

The anxious traveller's guide to leaving your comfort zone

By Andrea Bassett

Anxious travellers who want to travel are in a bit of a pickle. With two opposing desires—the desire to go somewhere and the desire to avoid nervous diarrhea—life can get discouraging pretty fast. Here's the cure: make a decision and get okay with it. If that means not travelling, fine. But if you're determined to travel despite the accompanying anxiety, great! It's time to take the journey by leaving your comfort zone.

But first, let's address the elephant in the room: anxiety is terrible! Feeling anxious, whether travel-related or not, is so uncomfortable that most of us will take extreme measures to reduce anxiety in our bodies and minds. And then we may beat ourselves up for feeling anxious in the first place. Let's stop doing that – it's really not helping. Before you get on that plane, train or automobile, first leave your comfort zone by sitting with those physical and mental manifestations of anxiety.

"What you resist not only persists but will grow in size."

- Carl Gustav Jung

Awful, right? But you did it and guess what? You're still here and that anxiety is a bit less powerful than before. Keep doing this, as many times as required. Between these moments of mindfulness, go ahead and book that trip. If you're like me and hate losing money, make it non-refundable.

"Don't worry about the world ending today, it's already tomorrow in Australia."

- Charles M. Schulz

Anxious travellers: here's how to leave your comfort zone and arrive at your desired destination:

- **Make your decision** – decide that you'll travel no matter the amount of anxious feelings and worries. Taking a stand against indecision feels good.
- **Prepare for your trip** – learn about where you're going and what you need to bring. This builds excitement and confidence! For some nitty-gritty tips on preparing for your trip, check out Seth Godin's anxious traveller checklist.
- **Learn some street smarts** – knowing how to mitigate risks is an essential part of travelling (and life). Learning a bit about how to keep you and your wallet safe will give you confidence. But...
- **Avoid using the internet to fuel your anxiety** – as a new traveller, you'll want to avoid places with 'travel advisories' but don't get too carried away on Google. It's easy to find bad news. Instead, look for the good news.
- **Accept this – something will go wrong!** Later, this will be a funny story – if you let yourself see it that way.

- **Reflect and repeat** – you felt the fear and did it anyway! That's a big deal for anyone, especially anxious travellers. Give yourself a pat on the back as you decide what to take on next.

The trip from your comfort zone to a new city, country or continent may not be easy and it may not always be fun. Go ahead and do it anyway. Bon voyage!

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