

CHRIS DEALS WITH IT

episode notes




EP 57 - 3 Tips For Evading Travel Exhaustion

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I recently completed a trip out to the west coast. The trip involved long flights, time changes, a lot of meetings, traffic jams, catching up with friends & family, before ending with a red-eye flight. On today's episode, I talk about the decisions and mentality that went into my crazy schedule. And I provide 3 tips that helped maximize my trip while managing its physical and mental demands.

Preparing The Circuit

- My business trip involved meeting with clients in & around the Los Angeles region. With meetings that needed to remain somewhat flexible, since they

typically have an indefinite length of time.

- I maintained a detailed plan in the weeks leading up to the trip, confirming with clients up until the week I departed.
- I also reached out to old friends who had settled in the area, and was fortunate that the timing worked for two dinners to catch up with both of them.
- I'd also planned to extend my trip by an extra day by driving out to Phoenix to see my brother, and catching a red-eye home from there.
- And all of this had to be crammed into a 4 day, 4 night schedule, to minimize the impact on my family back home.
- I intentionally planned my eastern-most meetings for Friday morning, so I could work my way out towards Phoenix, reducing the total miles driven over the three days in LA.
- In preparing for the trip, I knew my first meeting would be a few hours after landing at LAX, so I needed to avoid checked baggage. So here's the first tip:

Tip #1: The Pick/Pack List

- To ensure I travel as light as possible, I maintain a pick/pack checklist template within Notion.
- A few days to a week before each trip, I make a copy and tailor it to that specific journey.
- The pick/pack serves a few functions:
 - Gets me to walk through the trip, considering what's necessary
 - Ensures I don't overpack
 - Reduces any anxiety about forgetting anything
- I have different pick/pack templates for family vacations and solo work trips.
 - For this trip, reviewing the pick/pack helped me realize that I was going to need to bring a lot of documents, which meant keeping the other contents of my messenger bag leaner than usual.

On Powering Circuits

- Let's revisit that notion of a circuit. They require a power source. In this case, it's me.
- It's important to right-size your battery to the task at hand. I wouldn't power my kid's talking stuffed animal with a deep-cycle marine battery. And I can't start a boat motor with a AAA.
- In the case of this trip, I knew my battery was going to have to contend with being awake for 24+ straight hours on the first day of the trip, due to a 5AM flight, the west-coast time change, multiple meetings, and dinner plans that first evening, with no chance of a nap in between & lots of driving.
- For me, the biggest energy waste is in worry & anxiety. It leads to frantic movement, increased heart rate, and unnecessary exhaustion. Which leads me to my second tip:

Tip #2: Get places early

- Fifteen minutes early is too late.
- It may seem counter intuitive to sacrifice an extra hour of sleep by waking up at 2AM when 3AM might be fine.
- But I always get to the airport an hour earlier than normal. It helps alleviate the stress of minor delays on the drive there and getting through airport security.
- The lack of time stress allows me to better go with the flow, and start the day with a slow, steady, relaxed pace that I can carry through the day.
- That's not to say I did things slowly. The key is efficiency: Reducing variables, and paying attention for opportunities.
 - It's being alert rather than having my head buried in my phone. Seeing the TSA agents preparing to open another security line.
 - It's having all of my travel info available quickly on my phone in case plans need to be altered on the fly.

- And a quick note on jet lag: It's over-hyped. Especially when you're not going over an ocean. Three hours is easy: Just get right onto local time and don't give yourself the excuse.

Owning The Ask

- There was so much joy in catching up with old friends.
- It's easy to take for granted how growing older impacts our ability to keep in close contact with friends. We see them less because of all our additional responsibilities, and in many cases physical distance.
- Whenever I'm travelling, regardless of the reason, one of the first things I do is check in with any friends in the area to gauge their schedules. I put my trip on their radar.
- It's important to "own the ask" - a phrase I picked up from a recent newsletter from Jon Acuff.
- I'll do whatever I can to make meeting up as easy as possible for whoever I'm seeing, even if that means commuting out of my way to their part of the city, or creating that 24-hour day at the start of my trip.
- Those sacrifices are always worth it.
- There's no problem in balancing work & play, even on a business trip. Although never lose sight of who is paying the bill:
 - Never expense meals taken when visiting with a friend.
 - In the case of visiting family by tacking on an additional day to the trip, I made sure to credit back that percentage of time against the larger fixed receipts on my expense report: Car rental, gas, and airport parking, for example.

Tip #3: Map It Out

- When a trip has me cover a wide enough area, I'll create a special Google Map for the trip.

- That Google Map layer allows me to drop pins for each of my meetings, as well as key locations such as airport, car rental counters, etc...
- Once that's done, I'll start timing out the journey between each location, to help ensure I don't pack things too tightly.
 - This was especially helpful in a city with horrid traffic like LA, where every single trip had me slowing to a crawl for some part of it, regardless of what time it was.
- Then I'll zoom in along the path between destinations, marking down any opportunities for sightseeing, or picking up souvenirs for the family.
 - In this case it was fitting in a quick stop off at Downtown Disneyland right as it opened, earning me some bonus points when I got home.
- Mapping out the trip also helps identify opportunities for better routes between clients, and to adjust my itinerary when a client rescheduled one of my meetings the day before my trip.
 - It also allowed me to identify 'stretch goals', smaller potential clients & vendors that if time allowed, I could attempt to drop-in and say hi. Because of my planning, I was able to fit in two of these drop-ins during the trip.
- I also like to pin coffee shops or good restaurants near my destinations. As I always plan on being very early for each meeting, it's important to have a place identified.
 - This saves me having to waste too much time running around areas I don't know.
 - It allows me to recharge, catch up on messages, and review my notes for the meeting ahead.

The Red Eye

- When going from west coast to east, I don't mind the red-eye.
- Your choice of return flight is effectively:
 - Leave early afternoon, and get home late at night local time
 - Leave late at night, and get home early the next morning local time

- Either choice has a bad side to it: But I'll almost always choose the latter since it gives me a few more hours to enjoy a full day on the west coast, without too much impact on what's going on back home.
- This decision meant an extra eight hours with family in Phoenix, who I don't get to visit often.
- Dealing with the crappy sleep on a red eye is a lot easier when I keep the reasons for it top of mind. I went into the flight thankful it existed, giving me a fun, full day with family.
- I also find that the late night flight out of a west coast airport tends to be lower stress, as there's less of a crowd at the airport, and most of that crowd is likely on one of the same red-eyes you are.

Episode 57 Quote:

Today's quote covers Jack Schafer's Friendship Formula, which I learned about from the podcaster Jordan Harbinger's Wee Bit Wiser newsletter. It's his comments that follow the formula:

Friendship = Proximity + Frequency + Duration + Intensity

When we are young, these elements are built into our lives at school, on athletic teams, and often even inside our families. As adults, the formula is much more difficult to apply but just as important.