

good manners

Flying the Friendly Skies

Christine Chen, contributing editor
www.gpprotocol.com

Summer vacations.

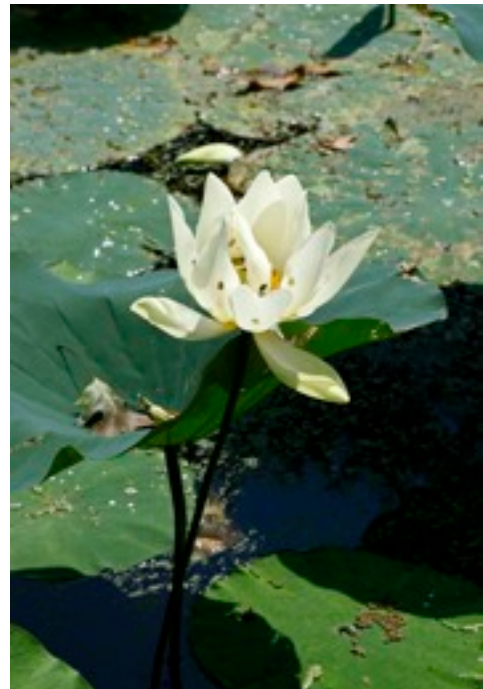
Time to relax. Slow down. Forget about the stresses of work. Oh, but wait. You are flying. And, we all know, flying ain't what it used to be. We are dealing with long lines, cramped seating, no peanuts, carry-on restrictions, and rude cell phone users.

Pretty soon, that much anticipated vacation with the family turns into a blood pressure rising, eye popping, teeth clenching experience before the wheels even leave the runway.

Now, we all know there are many elements of flying that are out of our control. But, there are a few things we can do to reduce the stress on ourselves, our family and friends, and yes, even our fellow travelers.

Jetiquette, a fancy word for “be nice when flying,” will help make this year’s vacation (and even business travel) a bit nicer for all. Here are a few tips and guidelines to remember. Some are quite obvious, which makes one ponder why they have to be mentioned at all. But, trust me, they do. Others are rules and courtesies that make air travel more bearable for all.

- Arrive on time. Now, this does not mean 15 minutes before your flight is scheduled to leave. This means at least two hours before your flight is scheduled to leave. Some international flights may even



require more time. The point here is that you never know how long the check-in lines will be or how long you will be waiting in the security line. If you leave yourself plenty of time, you won't be the frantic person pushing the person in front of you along with your suitcase. If you arrive in plenty of time, you will be the person casually walking to your gate with a cup of coffee and a magazine tucked under your arm.

- Escalators and moving sidewalks. Here's the rule. Stand on the right. Walk (or run if you didn't prepare to arrive on time) on the left. This is a pretty simple rule but yet it's overlooked quite frequently. It's very annoying to come upon a person who is sprawled across the whole width of the escalator or sidewalk when your flight is leaving in seven minutes.
- Be prepared. Have your driver's license, passport, and airline ticket ready when approaching the ticket counter. No one wants to wait while you dig through your pockets, purse, or brief case for these items. Keep them out and ready for the security line too.
- Check-on luggage. Remember, there are weight limits on luggage. Check with your airline on those limits and how many bags you may check on. Most airlines have a 50 pound limit. Weigh your luggage before leaving home or you may start off your vacation with less spending money than anticipated. There are hefty fees for bags over 50 pounds.
- Carry-on luggage. Follow the 3-1-1 rule. The rule states you may carry on 3.4 ounce bottles of liquid or gel in a 1 quart-sized, clear plastic zip lock bag in 1 carry-on bag. The zip lock bag must be taken out of your carry-on and placed in a bin when going through security. Save yourself the embarrassment of getting pulled to the side for a pat down if you don't follow this rule. Have your zip lock bag on the top of your carry-on and ready to pull out when approaching the TSA area. One other thing, make sure your carry-on meets the carry-on requirements. Most airlines only allow two carry-on's of a certain size. Check to make sure your's meet the requirements before your board.
- At the gate. Please, don't hog two seats. Many travelers will find a seat at the gate and then place luggage on the seat next to them. The

gate area fills up quickly. Don't be the one using two or more seats while there are ten others looking for a seat. In fact, if you see parents with children or an elderly person without a seat, offer yours.

- Boarding. Wait for your zone to be called before getting in line. Too many people hover and even get in the line before their zone is called. Boarding areas can be cramped. Slow down and wait your turn. Have your ticket out and ready to give to the boarding agent.
- Carry-on storage. Make use of the space under the seat in front of you. Too many times, only the over-head bins are used. They fill up quickly, leaving no room for other passengers' bags. Be sure to place the items you will need during the flight under the seat so you won't be the one continually crawling over everyone to get things from the over-head bin.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices. Turn off all electronic devices when told to do so. Pretty simple, but yet so many times the flight attendants must remind grown men and women to turn them off. While waiting for departure and after landing, when you may turn cell's back on, please, if you must make a call, keep it brief and speak quietly.
- Reclining your seat. If you must, and I mean must, recline your seat, only recline a few inches. Yes, you do have the option to recline fully, but it's terribly inconsiderate of the person behind you. Always check before reclining, as the person behind you may have food, drink, or a laptop on the tray table.
- Middle seat armrests. Here's the rule. The middle seat gets both armrests. Seriously, no one wants the middle seat. Shouldn't that unlucky person at least get both armrests?
- Parents and children. Parents have an obligation to make sure their children are not bothering others. This means children should not kick or pull on the seat in front of them or run up and down the aisle. Parents should make sure children have something to drink or eat during take-off and landing to avoid ear pain. And, those not traveling with children should be patient and considerate. Parents are probably

already pretty stressed and certainly don't need sighs, eye rolls, or rude comments from others.

- Deplaning. Be patient. Standing up and pushing others to get to your overhead luggage will not get you off the plane any faster. Allow those in front of you to deplane first. Help others who are struggling to retrieve their over-head luggage.

And, one other thing, remember to use those little magic words you learned in kindergarten. You may be surprised to find that a simple please, thank you, or excuse me changes a situation. Happy travels!

© 2013 by Christine Chen