



Travelling Alone

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Often people are shocked when they hear that I love to travel alone. Some state that they would be afraid to do this while others imply that they just don't think they would enjoy the trip without having people accompany them.

Well, there are several advantages to going solo:

1. Planning is much easier. You just think about where you would like to visit and start researching your options. You can open an email with flight offers and book whatever grabs your attention at the time without having to consult or compromise.
2. Travelling is more flexible. If you miss a plane or decide to get sidetracked, you can coordinate things based on one schedule only - your own. You don't have to worry about anxiety or commitments of others in your party. In fact, you could even choose to give up your seat on an overbooked flight and receive hundreds of dollars from the airline for doing so.
3. Opportunities abound. It is a lot easier to purchase one ticket to a popular event than two. Several times I have impulsively arrived at a box office and found that the concert was sold out - except for one great ticket - MINE! Would you believe twenty-third row center for Natalie Cole in Seattle?
4. Relationships develop. Frequently I am invited to join interesting people at their table for a meal when they realize that I am on my own. I have made amazing friendships and enjoyed great conversations on trips that wouldn't have occurred if I had been with other people.
5. Culture can be experienced first-hand. There is always time to visit with hotel or restaurant staff, discover local adventures or learn about the language and customs from a shop keeper because no one is waiting for you or wanting to do something else.
6. Plans can be altered. You can sleep in, order lunch in mid-afternoon or take an impulsive detour without upsetting anyone else's itinerary.
7. You set the pace. I have learned to walk slowly and rest often - a situation that does not match that of many other people. Last month, in Ronks, Pennsylvania, for example, I chose to take advantage of an outdoor Amish-made rocking chair so I could just rock and people-watch for two hours. I loved it but know that not everyone would have felt the same way!
8. You spend less money. At least I do because I know that I am the one who will have to haul my luggage around from place to place. And I don't want to pay an extra transportation fee if it weighs in at over fifty pounds.
9. I also eat better when I am alone because I am not in restaurants three times a day trying to finish everything on the plate. In fact, I eat only one restaurant meal a day, ask for a take-out container and then supplement my leftovers with fruit, vegetables or snacks that I have purchased throughout the day.
10. Finally, and with tongue in cheek I enjoy the fact that there isn't anyone to correct my stories!

You don't have to be afraid to travel on your own if you are wise. Just use your common sense, ask hotel personnel for advice about safe areas and keep your eyes open. With just a little practice, you will find that travelling on your own can be a wonderful experience!