

Part 1: Getting to France from a Memory

I probably should've learned this lesson a long time ago, but sometimes it's best to let go of plans and expectations because they're almost never met. Someone or something always gets in the way of what we think will happen, turning it into what actually happens. Yet what's funny is if we're open to this new experience, what actually happens is better than what we thought would happen. Not to mention we learn a lot of lessons along the way. This is where my LUXYOGA retreat in the South of France begins.

My trip began before I got to France when I was supposed to fly via American Airlines from Baltimore to New York, then New York to London before finally getting to Nice. The day I was to leave Baltimore I arrived at the airport about 1:30 p.m. for a 3:05 p.m. departure to New York. I'd gotten through security quickly given the time of day, and had some downtime before the flight was to leave. I checked the departure time at the gate to find the plane was delayed about 15 minutes and decided it'd be wise to get some extra water from a newsstand, as I usually get dehydrated when I travel long distances. As I was deciding which brand of water to get, there was an older man rather peeved the newsstand didn't have Dr. Pepper, but only Coke products. I was trying to help him with his drink decision, but soon I found myself having a completely different conversation about music.

The older man's name was Ed, and he was also going to New York with his daughter where they are from. For a living, Ed is a music video director for in his words, "ungrateful rock stars." He'd been in the music video business for a long time and directed some of Madonna's videos early in her career. Ed originally came from Florida for vacation and was connecting in Baltimore before going back to New York. He also had a client from Baltimore he was currently working with who wanted to do a music video shoot in Paris. From the Paris and Nice connection we talked about the differences in the cities, including the people, climate and price of the food. Ed was also into play productions and told me he'd written a few scripts he hoped would be on Broadway. As I got to know Ed, I would describe him more as an eclectic guy who loved to talk about movies, international cities, business and books. I liked listening to him, and I added commentary here and there, but as he kept talking I began to wonder when the plane would be leaving. Fortunately he stopped the conversation, and we went to see the departure status, only to find the worst scenario for me, the plane had been cancelled.

I was told at the gate check in to go to the check in for American Airlines so I could be rebooked. The time was about 3:30 p.m. I quickly said goodbye to Ed and went back to the American Airlines desk. There I found myself standing in a long line of disgruntled people, including myself. I was in shock of what was happening and trying not to get too frustrated. What made me upset was the LUXYOGA retreat was only four days, and if I left the next day, I would practically miss the retreat. There were other people in the American Airlines line going to other countries as well, including Chile, England and Turkey. Some people were being rerouted the same day; others were leaving the next day. At this point, I had been in line for over an hour, and the time was about 4:45 p.m. I knew there was no chance of connecting in London, so I wasn't sure how I was getting to Nice.

When I got to the ticket counter and told the attendant my dilemma, she said my flight had already been rerouted to go via British Airways from Baltimore to London, then London to Nice. The only

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difference was instead of arriving in Nice at 11:20 a.m., I would be arriving at 12:50 p.m. I was relieved with the good news and made my way to the international terminal at the airport.

I had to check in with British Airways to get my new ticket before heading to the plane. My flight wasn't leaving until about 7:30 p.m., giving me more time to myself, so I decided to stop at a small sitting area before the security checkpoint. When I was about to sit, I noticed the area was very familiar to me, like I had been there before. There were green plants and tall palm trees around the seats, making it a nice place to take a picture before saying goodbye. I thought about it a little longer, and then I remembered. I'd gone through this terminal thirteen years ago when I went with my family to Super Bowl XXXV in Tampa Bay. My father was an assistant coach for the Baltimore Ravens. My family went through the international terminal for our plane with the rest of the Ravens' family members. The sitting area was where my family had taken a picture. I remember it being one of the most exciting moments of my life then, and even though it was so long ago, bringing back the memory made it seem real all over again. This time, the reality was more nostalgic as my parents are no longer married, and my grandmother who was in the picture is now at the end of her life. Still, the memory brought a very strong emotion for me, and I began to tear up, almost crying.



Perhaps the universe had some design to get my trip rerouted so I could come back to this place.

That was my initial thought. I knew in my heart things were changing, like they did over thirteen years ago. Months ago I started meditating and working to change my thoughts and mindset to manifest a more fulfilling life. That involved quitting my job, attending another yoga training that begins in March and starting *The Sails Within* and *Life Off the Page*. Attending the LUXYOGA retreat was part of the change too, as I looked to align myself with places and activities I'm passionate about like travel and yoga.

It seemed as I sat in this sitting area, I was spending one last time in that Super Bowl memory before moving on. I just wasn't sure exactly what I was moving on from, except a childhood memory, but I knew it was deeper than that. I thought months before and up to the trip I'd be going to LUXYOGA to improve my yoga practice, gain some teaching insight and meet new people. At least, that was my plan initially. I'd also expected my flight to Nice to go smoothly. Well, I certainly didn't get to Nice as expected, but I was thankful to revisit a past life event. As it would turn out, the LUXYOGA retreat didn't turn out as I'd expected either.