

Airport Therapy

By Nikki, Ciao Bella Travel's Home Correspondent

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Our 8am flight from London to New York sounded inoffensive when it was just a few words on an itinerary. But that was before I did the count back and realised that an 8am flight means a pre-6am check in. And in London that means a 5.15am mini-cab to Heathrow, which means a pre-5am wakeup. This is coming from someone who believes that any day that starts that early is bound to be a bad day.

The most frustrating thing is then being stuck in an airport with a few hours to kill. But there's a funny commonality about airports. What I've noticed about airports (besides the fact that just when you think it's safe to buy a bottle of water for the flight, you hit another security checkpoint and you're forced to toss the unopened airport-priced bottle of water in the bin) is the bookstores. Without exception and no matter what country you're in, there is ALWAYS a massive selection of self-help books in airport bookstores.

And I can't figure out why. Is it because people who are flying are searching for the meaning of life, thinking it is to be found on a gorgeous beach or in an authentic Italian experience?

Or is it because travellers are running from something, only to find that "something" is themselves?

Or is it because these are the kinds of books that everybody buys but nobody reads, so they're perfect as a money wasting exercise at the airport – similar to the thousands of bottles of water that everybody buys and nobody drinks?

So why are airport bookstores not filled with religious texts or the Classics? Books we know we should read, and lets face it, would look a lot less desperate on our bookshelves back at home than the collection of Richard Branson's "Screw It, Let's Do It", or "Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude" or "The Milkshake Moment – Overcoming Stupid Systems, Pointless Policies and Muddled Management to Realise Real Growth".

And not that I'm dissing anyone who is into self help books - I've got my fair share of unread books at home about "The Road Less Travelled" or "Love, Freedom and Aloneness – the Koan of Relationships".



But I want to take a straw poll to find out if I'm normal, and if anyone else, in these days of strict baggage weight limits, carries books they know they **should** read half way around the world, only to be distracted by the in-flight irritainment and not even opening a book in the 12 hours of flight.

I find that no matter how bad the in-flight entertainment is, it is impossible to pull that tome out of my bag and read it. So I'm more than a few hours into the flight but I'm still no closer to the end of the Emily Bronte novel in my bag.

Instead I'm about to tune into "Fools Gold" coming up next on the in-flight entertainment program.

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