

# Mind Over Travel

Managing Air Travel Stress

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# Overview

Part I: Introduction to Air Travel Stress

Part II: Mind Over Travel: Five Principles of Emotionally Intelligent Air Travelers



OH NO!  
MY MEETING RAN  
LATE, MY FLIGHT'S BEEN  
CANCELED, MY LUGGAGE IS  
IN ANCHORAGE--AND THIS  
TERMINAL DOESN'T HAVE  
A CLUB LOUNGE!

GASP!

# What is Air Travel Stress?

Propensity to have anxious, angry, and distrustful reactions to air travel experiences

(Bricker, 2005, Journal of Counseling Psychology)

# Air Travel Stress Scale

Factor	Definition	Sample Item
Air Travel Anxiety	Anxious reactions to adverse air travel events	"My body feels tense if my flight is delayed"
Air Travel Anger	Angry reactions to other passengers	"I feel like screaming at passengers who bring aboard a lot of carry-on baggage."
Airline/Airport Distrust	Lack of trust that airline/airport will ensure comfort and security	"Current airport security measures deter hijackings or bombings" (Reverse Scored)

<b>Components</b>	<b>Air Travel Stress</b>	<b>Fear of Flying</b>
<i>Triggers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Adverse events (e.g., delays)</li> <li>-Other passengers' behavior</li> <li>-Airline/airport personnel behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All stages of flying (from deciding to fly to landing)</li> <li>-Sights, sounds, &amp; sensations of flying (e.g., engine noises, planes taking off)</li> </ul>
<i>Thoughts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Fears of adverse air travel events (e.g., missing flight)</li> <li>-Annoyance with other passengers</li> <li>-Distrust of airlines/airports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Hypervigilance</li> <li>-Fears of: crashing, dying, panicking, heights, confinement</li> </ul>
<i>Physical Sensations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Heart rate increase</li> <li>-Trembling hands/legs</li> <li>-Clenched jaw</li> <li>-Muscle tension</li> <li>-Hot or cold</li> </ul>	<p>The same plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Faint</li> <li>-Numb</li> <li>-Short of breath</li> </ul>

## Prevalence of at Least Moderate Level (US national sample of 3309 people age 12-78)

<i>Air Travel Anxiety</i>	<b>16%</b>
<i>Air Travel Anger</i>	<b>30%</b>
<i>Airline/Airport Distrust</i>	<b>32%</b>
<i>Fear of Flying: flight situations</i>	<b>9%</b>
<i>Fear of Flying: anxiety symptoms</i>	<b>11%</b>

# Odds of future flights

*Baseline*

*7 weeks later*



- 1) Air Travel Stress
- 2) Fear of Flying

Fly in the past  
30 days?

- National Sample of 2382 People
- 72% Retention Rate
- Surveyed on Data Collection Website



## Percent Reduction in Odds of Future Flights

<i>Fear of Flying: flight situations</i>	<b>49%*</b>
<i>Fear of Flying: anxiety symptoms</i>	<b>18%*</b>

\*p<.05

## Percent Reduction in Odds of Future Flights (Controlling for fear of flying)

<i>Air Travel Anxiety</i>	33%**
<i>Air Travel Anger</i>	21%*
<i>Airline/Airport Distrust</i>	18%*

\*p<.05; \*\*p<.0001

**Percent Reduction in Odds of Future Flights &  
Prevalence of at Least Moderate Level**

	<b>Odds</b>	<b>Prevalence</b>
<b><i>Air Travel Anxiety</i></b>	<b>33%**</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b><i>Air Travel Anger</i></b>	<b>21%*</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b><i>Airline/Airport Distrust</i></b>	<b>18%*</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b><i>Fear of Flying: flight situations</i></b>	<b>49%*</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b><i>Fear of Flying: anxiety symptoms</i></b>	<b>18%*</b>	<b>11%</b>

**\*p<.05; \*\*p<.0001**

# Summary on Air Travel Stress

- Multidimensional: anxiety, anger, and distrust
- Distinct from fear of flying
- Pervasive: Up to 1/3 in have it
- Important: Up to 1/3 are less willing to fly in the future

# Needed Now

An air travel stress program that will:

- 1) Decrease this common problem
- 2) Increase peoples' willingness to fly

# Ideal features of such a program

- Science-based:
  - (1) Latest knowledge about air travel stress
  - (2) Cutting edge stress management program
- Accessible: Anyone can understand it
- Flexible: Can be given in various lengths and formats
- Wide Reach: Can be given on a broad scale

# **Mind Over Travel:**

## **Five Principles of Emotionally Intelligent Air Travelers**

(Based on: Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999, Guilford Press;

Bond & Bunce, 2000, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology)

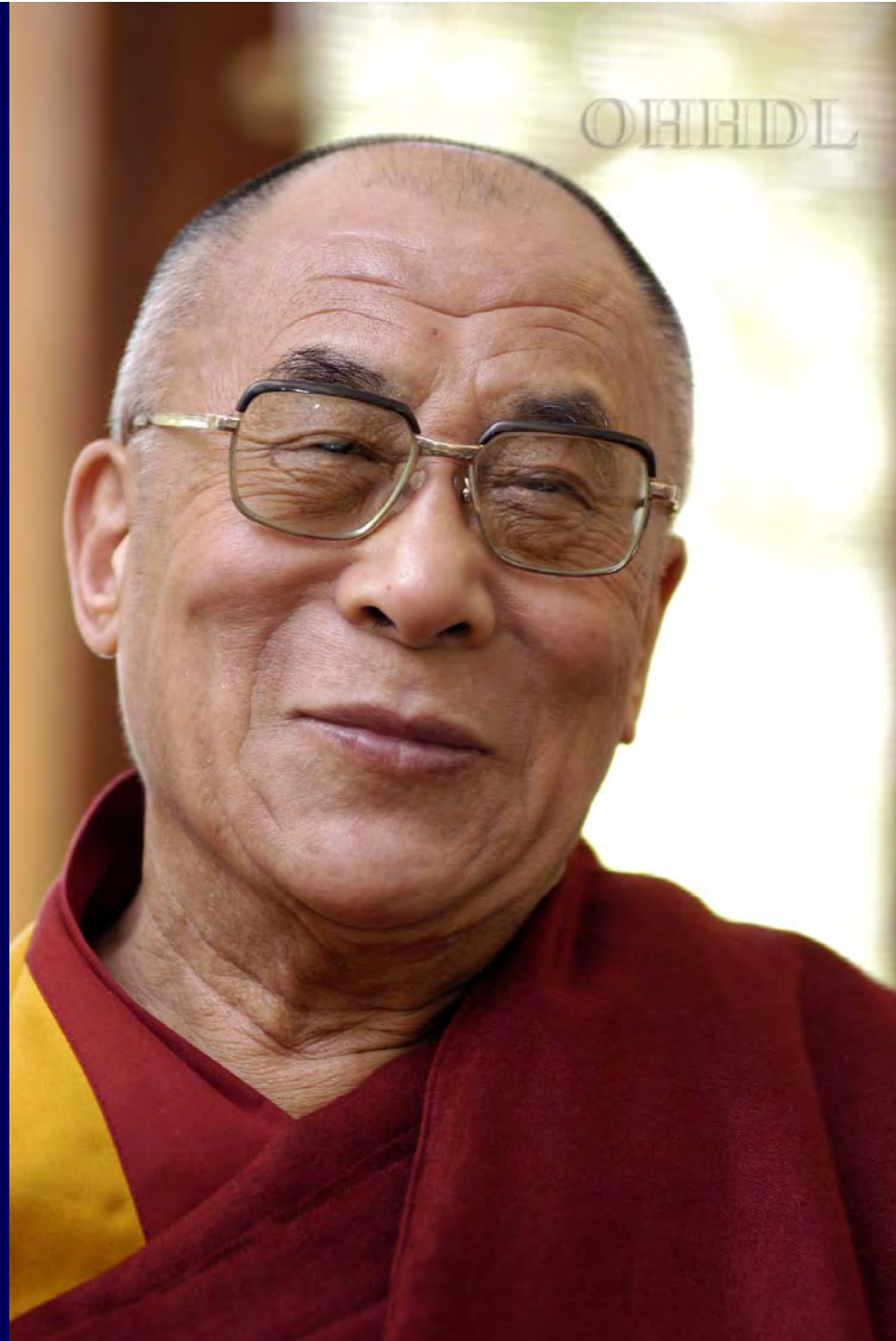
**Principle #1: Know your reactions**







ORHIDL



# Principle #1: Know your reactions

- Take the Air Travel Stress Scale:
  - Look at highest scoring items
  - Look at highest scoring sub-scales
  - Focus on your key reactions
- Or, where at the airport and on the plane have you felt anxious, angry, and distrustful?

**Principle #2: Remember why you fly**











# Principle #2: Remember why you fly

- Put your stress in perspective
- The purpose of your trip is what makes your stress worth having
- Write down why you are flying in 1-2 sentences
- Keep a photo of what this trip is about for you

**Principle #3: Be willing to have your  
reactions**



Our efforts to *avoid* our thoughts  
and feelings only give us *more* of  
these thoughts and feelings

(Belloch, Morillo, & Giménez, 2004, Behavior Research & Therapy)

# Principle #3: Be willing to have your reactions

- Practice holding your breath for as long as possible
- Make room for whatever stress you feel
- Allow your stress to come along for the ride

# Your “Stress Carry-on Bag”



**Principle #4: Stay in the present**









# Principle #4: Stay in the present

## For practice...

- When stressed, sit down for 5 minutes
- Notice the places and people around you
- Close your eyes and:
  - 1) Listen to the sounds around you
  - 2) Focus on the sensation of breathing in and out

**Principle #5: Act assertively**



# Summary of Mind Over Travel

- 1) Know your reactions
- 2) Remember why you fly
- 3) Act assertively
- 4) Be willing to have your reactions
- 5) Stay in the present

**“K.R.A.B.S.”**

# Where to Present Mind Over Travel

- In-flight personal video (20 minutes)
- Airport video at gate areas (1 minute)
- Corporate training for employees who fly (25-100 minutes)
- Fear of flying treatment program (25-150 minutes)



# Wish Stressed Air Travelers a Mindful Flight!





# **As part of Fear of Flying Treatment**

- 1) Audience: Fearful flyers**
- 2) Natural complement to fear of flying treatment programs**
- 3) Cover each principle for 5 to 30 minutes (25 to 150 minutes total)**

# **As part of Corporate Training for Employees who Fly**

- 1) Audience: Beginners; seasoned travelers with stress**
- 2) Offered to employees as online course or lunch-time seminar**
- 3) Cover each principle for 5 to 20 minutes (25 to 100 minutes total)**

# In-flight personal video

- 1) Audience: passenger on a flight
- 2) Offered as a personally-selected program to watch
- 3) Cover all principles, except “willingness to have reactions”
- 4) Cover each principle for 5 minutes (20 minutes total)

# Airport hold room video

- 1) Audience: Casual airport viewer
- 2) Focus mainly on “remember why you fly”
- 3) One minute video