

# PUBLICATION

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## Finding Joy in Business Travel

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In my job, I'm a road warrior – visiting our Firm's 22 offices regularly, as well as traveling for client development, professional seminars, Firm meetings, and speaking engagements. I travel somewhere most weeks, and a lot of that travel is by air. I don't know that many equate business travel with joy, but when one travels often, failing to find the joy in travel can lead to a pretty melancholy existence. Thus, I have worked hard to find joy in travel and am often asked how I keep such a positive perspective on it. While none of these are groundbreaking, below you'll find ten tips that may help keep a smile on your face when you travel on business.

- 1. Plan, parse, pack**

This one seems so easy, but I know a lot of people that give short shrift to the importance of these necessary tasks. Throw some stuff in a bag and go for it, right? Not if joy is what you're after. Plan your clothes and shoes for what you will be doing; make sure they are travel friendly; and make sure they make you feel confident. Take out those extras that just make your bag heavier, but remember that sweater if you are prone to get cold, that workout gear if you like to be active, and any easy special touch that will remind you of home. Don't hesitate to splurge a bit on a suitcase or bag that works for your situation.

- 2. Use those apps**

Sign up for the points or frequent customer programs of the companies you use for travel – and then get their apps. The apps are typically easy to use and relieve you of the burden of carrying extra paper or files. And, for some reason, they make you feel armed and confident.

- 3. Work that security line like you've been there**

Whether you are TSA Pre-Check or do the standard line, arrive prepared. There's nothing that zaps your joy worse than having your bag rummaged through or receiving an all-too-friendly pat down at 5:45 a.m. I keep a Ziploc bag packed with all of my small liquids (and I have travel-size everything) and keep it in the front pocket of my suitcase. I never have to wonder where it is or what's in it. Wear easy to remove shoes. Same with belts and jewelry. Say a friendly word to those around you who look like they are intimidated by the process or haven't flown in a while. Helping ease their concerns and brighten their day will do the same for you. And finally, remember that we all make mistakes, and you have to laugh when it happens to you. After all my traveling, I still forget and leave my antibacterial gel in my purse on occasion or wear a dress with metallic thread from head to toe. Yes, I did that. And yes, the agents were VERY thorough.

- 4. Bring something to do – and have a backup plan**

Unless you want to just nap or meditate, bring along something to occupy your time – not only on the plane, but in the airport. Take more than you think you can do because delays are inevitable. If you have something to catch up on, you can emerge from a delay feeling accomplished instead of just mad. And the "something" doesn't always have to be work. I often use the time to write handwritten notes, make lists of home tasks to be accomplished, study college choices for my daughter, write an

article (this one, in fact!), and sync family calendars. Whatever will relieve a burden, just do it.

**5. Stay in touch**

I'm so grateful to be traveling in an age where we have not only excellent cell phone service, but FaceTime, texting, and even in-air messaging now! No matter how busy you are, you can make keeping in contact with your family a priority. Don't be shy about telling your coworkers that you need time to make a call home. I often excuse myself from business dinners to make a quick call to tell my daughter goodnight, and I wouldn't have it any other way. That time refreshes me, supports her, and brings me joy. One final note here: your parents or grandparents may not know how to use these tools, so teach them. It's so worth the time.

**6. Find a getaway/treat yourself to an excursion**

If you are traveling for multiple days, you are likely to find a bit of free time. Find a local attraction you can visit, get a massage or blowout, or call up a friend who lives in that town. Yes, it takes a little planning, but each of those can feed your soul in a way that sitting in a hotel room alone cannot.

**7. Comfort = Joy**

Don't underestimate the importance of comfort. When I think comfort, I think a roomy, light shoulder bag, low heel shoes, a warm blanket, good headphones, and my travel-size heat mat for my bad back. Sometimes I even pack a comfort outfit for those days when I'll be traveling later at night. Your comfort items may be different, but we all have them.

**8. Know your airports and where to find peace and quiet**

Many of us travel routinely to certain locations. Learn those airports and your favorite places to spend time in them. That may rarely be the gate area. Instead, you may love a certain restaurant or bar, the airline club, or even an unused gate area. Many airports now even have places where you can rent a room for a nap or to work or talk on the phone in private. I haven't tried one of those yet, but I plan to!

**9. Make a new friend**

While I'm not much for chatting with my seat mates randomly (mostly because I don't know if they want to talk to me), I do find the occasional talk refreshing and enlightening. As Maya Angelou wrote in *Letter to My Daughter*, "A friend may be waiting behind a stranger's face." I have met and talked to some incredibly interesting people while traveling – missionaries, authors, students, world traveling retirees, and even potential clients. Human connection is just a basic need, and going through long hours of travel alone isn't for everyone.

**10. Have gratitude for the "why"**

Remember that you are traveling because you have a good job that brings opportunity and challenge. Your family, too, is blessed by the benefits that come along with your hectic schedule, and you may be raising kids that see your accomplishment while feeling your love for them. Not everyone can say the same. While the rush and stress of travel may leave you feeling tired and harried, the "why" is something to be thankful for. As I look out the window at the clouds and horizon, I am amazed at my place in this huge world and appreciative of my opportunity to see so much of it. Nothing brings joy like genuine gratitude.

So, buy those tickets, book that hotel, and set out on your way. Joy is just around the corner.