

Failure is an option: Giving up is not

By Tim Gard

I travel quite a bit and I've taught myself to enjoy it. I treat it just like I'm commuting to and from work, which, most of the time I am. During my 15 year career as a professional speaker I've flown over 1 million miles and shared my Comic Visions™ seminars from Texas to Tasmania. I've stayed in amazing places and in scary places, I've seen the best and the worst of travel and travelers and still, I love to travel.

I work really hard to have fun when I travel and enjoy the journey and usually try to follow the rules while having fun. However, sometimes I have to carefully push established travel guidelines to get to an event. I insulate myself as best I can by never taking the last flight out and giving myself plenty of time to make connections, but when the unexpected "glitch" occurs I have to be creative to get the job done. Failure is an option - I know I could miss a flight or a connection. Giving up is not an option - I never give up.

While on a recent multi stop trip to the east coast I flew in a small commuter prop plane from upstate New York and connected in Dulles (Washington DC) with a 727 to Denver. I had about 90 minutes to make my connection. Like everyone else on the outbound commuter flight I had to gate check my roller bag and when we landed I waited to get it planeside with everyone else and watched it come off the little plane only to be put in the cart that was to go to baggage claim. Everyone else got their gate checked bag except for me. No matter what I said the United representative, she refused to give it to me and sent me to baggage claim to get it. I had to exit security, claim my bag at the carousel and then try and catch my connecting flight to Denver. When I went to go back through TSA security in Dulles there was so many people in the priority passenger lane that if I waited my turn at the end of the line I knew I'd miss my flight. I had to make a choice. I either had to go to the end of the line and miss my flight or I had to do something I've never done before: I had to cut into the front of the line to get through security screening without being assaulted by another passenger or arrested and detained by TSA. No choice, my mission was clear. I choose the latter and silently girded my loins for what was to come.

I made my way to the front of the line quietly, gently and as unobtrusively as possible and gently placed myself between two passengers at the very front of the TSA line. I tried to look like I should be doing that and belonged right where I was. Neither man was happy and each told me that I could not cut in the line. Ignoring their comments, I put my head down and tried to make myself invisible. I made eye contact with no one. The guy in front turned away from me to start going through the x-ray machine, but the guy behind me got pretty loud and said"

you have to go to the back of the line.” And I knew I had to say something so I agreed with him: “you are correct” I said quietly and then again tried to be invisible. He said loudly: I’m not kidding”. I said” Yes, It’s clear you are not kidding” while I smiled and nodded.” Now security was watching him and not me. Keeping my head down and still not making eye contact, I’m now next to put my bags through x ray and he says: “You are not going to get away with this”” and I replied: “No I am not. Thank you”. As my bags went through the x ray machine I passed through the magnetometer and started putting stuff back in my bag as quickly as was humanly possible. The angry guy came up behind me and said ”I hope you are proud of yourself”. I smiled and quietly and replied ”I am” and then raced to catch my connection. I made it. It’s the only time I’ve had to cut in line at an airport and I hope I never have to again. I simply didn’t want to give up.

Failure is an option. Giving up is not. Use your Comic Visions™ and find your way with a smile.

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