We are in the middle of the summer travel season in the Northern Hemisphere and the winter season in the southern half of Planet Earth. Worldwide, millions of people are on the move seeking new experiences, time with friends and family, or perhaps the successful closing of a business deal. Unfortunately, things can go wrong and what starts out as a pleasant travel experience can turn into a real challenge, if not a nightmare. That’s when members of the Outrigger ‘ohana can literally save the day or even rescue an entire vacation.

For example, many consider 13 to be an unlucky number and this Wednesday, July 13, was indeed an unlucky day for many travelers. Looking at mapping data gathered by FlightAware, a private company that employs sophisticated technology to compile information on the status of commercial airline flights across the continental U.S., it is clear that Wednesday was a difficult travel day for thousands.

Things were particularly bad in Chicago (ORD), New York City (NYC) and Washington, D.C. (DC). I am sure that travelers booked on any one of those delayed or canceled flights were probably quite frustrated with their experience.

Travel delays are just one of the many potential inconveniences that travelers face. Traffic, taxi cabs, lost luggage, cramped seats, unhappy children, long lines, missed meals, lack of sleep, fear of flying, surly agents, airport noise, loss of personal control going through TSA screening and general uncertainty can all combine to put travelers on the edge of “travel rage.”

And when they finally reach the hotel front desk they may wonder, will this be another painful experience?

Over the years, I have watched our Hosts save the day for weary travelers. From the moment travelers arrive on property and as they check in, our Hosts welcome these voyagers with heartfelt warmth and authentic hospitality. If there is a problem of some sort, they work pleasantly to fix it. I have noticed time after time, how it makes such a wonderful impression and sets the tone for the rest of their stay.

I call the first few minutes after arrival, “The Golden Minutes.” It is a fleeting time when the hospitality we extend and good feelings we convey mean the world to travelers. It makes an enormous impression and it is unlikely to be forgotten.

MiseryMap by FlightAware for July 13, 2016. Between 5:00 and 9:00 p.m. there were 851 flight delays and 138 flight cancellations in the continental U.S. For the day, there were a total of 7,420 flight delays and 720 cancellations! (green = proportion on time, red = proportion delayed or canceled)
Golden minutes ...

There are many things in the world we cannot change, but we can make a big difference in the lives of the people we assist. So, in the coming months, put on your nicest smile and take the opportunity to do something special for someone who will long remember how warmly they were received at a property operated by Outrigger Hotels and Resorts. You can make a world of difference.

My Travel Nightmare

By Karen Emoto, Executive Office Assistant

Dr. Kelley is so right! The Golden Minutes of opportunity when guests arrive at a hotel are absolutely critical. I had first-hand experience with this concept when I went to New York City with family members six years ago.

We were so thrilled to be in the Big Apple. After taking the “red eye” and experiencing two flight delays en route, we finally landed at Newark airport, which also serves New York City. Outside of the baggage claim area, there was a long line for a Yellow Cab so, as we were standing around looking for alternative transportation, we were desperate enough to hire a “gypsy” taxi driver to take us to our hotel, even though our guide book advised against it!

When we finally arrived at our hotel, nearly 14 hours after beginning our journey, we were exhausted. This is where a skilled guest service representative could have made a huge difference. Instead, we came upon a front desk representative who didn’t smile or give us eye contact. In fact, she didn’t even greet us! I had to go up to her at the desk and start the conversation. She did not leave me with a good impression of the hotel and that memory lingers in my mind even today.

Things could have been so different if she had seized the opportunity to take advantage of those “Golden Minutes,” as Dr. Kelley wrote in his timely and pertinent article this week. Thank you!