

Story 1

It's Thursday of finals week and I'm exhausted. Four tests in four days, covering material I spent every day and night of the last 10 weeks learning, all finally coming to a close. I told myself the hard part was over as I walked out of the front of Myers, opening my phone to check on my flight home that night. CANCELLED, it said, and as my eyes glanced over the big red letters my heart sank into my chest.

The next hour of my life was spent in panic trying to figure out what to do next. 'One flight is not a big deal' someone might say. Try telling that to a stressed-out college student who's looked forward to seeing their family as a way to get through the brutal 10 weeks of the quarter. With a million thoughts racing through my head, the only thing I could think to do was call my parents. "It's weather," my dad said, "you're going to have to call the airline company so they can switch the flight, and hopefully there is one tomorrow." My anger and stress had subsided for a moment as I spoke with my parents. Just a phone call, should be easy.

The next two and a half hours of my life proceeded to be what seemed like an endless cycle of me trying to find a flight and the airline telling me it wasn't available. For context, there is one direct, four and a half hour flight a day that leave Indianapolis to go to Seattle, scheduled at the same time every day, 6:00pm. "Sunday is the soonest I can put you on a flight," the airline attendant said after I had been on hold for around an hour. "Nothing sooner? Even on a different flight?" I asked. "Nothing sooner" she repeated. After I reluctantly agree, seeing as this was my only option, I hear her say "Seems like Sunday's now full too, how about Monday?". Four days later, that was over half my quarter break and there was nothing I could do.

After about an hour of sitting in my apartment, dreading being stuck here for four more days with nothing to do and no one to see, I suddenly get a text from my mom. "I found a flight, but there a catch," it read, "there's a flight out on Saturday, but it has an eight-hour layover." The moment I read the word Saturday, I jumped at the opportunity. Surely, I could find something to do for eight hours, and it was sounding better than sitting around until Monday evening.

Now the new plan was to fly out of Indianapolis in at 7am to Los Angeles, wait 8 hours, and then fly out that evening to Seattle. I spent Friday try to think of all the things I could plan to pass the time. Finish a whole season of Stranger Things, read through the books piling up on my nightstand, or pick up a new hobby like knitting. Nothing sounded interesting enough to do for an entire day sitting in the airport, but I kept reminding myself how lucky I was to fly out earlier than originally planned. Then I remembered something, my best friend from high school goes to school near Los Angeles.

I quickly picked up my phone to check the distance from LAX airport and it read 43 minutes. That's reasonable, I thought to myself. So, I texted her about my layover and to my surprise she was free! The thought of getting to walk around LA versus sitting inside the airport for 8 hours sounded a lot better.

After a long and stressful two days, I finally flew out of Indianapolis. I got the chance to see my friend, and we spent the day going to brunch, walking along the boardwalk, and relaxing on the beach. After a fun day, I was able to fly home and see my family as planned before. So as stressful, and annoying as the situation was initially, my flight getting cancelled turned out to be a positive experience.

It reminded me that although things might seem frustrating in the moment, they can turn into some of the best memories. For me, a cancelled flight led me to the opportunity to visit a friend, which is not what I imagined from the beginning.