

Transcript for Minisode Monday #79 | Why We're More Productive on Airplanes (and How to Be When We're Not)

Full show notes found here:

<https://theartofcharm.com/podcast-episodes/minisode-monday-79-productive-airplanes-not/>

JORDAN: Hey, Jordan Harbinger here from The Art of Charm. Welcome to Minisode Monday, your weekly shot of personal development espresso here. Happy to be here with you, kicking off the week with something quick and actionable that you can implement right away that will make you more magnetic and effective.

Today, we're back with my friend Jon Acuff. He was on the show recently discussing the book [*Finish: Give Yourself the Gift of Done*](#), which is essentially a dissertation on perfectionism and how to annihilate or at least make a plan to get started on annihilating it, right? I suppose. Or not do that at all and actually get it handled, finally. But I'll tell you, there was a tip in here, Jon, that I loved, which was about why people are more productive on airplanes and how we can recreate that. What's going on here? That was genius.

JON: Business travel is part of most jobs, it seems like, today, on some level. So, I had a bunch of friends tell me one day, "I'm so productive on planes. I'm so productive, I wish I could fly all the time," and I thought, "Well, that's not the solution." And then I wanted to say, "What does that mean? Why are you so productive?" So the bigger tip, the 50,000 foot view is that I would dare your listeners, if you're winning in some way, ask why, learn from it, and repeat it in other parts of your life. So, that's what I'm about to do. So, I'll break it down specifically.

Here's why you're more productive on a plane. Number one, you can only bring a limited amount of work. On a plane, you are physically limited in what amount of work you can bring. You can't bring a big rollout of the calendar, you can't bring a bunch of file systems, you can bring your computer, certainly, but

you're limited. So, you recreate that on land, if you will by, if you go to a coffee shop, you bring one project. If you go to an empty office to work, you bring one project. Bring a limited amount. If you bring everything, you'll get nothing done.

Number two, the white noise helps you focus. Noise and our music, what we listen to, has an impact on our environment. So, how do you recreate that? You get a pair of QuietComfort headphones or noise cancelling headphones, you deliberately pick out your playlist. For me, I'm a big ambient guy. I love Rony Seikaly, who I grew up watching play for the Miami Heat, has a show called Sugar Free Radio. Be deliberate about what you listen to and how you listen to it. I can't listen to songs with words because as a writer, I listen to the lyrics. So, be deliberate.

Number three, the Internet connection is too weak to get distracted. That's a huge one. This is a magical way for you to recreate that. Turn off your Wi-Fi. I just made an explosion hand gesture with my head. Yeah, people right now are like, "What? I can turn off the Wi-Fi?" Either go somewhere where there's no Wi-Fi, or deliberately say, "I'm going to set a timer for the next 30 minutes. Here's what I'm going to do without Wi-Fi," and I guarantee you you get more done. And here's what I mean. Don't even take an exit for research. When I write, when I've got something to write, whether it's a speech, a meeting, a book, if I think I need something, I make myself a note that says, "Look up quote later," and then later I'll go get it. If I go on the Internet, forget it. I'm gone. I'm going to be lost, you're going to be lost. Turn off the Wi-Fi.

Number four. The number four reason you're productive on an airplane and how you can recreate it is, there's a well-defined deadline. There's actually a series of airplane deadlines. Next time you fly, you'll realize this. There's the deadline to get on the flight, there's the deadline where they first tell you, "Okay, turn your phone to airplane," there's the deadline of, "Now you can get your laptop out," there's the deadline of, "Now you have to put it away." There's this whole series of deadlines and most

of us, when we sit down to work, don't put a deadline. We think, "Oh, I don't need a deadline. It's a project."

We act like our projects are jazz and they'll just naturally resolve. Forget that. Have a firm deadline. "I've got 30 minutes, I've got 45 minutes. I've got 50 minutes. This is what I'm working on and when it's done, it's done, and then I move on."

The fifth one. The fifth valuable thing about an airplane is nobody knows you. You know what nobody ever says to you on an airplane? Nobody ever says, "Hey, you've got 60 seconds?" No one ever takes 60 seconds when they come into your office and go, "You've got a minute?" It's always like nine minutes. Go somewhere where you get to be anonymous. I used to hide when I worked at Bose. I'd grab three files, I'd crouch in the sea of cubicles, because they weren't tall. I'd crouch and I'd find an empty one and I'd sit there. There was no phone, there was no distraction, there was nobody coming in to find me, and occasionally I'd see people on the other side of the office looking for me, but we didn't have a meeting so I didn't need to get down with whatever they were doing. I focused.

So, those are the five things I'd say if you want to be as productive as you are on an airplane. One, bring a limited amount of work. Number two, focus on the noise, listen to the right things. Number three, turn off Wi-Fi. Number four, have a deadline or a series of deadlines. And five, go somewhere where you get to focus and people aren't interrupting you.

JORDAN: Great. It sounds like some of this is common sense and yet here we are, getting more done on airplanes than anywhere else.

JON: And not asking why. We walk off the plane like, "I got so much done. I'm just going to leave it there, though." Or, "I'm going to hope I fly more." Flying more isn't the solution.

JORDAN: Exactly. For the full show notes with Jon Acuff, with lots more just like this, check out the episode on The Art of Charm podcast that just aired recently here. That link is in the show

notes. Also, let me know how this goes over the next few weeks and months as you integrate this into your life. Tweet me @theartofcharm and let me know how this is working out for you.

And don't forget about the AoC challenge. We're talking about a lot of productivity, networking, relationship tips, just like this, helping you connect better with others, creating more productive personal and business relationships, taking you step by step through the challenges to help you move forward, and we have a Facebook group with thousands of other AoC family taking the challenge as well.

Of course AJ and I are in there with the rest of The Art of Charm team, helping you all move through those challenges. It's great for us to see the growth going on in there. I love every time I check in on people there. The group is growing like crazy and very supportive, and you have time, and you're able to do it, and it's not going to distract you from your core work. We've already discussed that. So, text 'A-O-C,' that's 'AoC' to 38470, the number 38470, or go to theartofcharm.com/challenge, and get rocking. All right everybody, have a great week.

