



A New Lifestyle / Q&A with Dave Stalls

My father's story is simply inspiring. I mean, look at that face? **I had to share it with you** ~
Jonathon Stalls, Walk2Connect Owner / Lead Itinerant

Walk2Connect: When did you notice walking was good for you? (physically, mentally, emotionally)

Dave: Over the years more and more sports have become undoable due to pain, especially in the knees and back. I can no longer rollerblade, ride a bike, run/jog, play basketball, play racquetball, etc.). Walking is about all I have left. When I regularly walk, it seems to decrease the pain in my back and makes it stronger.

For the last few years my work life has been especially stressful due to my role as the senior leader of a large local nonprofit and the pressures of the recession. Walking for increasingly longer distances and walking more frequently has become the best way for me to think and release the worry. I often found that as my mind drifted from topic to topic it relaxed and allowed the entry of unique solutions. I learned to walk with a small notebook and pen in my pocket so that I can jot down a note and not have to try to remember that surprisingly good thought.

Walk2Connect: How have things evolved (and why) in regards to your past walking activity to now?

Dave: The Walk2Connect excursions got me walking longer and longer distances (and hours). I would have never thought that I could walk 13 miles and enjoy it. I also found myself losing weight, which has been really tough as I've gotten older. As the weight has dropped so has my really bad heart burn (I was eating Tums all day...no more).

I am a former professional athlete, but the challenge of walking an average of 15-20 miles a day for more than 30 days in a row was something I wasn't sure I could do or wanted to do. I am so proud to have completed the entire Camino de Santiago de Compostella with full pack walking 490 miles across northern Spain ...an amazing trip and an amazing experience with dozens of new friends from around world, and my son. What's been especially wonderful is returning to the U.S. and making a conscious decision to keep my Camino alive. I now walk almost every day from my home in Park Hill to my meetings in either downtown Denver (1 ¼ hour walk) or in

Original Aurora (1 ¼ hour walk). On weekends I often walk 3-5 hours each day, all within Denver doing the same things that I used to do driving (e.g. Tattered Cover on Colfax or LoDo, coffee shops, Landmark Theaters, etc.). Much less gas, less driving stress (I'm extremely impatient behind the wheel), less carbon footprint, and much more connected with my neighborhood, Park Hill, and all of my surrounding neighborhoods.

Walk2Connect: What would you say to inspire or encourage folks who are curious about walking more in their daily life? (ie practically to save money, for health reasons, for clarity)

Dave: The people in my life, professional and personal, have begun adapting to my walking way of life. My work/life balance is much healthier. I don't need to fix flat tires or change worn down rollerblade wheels. I carry everything I need for the day in my backpack (e.g. clothing layers for Colorado weather, book, newspaper, hat, gloves, computer, and money for the bus in case I run out of time, etc.). My walking poles get some stares and comments about whether I'm walking in the right direction to get to the mountains. Walking as a part of my everyday life has changed my life for the better. My life might even be longer, too. I'm OK with that. ~ Buen Camino!

- You can follow Dave Stalls's work by visiting [this link](#) as he builds a new non-profit organization called Street Fraternity. Their mission is to attract and engage violent young men with a place of camaraderie and programs for personal growth. *Go Dave!*