

Giving serendipity another chance by Roger Collis

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Long-haul flying (or short-haul, for that matter) sure isn't a load of fun these days. But even the most jaded travelers should give serendipity another chance. It might bring some illusion, some whiff, of adventure back into the aircraft cabin.

Here's how it works. See how many of these psychographic archetypes you can recognize on your next flight:

The Talker prattles interminably, recounting his or her life story, with full medical history, marriages, divorces; dispensing loud gratuitous advice to everyone around. Talkers often stand blocking the aisle when the cabin crew is trying to serve drinks. The only recourse is to put on your headset and close your eyes. Fiddling with the laptop, or pretending to read (or write) *A Brief History of Time*, only invites unwelcome attention.

The Workaholic is engrossed in a laptop during the entire flight, only looking up to refuse drinks, and disdainfully noting how much you are drinking and idling away the time.

The Blanker never acknowledges your presence, or makes eye-contact, nor apologizes for stepping on your foot on his way to and from the lavatory.

The Dark Horse makes you kick yourself when just before landing he or she reveals, by some chance remark, that you have missed the chance of impressing a celebrity, potential employer, or potential 'significant other.'

The Siren is the fascinating woman with whom you spend 10 delightful hours in the air, only to get the cool dry handshake after touchdown. 'No, I'm okay, thanks, my husband/boyfriend/partner is meeting me.'

Airlines could offer more latitude (and possibly longitude) in choosing in-flight buddies by using the reservations computer for online dating. Especially carriers operating the Airbus A380 'Flying Village.' You would simply punch in your mile-high predilections, and the computer would match you with a suitable seatmate.

A serious caveat: Remember never to make indiscreet remarks, until you have positively identified your neighbor. You never know these days whether he, or she, knows your boss/client/auditor/husband/wife. And do not hand out someone else's visiting card – unless that is the statement you really want to make.

