

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

By: Doug Lipp

From: *Stuck In the Middle Seat*®

### Traveling Sucks!

"Oh, that's nothing, wait'll you hear my story,  
you'll never believe what happened to me...!"

How many times has this happened to you? You're in the middle of telling family, friends or business colleagues about yet "another wonderful travel experience" when someone interrupts to share their own horror story.

Fact: We have all been there and experienced the nightmare of travel.

Fact: Your horror story is better than everyone else's.

Fact: No one really cares what you've been through.

Fact: More is on the way.

That's why you're reading this book. It won't talk back, or try to outdo you. But it will suffer with you in silence and will always be by your side ... as long as you don't leave it on the airplane, in the taxi or your hotel room.

Let's face it. Traveling can be a major pain.

My hope is that this book will provide you a bit of comfort during your travels. Perhaps it will help you take your mind off of what just happened to you ...or what's surely going to happen.

Traveling, whether for business or pleasure, is demanding and isn't going to get any easier. The sooner you realize you have no control, the better. Planes will continue to be delayed and flights cancelled, you will lose your cell phone or favorite stuffed toy and, sooner or later, your hotel room you will be right next door to the ice maker, elevator or, worse yet, the "honeymoon suite." Top this off with a relaxing taxi ride in a big city plus the joys of jet-lag when traveling abroad, and the package is complete.

Don't despair, you do have control over something ... how you react to all of these wonderful experiences. If nothing else, remember that you have complete control over your own emotions and attitude. "I know, I know, tell me something new," you say. Well there isn't anything new on the mental health front. We can complain about what we don't have, fret over what we lost, or we can shrug it off and smile. So what if you didn't get your favorite seat, room, or meal! You can either let it get you down or let it go. Sit back, relax and take a few minutes to escape in the pages of this book. Have a good laugh, a good cry, or just rejoice knowing you aren't the only one who has had so many great opportunities that test your patience.

One more thought ..., why don't you go ahead and leave this book on the airplane, in your hotel room, the taxi or bus. It wasn't expensive, and maybe someone else will get a laugh or two.

## Our Characters

Let's meet our two main characters, Bob and Lucy. They have been "on the road" one too many trips and never seem to catch a break. If you think you're having a rough time right now, just take a trip with them and realize, *things could be a lot worse...*



### Flying

If you're old enough to remember the days when we had to "dress up" to go on the airplane, then virtually every aspect of air travel these days is, without a doubt, maximally challenging. Even for most of the younger travelers, who know nothing other than air travel has the same glamor factor as taking a trip on a bus- except that it's in the sky- are well aware that a day of flying can rank right up there with tooth extraction.

So, to get ready for this flight of fancy, please unbuckle your seatbelt, do not bring your seatback to its full upright position, go ahead and keep all of your electronic toys running and, for heaven's sake, please don't hesitate to keep talking on your cell phone.

Let's take a look at some of the more joy-filled events that come as part of the whole air travel package:

- Getting Through Security: *Legalized strip shows in every city*
- Electrical Outlets-Worth Their Weight In Gold: *Didn't we all learn to share in Kindergarten?*
- Pre-Boarding: *"When Everything Qualifies as an Ailment!"*
- Carry-On Baggage: *Take on the most stuff, win the competition!*
- Seating: *Bring your shoehorn*
- In-Flight Meals: *Take a flight, lose 20 pounds*
- The Restrooms: *Just hold it!*
- Naptime: *"Leave Me Alone"*
- Frequent Flyer Miles: *You earned 'em, go ahead and use 'em! Yeah, Right.*
- The Best Flying Season: *Two Days Per Year...That's It!*
- Business or Pleasure: *The Definition of "Cruel and Unusual Punishment"*
- Ahh...Confined Space: *The nose knows*
- Those !#@!! Regional Jets: *Flying Tubes of Torture*

