries with someone is a way of getting closer and having something in common with them for the rest of your life. So traveling is a constant way of keeping good memories with good people, but also of maturing mentally. That's why we associate the term travel with absolute perfection, relaxation and joy.

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When it comes to studying abroad, there are several reasons for this popularity. Many people make the decision to spend a certain amount of time in a foreign country as part of their studies.

First of all, and this is very often the case, it can be to perfect a foreign language. Indeed, one of the primary reasons for leaving for a foreign country is the language. It's very advantageous and much in demand with schools, and even for the future. Having the ability to speak several languages on your CV is regularly rewarded, as it shows your ability to communicate with other foreigners. On top of this, language courses are often set up to give students a good grounding and enable them to assimilate new notions.

Then there's personal culture. Indeed, leaving for a foreign country for whatever reason is a good way to enrich oneself personally.

When you decide to spend some time in an unfamiliar country, and above all on your own, it's a good way to become more independent. This rare experience takes us out of our comfort zone and makes us grow. It's a good way to start making our own decisions and organizing ourselves. For many of us, this means that when we return home, we'll be autonomous and independent, but also more self-confident for the future.

When we decide to go away to study, we're bound to meet new people during this period, most of whom also come from another country. In many cases, these relationships enable us to communicate better in the same language, but also to avoid feeling lonely (because most people who decide to study abroad are young and have never left on their own). So it's an excellent way of creating bonds, perhaps for life, with people from other countries.

There are a number of options available to make this happen. For example, there's the Erasmus program, which offers you the chance to take part in an exchange with a foreign correspondent with whom you'll be able to forge links and, at the same time, deepen your knowledge of a language other than your own. At the same time, it's an opportunity to learn about what's going on in Europe and the rest of the world (global warming, discrimination, the Olympic Games, etc.). The Erasmus+ program offers the opportunity to go away for a month in the first year of secondary school, and then to take a BAC with a European mobility qualification. This experience opens doors to the future in any field.

But there are also school exchanges through organizations that enable you to spend a year studying in a foreign high school. You can also opt for an au pair program, a one-



or two-week linguistic stay to take language courses, or leave thanks to your studies and your establishment (business school).

So it's safe to say that moving to a foreign country for study purposes can be described as perfect.

Secondly, whether you're an expatriate, a traveler or even a student, going abroad has its drawbacks, which don't make it such a perfect experience.

As far as expatriates are concerned, despite the many advantages, it's important to realize that there are some disadvantages.

Firstly, integration in a new country can pose a few difficulties. Although only a tiny minority of expatriates decide to return home, the experience for anyone who has been there is not always straightforward. Certain periods, especially at the beginning, can be difficult to overcome. You have to bear in mind that integrating into a new work or sports team, or simply finding your feet in a foreign country, can sometimes take a long time. Homesickness is often an inconvenience that everyone experiences at least once, as new cultures and lifestyles are not easy to get used to every day. Very often, the difficulty of expressing oneself further provokes this phenomenon, causing a feeling of incomprehension and isolation.

At the outset, the experience will be one of discovery, with each day being new and like a "vacation". But after a while, we start to miss our family, our friends, our life. This will make itself felt and create a feeling of unease.

Another important subject that proves that expatriation isn't necessarily easy is the complex administrative procedures involved. Indeed, when you decide to move to a foreign country, there are many administrative formalities to be completed, especially if you're moving abroad. To start your new life, you need to take a number of steps: obtain a visa and a work permit, find accommodation, send your children to school, look after your bank accounts, manage your various insurance policies, register with the tax authorities, etc. These steps are initially complicated, but when you're moving to a country other than your own, the distance and language barrier make them even more daunting.

What's more, healthcare systems vary depending on the country you're in, which can pose challenges if you need medical care, especially if access to health services is limited or medical practices are different from those you're used to. For example, in

France, you have social security, which allows you to be reimbursed after the appointment, whereas in Spain the health service is paid for directly and does not need to be reimbursed. In the U.S. Medical expenses are paid by the patient, who does not necessarily benefit from assistance (you have to be able to afford it).

So before you leave, you need to take all possible steps to ensure that you don't encounter too many difficulties during your expatriation.

All of which goes to show that moving to a new country as an expatriate isn't always perfect.

When we decide to go on vacation, we don't really take into account the things that could happen while we're there, and so we don't take enough information or pay too much attention to the dangers there could be.

First of all, price is a factor to consider. When we decide to book a holiday, we want it to be perfect at all costs, the accommodation to be pleasant by our standards, the activities to be moments we'll remember forever, and so on. But to achieve all these things, you need a budget. You have to decide how much you want to spend on this time of pleasure. And for some people, this can be very expensive, which may create financial difficulties or restrictions to enable the project to be carried out. The further away the trip, the more expensive the destination.

Then there are the problems you may encounter when you decide to travel to a country you've never been to before. These could include health problems, for example. Leaving for a foreign country also means leaving for a country with unknown diseases. For example, in Spain there are more mosquitoes because the temperatures are higher than in France. Very often, when we leave our initial country, we have to find out about the vaccinations we need or the illnesses we may have, because in Asian countries, for example, there are many illnesses that don't exist in France and which can be dangerous. After that, you also have to be careful about what you eat and drink, and also about insect bites, which can be very dangerous in some cases. Deciding to go on vacation can also be a stressful time. This can be caused by flight or train delays or even cancellations, baggage problems, health problems, money problems or simply the unexpected. We may also be afraid of not being able to cope with jet lag on the way back, or even of returning to our daily routine. These are all problems that many people face, and they're afraid they won't be able to overcome them.



And the last thing that's very hard to anticipate and that can "spoil" a vacation is tourist overcrowding. Indeed, in many popular destinations, you could be confronted with crowds of tourists, which can make certain attractions less pleasant to visit. So it takes a lot of organization to go on vacation and make sure everything runs smoothly. But while these inconveniences may exist, it's important to note that the benefits and positive memories you bring back from your vacation can often outweigh these negative aspects.

When you decide to study abroad, things don't always turn out exactly as you'd hoped. We often come across people on social networks who are doing or leaving to study abroad, and regularly only come across videos with positive things to say, but very rarely the negative points we may encounter. Life isn't perfect when you take the decision to study somewhere on your own. The negatives are very similar to those of an expatriate on a mental level. At a certain point, family and friends are going to be in short supply, and new habits and lifestyles can be difficult to establish, creating a feeling of loneliness. The language barrier is also very common in this field, as most students leave with the aim of improving their language skills and becoming fluent in it. But initial shyness can be a handicap for some people, because in addition to not necessarily knowing anyone in the country where they're going, the language barrier can set a person aside and make them feel bad.

What's more, if you're going away to study, you'll often be asked to do some work to keep track of your studies. These assignments are often quite long and complicated, and must correspond to specific and precise expectations. For example, as part of the Erasmus+ program, and in order to obtain an honors degree on the BAC, students are required to submit a portfolio of work (mobility report, dissertation, video and oral exam). On top of this, you need to be able to organize yourself so that you can keep up with the classes at your original school, and keep up with your classmates. This can be difficult for some people and can lead to a drop in motivation.

But finally, one thing we don't necessarily think about is reverse culture shock on the way back. Reverse culture shock on return is perhaps the most surprising drawback. During a semester abroad, some students experience culture shock. On the contrary, you may find that your experience goes perfectly and you don't want to return home. For example, when you return from an Erasmus program, you come back changed by

your experience abroad. So it can take a little time to get used to your old way of life again.

So leaving to study also has a few drawbacks to take into account, which can sometimes mean that the experience isn't perfect, but in spite of this, it makes for a rare and unforgettable experience.

In the end, perfection doesn't really exist, but we can try to get closer. This perfection that everyone tries to achieve every day by any means possible may not be entirely possible, but it is impossible to obtain a semblance of perfection in our adventures.

We can start by trying to give the best of ourselves. While this ideal may not be possible, we can strive every day to be the best we can be. This implies that we must constantly improve in what we do, in order perhaps to find some semblance of perfection.

The first step is not to be alone, but to surround yourself with people who can help you if you need it. For expatriates, you can try to socialize and not stay home alone. The same goes for students: getting out and about, partying and meeting new people is essential to a person's self-fulfillment abroad.

We also have to give our best to what we do. Like work, for example, it's a good time to see how important our ability to succeed is, and in this way to believe in ourselves. If we're traveling, we can try out an activity we've never done before and which gives us pleasure, so as to gain the satisfaction of personal accomplishment. By striving at every moment to improve in something, by trying to excel in an area without being perfect (work, language etc...), self-esteem is boosted and confidence is gained at the same time. By focusing on this constant progress rather than on a goal of absolute perfection, individuals can find deep and lasting satisfaction in their journey abroad.

Then you have to accept that nothing in life is perfect. Indeed, life is full of imperfect moments, things happen that weren't initially planned, creating challenges, sometimes opening our minds to a situation (positive or negative) etc... But all these facts, we'll point out that life is random and that we need to make the most of it and not look to the past.

When we hesitate to order plane tickets for a vacation because we're afraid something won't go as planned. Or when we're afraid of leaving home to live in an unfamiliar



country on our own, whether for study or work. All these apprehensions we have about a situation, because we want it to be as perfect as possible, can at times demotivate people from exercising, from fulfilling a wish they had.

And you can't stop there, you have to question the situation and say to yourself: if some people can do it, why can't I?

We have to accept that nothing is perfect, but we promise ourselves that we'll do everything we can to get closer to it. By acknowledging and appreciating the moments of happiness, success and connection during the experience abroad, individuals can cultivate a positive mindset that helps them embrace the less perfect aspects of their trip. What's more, practicing acceptance of self and external circumstances can help reduce stress and anxiety, enabling them to live each moment more fully.

And finally, it's all about achieving personal balance. Each person has a different view of the situation, each individual has different concerns. This means that, from one person to another, perfection and imperfection can be seen in totally random ways. For example, a person moving to a foreign country to study may be uncertain about the workload, while another may be more uncertain about his or her ability to integrate. For expatriates, some people will be more concerned about their language skills, while others will be more concerned about how they will manage the distance from their loved ones. And for travelers, some people will be afraid of illness and others of possible transport cancellations, for example.

All of which goes to show that everyone is free to think differently, and therefore also to set their own goals for a successful experience.

Don't dwell on what others think. It's crucial for individuals to define their own criteria for success and personal satisfaction. This involves recognizing and respecting one's own limits, taking care of one's mental and emotional well-being, and finding a balance between the different spheres of one's life, be it work, social relationships, or personal time. By finding this balance and actively pursuing personal satisfaction, individuals can create an experience abroad that comes as close as possible to their own conception of perfection.

In conclusion, we can confirm what Salvador Dali said : *"Don't be afraid of achieving perfection, you'll never get there"*, because perfection isn't possible, and although there are many advantages to going abroad, there are also disadvantages.

So it's clear what Dali was trying to get across with this message.

Nevertheless, it may not be entirely achievable, but we can get as close to it as we can.

And that's something you can only do yourself.

*“Celui qui reconnaît consciemment ses limites est le plus proche de la perfection.”* De Alfred de Musset dans La Confession d'un enfant du siècle.