

KELSEY
TIMMERMAN

AUTHOR OF
WHERE AM I WEARING?

WHERE AM I EATING?

WITH
Discussion Questions
AND A
Guide to Going "Glocal"



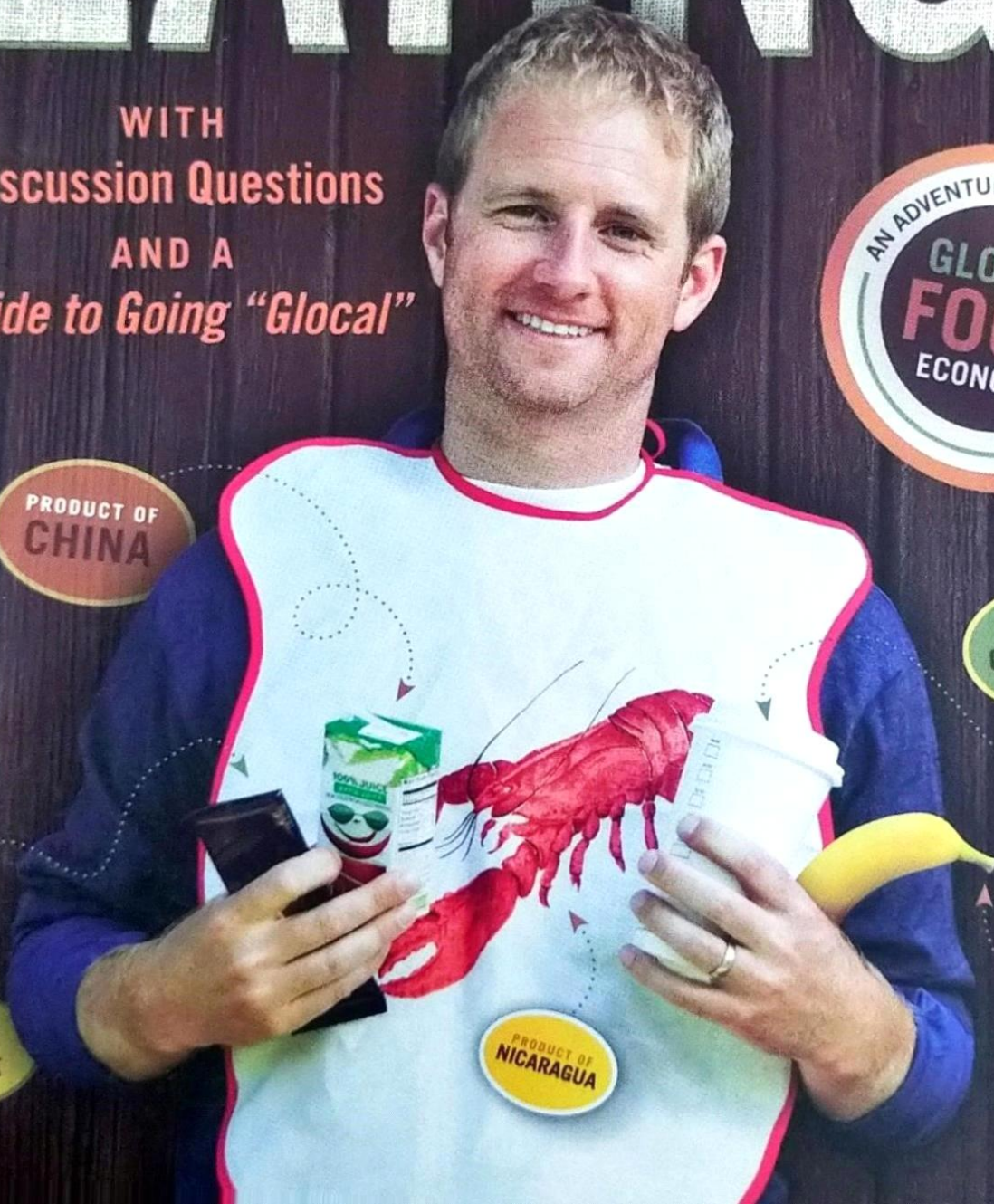
PRODUCT OF
CHINA

PRODUCT OF
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PRODUCT OF
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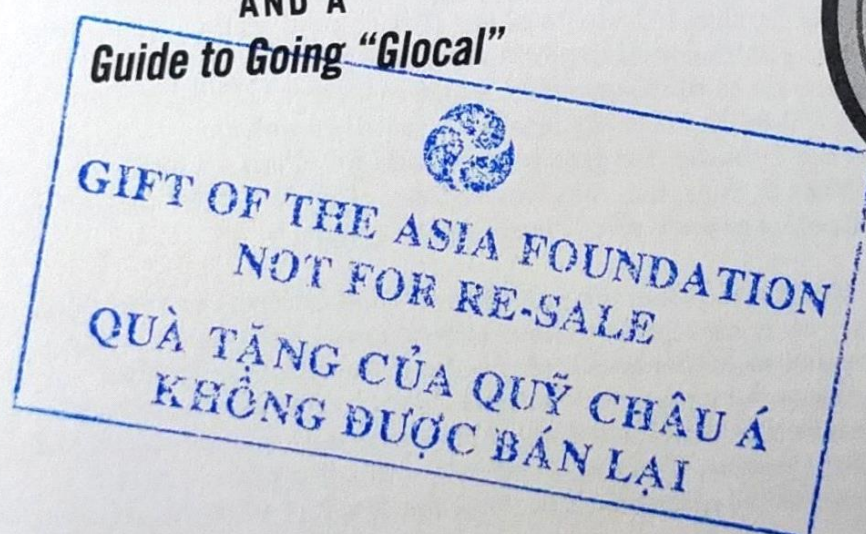
PRODUCT OF
IVORY
COAST

PRODUCT OF
NICARAGUA



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WITH
Discussion Questions
AND A
Guide to Going "Glocal"



KELSEY TIMMERMAN



WILEY

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Introduction: Our Global Connection

Every person, even a slave, has a name. His was Solo. And since meeting Solo, a day hasn't gone by that I haven't thought about him and what happened when I freed him, and how, if I could travel back in time to the cocoa field where it all went down, I would do everything differently.

I freed a slave. That sounds crazy, doesn't it? First, that slavery exists at all; second, that I was able to allow him the opportunity to act of his own free will; and third, that I could do so although I'm just some guy from Indiana who has a wife, two kids, a mortgage, and a cat named Oreo.

But to think that it's a novelty that my life intersected with slavery is to not have a handle on the world in which we live. You have a connection with slaves as well. We all do. If you eat, if you wear clothes, if you use something with a computer chip, you are connected with someone like Solo. And you are connected with mothers and fathers around the world trying to make ends meet the best way they can.

Once you see how connected we all are, you will never see the world, and your place in it, the same again.

* * *

Hershey, Pennsylvania

"Hello. I would like to take a bath in a big ol' tub of chocolate," I said to the fella who answered the phone at The Hotel Hershey.

My request was met with silence on the other end of the phone.

"Huh," I thought, "I guess I have to elaborate."

"Uh, I saw on your website that you offer whipped cocoa baths," I explained, toning down my request a bit. I figured the person answering the phones at the Chocolate Spa at The Hotel Hershey in Hershey, Pennsylvania, the center of the chocolate universe, would be used to such requests. Guess not, though.

"Sir," he said, "the cocoa baths are only for women."

"Why is that?"

"Sir, we have codes."

For a moment I thought about taking a stand for all that is right. I wanted to shout, "Sexist pig!" I considered becoming the Gloria Steinem of whipped cocoa baths.

"Could I interest you in a cocoa massage or perhaps . . ."; he rattled off a long list of treatments. There was the 50-minute Gentlemen's Whiskey Body Scrub "for men who don't want rough skin" that "reverses signs of aging." There was the stone pedicure, which is "a pedicure and hot stone massage for the feet all in one!" A gentleman can get a manicure or a facial, but ask for a cocoa bath, and you are one step above a prank caller.

"No, thanks. I don't like people touching me," I said, wanting to ask more questions about these "codes" but deciding against it.

I had spent the day speaking at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Cedar Crest selected my first book, *Where Am I Wearing?*, as a freshman common reader for all incoming first-year students to read over the summer. I always get so much out of these common read visits. It's a chance for me to chat with students and professors from many different backgrounds and fields of study.¹

Campus visits allow me the chance to talk with a lot of really smart people. Meeting them has shaped much of my work. When discussing my travels through the West African cocoa industry with the director of the Cedar Crest program, it was suggested that I visit Hershey's Chocolate World.

Visiting a chocolate amusement park? For research? After what I had experienced in West Africa, after the close call I had, I was up for a little easy chocolate-filled research.

¹If you are reading this book as part of a common read or otherwise and have any thoughts or questions as you follow my global food adventure, feel free to reach out to me via e-mail: kelsey@kelseytimmerman.com; Twitter: @kelseytimmerman; or Facebook: facebook.com/kelseytimmerman.

I called my wife, the most patient wife in the world, and told her that I had some super-important work to do at Chocolate World, and that I would be home two days later than expected. I prepared myself to have the *cheesiest* chocolate experience possible.

I had originally planned on getting a spa package during my stay at The Hotel Hershey; but then I discovered that the Hershey Sweet Retreat overnight package cost \$818. \$818?! That's about the deposit I would need on an apartment if Annie, my wife, heard that I spent \$818 on a spa package for myself while she was at home rearing our two children alone.

So to preserve my marriage I stayed at a cheap hotel and tried to book a 15-minute, \$50 whipped cocoa bath at the spa. I figured immersing myself in a tub of chocolate would be a nice addition to my experience of chocolate excess. After being thwarted by the Chocolate Spa code, I decided to tour the hotel and see what other chocolatey experiences I could have.

The Hotel Hershey overlooked Hershey, Pennsylvania, the town that Hershey's chocolate built, complete with Hershey Kiss street lamps. The palatial hotel was something that belonged in the French countryside, not in rural Pennsylvania. I walked up one arm of a sweeping staircase that reached out to the town. Once inside, I lost myself in the plush carpeted corridors before finding my way to the garden out back. There were pools, fountains, flowers, an ice-skating rink, and a restaurant.

The Harvest restaurant prides itself on featuring food from "field to fork." At this restaurant, origin matters. A few days (or possibly weeks) ago, there was a pig walking around on some local farm. One day he was slaughtered. A chef mixed up some chocolate barbecue sauce and smothered the pig's ribs, someone put them on a plate, and a waitress brought them out to me.

Although the pig was local, the cocoa that went into the barbecue sauce sure wasn't—nor was the cocoa in my Hershey's Classic Chocolate Cream Pie with chocolate crumb crust, smothered in chocolate sauce. (My ordering strategy was to order the entrée and the dessert in which the word *chocolate* was used the most. I passed on the chocolate martini, though.)

Much of the world's—and most of Hershey's—cocoa comes from West Africa. I'm fresh off a trip to Ivory Coast and Ghana, the main suppliers of Hershey's cocoa. After witnessing the harsh realities of the lives of West African cocoa farmers firsthand, I would be lying to say that I didn't come here to compare those realities with the surrealism

of Hershey, Pennsylvania, and Hershey's Chocolate World—a place where a two-hour chocolate-filled spa package costs more than most West African cocoa farmers earn in a single year.

The thing is, I *loved* Chocolate World. I took the Chocolate Tasting Adventure class, in which Dr. Livingston McNib shared his knowledge of chocolate via live satellite feed from the fictional chocolate-producing country of Ariba. My fellow classmates and I learned about chocolate's Incan origins (they called it “the fruit of the gods”), about the chocolate trees' biology, and, most important, how to eat chocolate: look, listen, smell, and taste. It's a fine art that doesn't involve chewing. And let me tell you something: if you've ever claimed to not like dark chocolate, you've been eating it wrong. Stop chewing it, let each bite melt on your tongue, and the flavors will slowly reveal themselves—sweet, bitter, fruity, nutty. Trust me on this, as at the end of the class I received an official master's degree in chocolate tasting from Hershey's University. I looked at my degree, looked at the eight-year-old to the left of me and the 10-year-old to the right of me, and, boy, we were all smiles.

I enrolled in the Chocolate Lab, where we discussed the origin of cocoa in more detail. We tasted chocolate and tried to guess whether it came from Jamaica, West Africa, New Guinea, or Mexico.

“Imagine every pod as a Hershey bar,” Gail, decked out in a white lab coat, said as she held up a cocoa pod that supplies enough cocoa for one bar of Hershey's milk chocolate. “One family can harvest only two times per year. They've always done harvesting by hand. Companies the size of Hershey send representatives to the farms to make sure that the farming is done correctly.”

Gail showed us pictures of farmers. They were nameless and storyless and happy and proud. However, I have to give Hershey credit for not pretending, in this class, that its most important ingredient doesn't just magically appear in its chocolate wonderland or come from the fictional country of Ariba.

And then Gail directed us in making our own chocolate bars. We added cocoa nibs and even hot pepper to our bars. I looked at the nine-year-old to my right and the 11-year-old to my left, and we were having the time of our lives.

And that's when I started to notice the looks I was getting from parents.

I was a lone 30-something man bouncing around Chocolate World with an irrepressible, sugar-high grin.