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A Wing and a Prayer

Right now I'm in an airplane, _____
flying from New Orleans to
Newark. The flight was an hour late leaving. The man sitting beside me is on
his third Scotch on the rocks. The booze is free because we're up in first
class. It just struck me that the thought of a drink has never even crossed
my mind on this flight! That truly is a miracle.

I have always traveled for a living, mostly by airplane. When I was
introduced to our program of recovery via a drug and alcohol rehab, one of
my fellow patients assured me that in order to stay sober I would have to
give up any job requiring travel. That alarmed me because I truly enjoyed my
profession and the associated travel.

The day I was discharged from treatment, I went to two AA meetings. At the
second meeting, I met the man who would soon become my sponsor. One of
my first burning questions for him was, "Am I going to have to change jobs
and quit traveling in order to stay sober?" My sponsor assured me that it was
quite possible to travel and to stay sober. In early recovery, he impressed
upon me the importance of going to a lot of AA meetings, both at home and
on the road. I promised him that I would seek out AA meetings wherever I
went. In the beginning, I used to bring back meeting books or schedules to
prove that I was "making meetings" on the road. My attitude of having to go
to meetings gradually changed to wanting to go to meetings. Over the years,
I have attended meetings in over thirty states and nine or ten foreign
countries.

"How am I to resist the temptation of taking a drink while on an airplane?" I
asked my sponsor. For years, I had viewed airliners as bars with wings. When
I was drinking, the flights did not seem as boring or as long. It was exciting
to come out of a blackout as we were landing in a strange city and have no
idea where I was!

My sponsor told me to start my day on the days I was going to fly just as I started every other day--by asking my Higher Power to help me stay sober. He told me that my drink selections were limited to mineral water, diet soda, and coffee. So I have not had an alcoholic drink on or off an airplane in over eighteen years because booze was not one of the options, and I am very grateful for that.

Staying sober is not a battle any more. I truly love the life I have without alcohol today. The Promises have come true for me, and I have no desire to give up all of this. I understand that I have a daily reprieve from my alcoholism, contingent upon my spiritual condition.

The air traffic controllers have delayed us further from landing in Newark. But you know what? I won't drink over it.

-- John K.

Hackettstown, New Jersey

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