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Living in the Clouds

By Kim Davis

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I have a sister of whom I am very proud. After the kids were grown she found herself divorced after years of unhappy marriage. So she went back to work. She found the job market brutal after all those years as a housewife, but she stuck with it, and got a ticketing job with Continental Airlines. She allowed herself to dream about returning to the flight attendant's job she'd given up when she got married, and thanks to a 1968 court ruling which struck down the mandatory resignation ages and to the fact that my sister is still in great shape, today she is flying again. And she loves it!

The Office of Travel and Tourism Industries has posted the following statistics regarding travel in 2000: 26,853,000 Americans traveled to foreign destinations, while a record 50.9 million international travelers visited the United States, which means lots of international air travel. Add to that domestic air travel and you can see that there are a lot of jobs out there. Post September 11, 2001 figures have not yet been released, but we hear news of financial troubles with the airlines on a daily basis. So, are the flight attendants' jobs secure? I've had a look around to try and get a feel for the industry as it stands today, and though there have been some layoffs among smaller airlines, particularly charter companies, many companies are also hiring. In the U.S. Southwest Airlines and Continental both appear to be weathering the storm well.

Glamorous as it sounds, working for the airlines is not all sweetness and light. The constant threat of lay-offs notwithstanding, it can be as repetitive as any other job in a service industry, with long hours and downright abusive passengers to look after. The plus side is that you get paid to travel. I was nosy and read some online discussions between flight attendants (www.flightattendants.org), and discovered that difficulties aside, these people really LOVE what they do.

Here are some of the reasons why:

With practice and seniority, flight attendants are often able to group their flights together in such a way that they have 1 – 2 weeks off every month.

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There is a lot more variety than in a "normal" 9 – 5 job. You get to fly to different cities, work with different crews, and move your schedule around so you never have to get bored.

Airline employees usually get 2 paid weeks off after the 1st year with a maximum of 5 weeks per year after 20 years of service. They fly for nearly free and get discounts on hotel accommodations and car rentals. Close relatives are entitled to super cheap passes as well. The only stipulation is that people traveling on "buddy passes" must fly standby. So if the flight fills up with regular passengers, everyone with buddy passes will get bumped and have to wait for the next flight, (not a good way to travel with children!)

Plus most airlines also make interline agreements with other carriers so that employees can fly free or nearly free to just about any place that has an airport. If you visit flightattendants.org/interline.htm you

will find a long list of interline companies which offer package holidays, tours, and cruises exclusively to airline employees and their accompanying family members and traveling companions.

Though the majority of them are women, the job is now open to men and women between the ages of 18 and 60. Most airlines set height requirements for flight attendants between 5' and 6' since taller people have trouble moving around the cabin of the aircraft, and shorter ones have trouble reaching the overhead lockers. Being in good physical condition is important, since the job demands it, but the old weight restrictions have relaxed. Today airlines say "weight must be in proportion to height". And thankfully, a court ruling in 1990 banned smoking on all domestic flights, thus eliminating second-hand smoke inhalation as an occupational hazard for flight attendants.

Though airline passengers tend to think of flight attendants as waiters, in actual fact, the flight attendant's primary responsibility is to the safety of the passengers. My sister told me she spent several days practicing getting people out of the aircraft safely, and she showed me the bruises she got from sliding repeatedly down that inflatable ramp you see on the little safety card in the seat back in front of you. Other standard safety training includes basic first-aid, CPR, and fire-fighting.

Here are a few things to consider if you want to be a flight attendant:

- * You may be away 4–10 days at a time.
- * Starting salaries are quite low, but increase handsomely with seniority.
- * Attendants may be scheduled for up to 16 hours at a time on some long haul flights. (My sister says she doesn't sit down for the whole trip on a 10 hour trans-Atlantic flight.)
- * Depending on whether you work for a small or large airline, you could be a crew of 1 or 18, who serve up to 400 passengers.
- * Some flight attendants see nothing but the same two cities day in and day out as they fly back and forth between them, while others enjoy layovers in the worlds most exotic locations. Shop

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around before you commit to an airline.

* Carriers look for candidates with good communication skills, adaptability, and who work well without supervision.

* For international flights, bi-lingual and tri-lingual applicants are preferred.

* Attendants should have a minimum of a high school education or GED, and most have at least some college.

* Flight attendants receive 4 – 6 weeks arduous training from the airline that hires them, whether or not they have had any previous experience or training.

* Regarding lay offs in the currently troubled airline industry, here are some quotes I gleaned from a flight attendants online forum at www.flightattendants.org (If you really want to hear what FA's are saying, go read these discussions, they are very enlightening):

Here's the pro: "The airline industry is in trouble but it isn't going to hell just yet. I've been working as a FA for about 3 years and believe that my job is secure. I do work for a regional but haven't seen a lot of people come from other airlines to us because of layoffs. We suspended hiring in September until the beginning of the new year and plan to start again in the spring. In the fall there is usually less flying overall than in the other months so it made sense to stop hiring. The first year the money is really funny and that's when a lot of people leave. At (blacked by Kim) we start at \$16.69 an hour with an 80 hour guarantee (Monthly), there is no max but it would be hard (if not impossible) to fly more than 100 hours in the best and busiest of months. Right now most people are getting pretty close to 85 hours. Per diem is \$1.40 an hour from check in to 15 minutes after block in. There is no talk of layoff or the company trying to ask for concessions." – skywaiter

And here's the con: "The airline industry, especially the charter industry, is very much a seasonal operation. Though airlines fly year round there are more flights in the winter and summer than in the spring and fall. So for the first few years of employment with a charter carrier it is common to be laid off during the slower seasons. (This from a Canadian FA, with more dramatic seasonal traffic fluctuations than in the States.) Newer crew members go through layoffs, being on and off of reserve. Eventually, though, if you stick it out you get enough seniority to fly year round. Not everyone can wait around and suffer the ups and downs of the industry, which helps others hold their jobs year round. You won't always be at the bottom of the list and it only gets better." – FlyLucky (Moderator)

If this sounds like a job you want to pursue, follow a few of these links for more information:

www.flightattendantcareerguide.com

www.aepsairfairs.com – Aviation Employee Placement Service Job Fairs

www.aeps.com – Aviation Employee Placement Service

www.flightattendants.org

www.wiai.org – Women in Aviation International

www.nbaa.org – National Business Aviation Association, Inc.

www.afanet.org – The Association of Flight Attendants, AFL–CIO

www.aviationcareer.net – AviationCareer.net

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Weather Working with Clouds

By Stephanie Yeh

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Working with clouds is a great way to start developing your weather working and psychic abilities. Here's a simple way to work with them:

1. Choose a day that has scattered, puffy clouds for this exercise. Get into a comfortable position (either sitting or laying down) where you can easily see the clouds.

2. Choose a particular cloud to work with. Decide what you will do with your cloud. You can split the cloud in half, shape it to look like an animal, extend one end of the cloud or make the cloud taller. Whatever you choose, keep it simple.

**For instance, you may choose a cloud that already looks like a duck, but a duck with a short tail. Choose to extend the duck's tail until it looks proportional to the rest of the body.

3. Shape the cloud using your thoughts and intention. See the cloud as you want it to be. Super–impose that image over the actual cloud. You can also talk to the cloud or use your hands to shape the cloud. While you obviously can't touch the cloud with your hands, clouds are sensitive to force of movement in your hands.

4. Clouds are very reactive and easy to shape, but sometimes slow to move. If you work with your cloud for 1–2 minutes but very little seems to be happening, take a break for a few minutes then look at your cloud again. You'll probably see that the cloud has moved in the direction you pushed it – it just took a while to get there.

As with all these kinds of exercises, don't judge the result. Just keep practicing. Before long you'll be delighted with what you can do!

Stephanie Yeh, co–founder of the Esoteric School of Shamanism and Magic (<http://www.shamanschool.com>), helps clients use magical and shamanic techniques to manifest their desires. Stephanie has created several online and video classes to make this information more accessible. She also helps others learn to create abundant health and wealth with spiritual and practical resources through her site, Prosperity Abounds (<http://www.prosperity–abounds.com>).



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