



Cell yapping can be annoying to others in airport waiting rooms

Most senior travelers wonder these days if people actually have anything resembling considerate behavior any more. With politics, music, TV and movies getting closer to the gutter every day, do manners actually matter? Add to that the ever-increasing hassle of just getting through airport security, and tempers can be very short.

For those who want to respect and to be respected when traveling, here are some examples of bad behavior and simple courtesy rules to follow while waiting in the airport or sitting aboard your flight.

The most annoying offender is the obnoxious character sitting next to you in the terminal yakking at full voice on the cell phone just two inches away from your ear. Almost every traveler needs to use the handy cell phone, to keep up with the latest at home, office and schedules. However, for the sake of everyone around you in the waiting area, when using your cell phone, go find yourself a quiet corner. Then you can yell, curse, gesture, squawk and scream as loud as you want, as long as you're away from other people's ears.

Another annoying airport waiting area character is the slob who must take up two or three seats with carry-on bags, plopped-up feet, heavy rear end and other unnecessary items on seats while others must stand and wait. Be considerate, and take up just one seat, and keep feet and bags on the floor next to you.

We all know airport delays and long waits are more and more common in these days of infuriating security checks, inflated prices and deflated flight schedules. But if you must get some lay-down sleep in the terminal, instead of denying other tired travelers seats in the waiting area, have the courtesy to go pile up a personal nest of some newspapers, then stretch out on the floor against a wall in a quiet peaceful area.

I'd suggest GIs, students, frequent flyers and other travelers who regularly do long airport waits

to have with them backpacks containing blankets, eye shades and quick-blow-up little mattresses and pillows. Thus equipped, they can get as much comfort as possible in those impossible situations. For your own peace and quiet, try to do it without blocking foot traffic and otherwise bothering other travelers.

For extending common consideration and etiquette once you've boarded, the same general rules apply. Look to your own comfort, but also be aware of the rights of others. We fly frequently, and although bad things happen, we too often get the feeling that somehow Murphy's Law is always about to strike when we're boarding.

There's the obvious smoker who plops down in the seat next to you, not only suffering from his lung-destroying addiction, but also for being denied his poison during the flight. His clothing, hair and body still smell strongly of old, burnt tobacco. Unable to light up, he turns into a nervous, fidgeting seatmate with a never-ending, irritating cough.

We love kids with all our hearts, but not screaming, misbehaving, incontinent and/or barfing little ones on the seat next to us. It's useless to yell at the harried mother to solve the problem immediately. But there are ways of toning down the kiddy disruptions, and maybe avoid it totally.

When our kids were little, we tried to schedule red-eye (late night) flights, and with proper preparation, and after a busy day, we were usually successful in having them sleep throughout the trip. We may have done it more for the sake of our comfort than out of courtesy for other passengers. Whatever the reason, the results were happy people all around.

Etiquette is a fancy way of describing the practice of simple consideration for others in airports and on flights. Or even more basic, it is the application of the Golden Rule on the ground, as well as at 30,000 feet in the air.