

Ep #131: Agree to Disagree: Best Lounge Access, Hotel Loyalty Programs, and More



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Alex Payne, Jess Field, and Pam Lorg

[Points Talk with the Travel Mom Squad](#)

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Alex: There is a lot that the three of us agree on, but not everything. Listen in as we discuss some of our differences when it comes to points and miles.

Welcome to *Points Talk with the Travel Mom Squad*. We are three moms who've discovered how to leverage credit card welcome offers to get hundreds of thousands of dollars of travel expenses for nearly free. We've used credit card points and miles to take vacations to places like Hawaii, Paris, Greece, Maldives, Japan, and so much more. And the best part? We each still have 800 plus credit scores. Imagine being able to take the vacation of your dreams for nearly free. It's totally possible, and we're here to show you how.

Alex: Hey, I'm Alex.

Pam: And I'm Pam, Alex's mom.

Jess: And I'm Jess. Let's talk points. So, even though the three of us mostly agree on a lot of things when it comes to points and miles—we've been doing this for close to a decade—there are still some things that we don't agree on. Like we always say, you do you, so you can decide which of us you agree with as we go through these, or maybe you don't agree with any of us. We do all agree that Hyatt's our favorite hotel chain, we love Chase points the most out of all the flexible currencies, but we're going to get into some things today that we differ on. We're going to agree to disagree on some things.

So, the first thing we're going to talk about is the best card, in our opinion, the best card for lounge access. So Pam, what is your favorite card for lounge access?

Pam: Obviously, for me it's the Amex Platinum or the Amex Business Platinum. And I just think it has all the way around, their very best lounge access, as everyone knows, I am a huge lounge geek. I like to get to the lounge. I'll get to the airport early just so I can relax in the lounge and get something to eat, take something to eat with me maybe. I love Centurion lounges, that's the only way

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that I'm going to get into a Centurion lounge. I also use it for getting into priority lounges internationally. I just think it's a really good card for lounge access. I mostly travel solo or with friends and family who also have a card, like my husband, he's got a business platinum card. So I don't need to worry about getting him into a lounge. I'm not trying to get a whole family into a lounge. So this just makes sense for me. I don't care that I can't get guests in for free. It's nice, but I'm usually with family who have a card, so it's not a worry. I think it's always worth that \$695 annual fee because I take advantage of all the credits and benefits that there are. It's not even hard for me. I have a little tiny spreadsheet that I just make sure I do the annual things right at the start of the year, the semi-annual stuff I take care of in January and July, it's a no-brainer, it works for me. But I am going to say that I am standing apart from you two, I know on this.

Alex: Yeah, and you also forgot that one gets you Delta Sky Club access.

Pam: Yes, and that's huge when I come to visit you.

Alex: Yes, because-

Pam: In fact, that's probably one of the bigger reasons that I like it. When I go visit Alex, I will purposely fly United there and always fly Delta coming back so I can go into that lounge. It's a really good lounge. And there are some other really good Delta Sky Club lounges. Fabulous one in Boston and another really good one in JFK, so yeah. I'm all for the best of the best.

Alex: Yeah, the downside is now you only get 10 visits a year, but I actually think that's probably for most people, that's probably fine. Just those business travellers and they probably have the Delta Reserve or something.

Pam: Even for me who travels a ton, it's fine.

Alex: All right, well, this is where Jess and I don't agree here and I do think it's tricky because there are more Centurion lounges than there are Capital One

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lounges. So for myself, Venture X, Capital One Venture X, I think is the best card for lounge access, coming from the perspective of having a family. We travel through Denver a lot and Denver has a Capital One lounge. We'll often have layovers there. And my husband has the Venture X business card, I have the Venture X card, and we can get our whole family into the lounge because you can bring two guests for free with each of those cards.

And even if he didn't have the Venture X business card, I could make him an authorized user on my Venture X card, and then as an authorized user, he could get two guests in for free. So that's just really wild. With having one card and an authorized user card, you can get a family of six into a lounge. So it's just it works for us. I think if you never go through a Capital One, at an airport with a Capital One or and they don't have a Capital One lounge, it might not make sense. But the Centurion lounges are there's zero sense for anybody who travels a lot with a family. You're not going to be, all right kids, four-year-old, I'll see you later. You can pay, you can pay to have them come in, but that adds up because I think it's what, \$50.

Pam: See, I actually like that idea. Go with your husband, you're the only one that has the card and you say, hey, honey, sorry, I'm going-

Alex: I have done that.

Pam: To the Centurion lounge, and you get a little break for a little while.

Alex: And I have done that, but it is but then everybody's got to go spend a jillion dollars on food. We were at the airport, we didn't have a lounge option. Maybe we could have had a lounge option, but we didn't have time anyways. We spent \$100 on pizza for the six of us and another \$50 on something ridiculous, \$50 on drinks and candy to take on the plane. And I was, this right here is why I have the Venture X card and wish I was in Denver because I have to spend so much money at the airports when there's not a lounge.

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Pam: Well, I have to say too, despite the card that I think works best for me, I also have that card. And when it comes to which lounge I pick to go to out of all the ones I have in Denver, I still love the Capital One Venture lounge the best.

Jess: Well, that's us, Alex and I both have a business platinum. We're equal opportunist. We just this is our favorite if you have a family is the venture X, but for me, it's hard because Houston has only a Centurion lounge. They don't have a Capital One lounge. And so I'll always hold an Amex platinum or business platinum so that I can get in there when I'm traveling alone or if Ted and I are going somewhere, he also has a business platinum. But just in general, I prefer Capital One lounges and I also like that the annual fee is about half as much and you can get guests in for free.

Pam: But you know, having said that too, because you can bring so many people in with you, every time lately that I go to my lounge in Denver, I'm having to do a wait list for it. Now, granted, the wait list really doesn't take that long. I never, I'm fine because I've been there early anyway, so I've got an hour and it may take 20 minutes to get in there. But that is the downside is that sometimes they can fill up a little bit faster because so many people are allowed to go in on that card.

Alex: But I'm going to be devil, I'm going to be the devil's advocate here. When we just flew through Houston, Mom, you and I couldn't get into the Centurion lounge. We didn't have any guests.

Pam: That's true.

Alex: We had to wait out in the hallway. There was people who were saying, oh, it's going to be about a 45 minute wait and you're, I'm going to be headed to the gate in 45 minutes.

Pam: But that's a pretty small lounge too.

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Alex: It is a pretty small lounge, but you're going to run into the lounge capacity, it happens at Delta Sky Club. It happens everywhere, even when they try to limit things. I still feel it's an issue because people are realizing, oh, all I need is a credit card and I can get into this lounge.

Jess: Well, we're probably not helping things because...

Alex: No, we're not.

Jess: All right, next up, this is one that Pam feels very passionately about. So...

Alex: And I feel very passionately on the flip side.

Pam: Here's Pam standing alone again.

Jess: So with the personal Hyatt card, okay? So the standard offer on the personal Hyatt card is that you can earn 30,000 bonus points after you spend \$3,000 in the first three months. We all agree that one is worth going for. Here's where it gets trickier. There's a second tier where if you spend \$15,000 total, so 12,000 more than tier one, you earn an additional 30,000 bonus points. So effectively, 60,000 Hyatt points total after you spend \$15,000 in the first, I think it's six months for the 15,000.

Pam, how do you feel about that second tier?

Pam: Well, first of all, I think the whole offer isn't very good.

Alex: I agree with that.

Pam: Yeah, it's been that way for forever. It's 30,000 points? That's nothing. At least give 45 so you can stay in the top resort, 50,000. It's just I just think it's a really lousy offer. Do I have it? Would I have it? Yes, because you also get the free night certificate on your anniversary. But I think that second tier is awful. I

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would never do that second tier. \$12,000 spend for just another 30,000 bonus points.

Alex: You mean \$12,000.

Pam: Yeah. I'll take that \$12,000. I will use that for probably at least two, if not three other welcome offers on different cards. So yeah, I think it's awful.

Alex: Here's my thing though. You have plenty of expenses because of paying taxes. So paying another \$12,000 on a card to get a few extra things wouldn't be that difficult for you.

Pam: But I think it's awful for the person who doesn't. That's where I'm going there, I think.

Jess: Here's my only retort to the, well I could spend \$12,000 on three more cards. But then you're having three more pulls on your credit. You're having three more cards that potentially might count towards 524, at least one or two of them.

Alex: And they're Hyatt points.

Jess: I never really agree with that reasoning because it's, yeah, I could put that spend on different cards, but that's three more cards you're adding, you know? I guess if you want to just open those four cards in a year and that's it. But I think I agree with Pam that if it's going to be a struggle for you to hit that minimum spend, then it probably doesn't make sense to overextend yourself to hit that second tier.

Alex: I also think it doesn't make sense for everybody. I'm just saying what makes sense for me personally.

Jess: Yeah.

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Alex: I do agree with my mom that I don't think this offer makes and what Jess was just saying, I don't think this offer makes sense for everybody.

Jess: All right, but when why does it make sense for you?

Alex: It makes sense for me. Well, let me just say, I purposely spend \$15,000 on this card every single year. And I do that because I want to get the free night certificate. Every year when you spend \$15,000 on the card, you get a free night certificate. And yes, it's only category one through four, but I have found good use with those every year. There's it's not hard for me to use those. And then you earn two elite nights for every \$5,000 you spend on the card. So right there you're getting six elite night credits. It just makes sense for my globalist strategy too. I get six elite nights plus a free night certificate. I use that free night certificate. Now I've got seven elite nights, plus I've earned some Hyatt points in the process.

Jess: And you get five from holding the card.

Alex: And you get five from holding the card. Yeah. So, it makes sense to me because of my globalist strategy. Now, if you're not going for globalist, maybe it won't make sense for you. But if I can get six elite nights and a free night certificate and then use that free night certificate to get another elite night, that's pretty good.

Pam: Well, you know what? You're almost convincing me, but only because I go after globalist status. And I think when I look at this, I'm looking at the common person who probably isn't. I don't think it makes sense for them. I think it does make sense for someone who's going for globalist, has that spend, has estimated taxes to pay. I think I will do it this year. But for the for normal Joe, I don't think it makes sense.

Alex: Well, and also if you don't you've the last couple years have had a lot of Hyatt stays. So it's not like you've been needing to do some of those extra things to get elite nights. I have to do that. And I put spend on my Hyatt business

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card to get more elite nights too. And so for me, it's I have to do that because I'm not getting enough nights in Hyatt hotels.

Jess: Yeah. And I think you were saying Pam, for the average person, this card may not even make sense at all. You know, like you said, it's going to add to your 524 count. The welcome offer has never been great for this card. Except for when it was two nights, two free nights at any Hyatt worldwide.

Alex: Which was what? Eight years ago?

Pam: When I first got it.

Alex: Yeah.

Jess: Yeah, but ever since then, and people DM us all the time and are, when's the Hyatt card going to go up? And I'm, I don't know, it's been the same for five years.

Pam: Hyatt, listen to us. We're begging you. Make this a better offer.

Jess: So yeah, this is not a card, in my opinion, that you get for the welcome offer. This is a card that you get for the annual free night certificate. And if you regularly stay at Hyatt and are either paying cash or charging incidentals to your room and you can get those multipliers on the card, I think it makes sense. If you're not a Hyatt loyalist, I'd pass on this one altogether.

Alex: Yeah, you're going to get more by opening up Chase Ultimate Rewards cards than you would by opening up the Hyatt card and using though that for Hyatt stays. If you're, oh, we're just staying here and there, then yeah, Jess said, probably not worth it.

Jess: All right, now we're going to move over to Amex. So here's one where Pam and I agree. Alex is going to have to defend her decision.

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Okay, so with Amex personal cards, they put into place this family rule language that basically says that if you have a personal platinum card, then you cannot get the welcome offer on the gold or green. If you have a personal gold card, then you can't get the welcome offer on the green. So you have to go in order from lowest to highest if you want to get all three personal Amex cards that earn membership rewards. So you'd want to start with the green, and then you'd want to move to a gold, and then you'd want to move to the platinum.

So Alex, do you agree with that order of things or would you skip over the green and go straight to the gold?

Alex: My take is that if there's an increased welcome offer, which there hasn't been in a while, but we've seen them, then I would get the green if I haven't had the gold yet. I would do that first. And if for myself, I already have the gold. I can't and then this rule came out after I had already gotten my Amex gold, so it wasn't even an option for me. My husband doesn't have any of the personal Amex membership rewards cards. He only has the business. And so if there was an amazing offer on the Amex gold and it was that he was targeted for, came up and we were ready for him to get a personal card, then I would maybe skip the green and just get the gold.

But if there's not really, and I can snag some 40,000 more points, then I'm, sure, I'll take 40,000 more points because otherwise there's no way I'm going to ever be able to get them. And I'm not in a huge rush for him. Clearly, he's never had the Amex gold personal card. I'm not in a rush. So in my mind, I'm, I might as well just get the green first and get him some points. That being said, I do have the gold. And so we do get the 4X at restaurants. I can get 4X on groceries, which I do think that is a nice, a really nice card to have. And so, yeah, I would probably get him the green first just to snag those other cards.

Jess: All right, Pam, what about you? If you were starting fresh with Amex? We know you're not.

Pam: I know.

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Jess: But if you were starting fresh with Amex,

Pam: I actually did have that card at one point, and I've since canceled it.

Alex: Well they had a crazy offer on it right after the pandemic or during it where you got a free away or \$100 off an Away suitcase.

Pam: Yes. Yes.

Alex: Plus a bunch of points. It was pretty cool.

Pam: Yeah, it was a really good thing and I don't have it anymore. I to me, it's just the it goes down to 5 and 24 spot and it's just not worth taking a 5 and 24 spot. Because once you get over that, you've got to wait to get that down. I just don't think that 40,000 points is worth a 5 and 24 spot. And that's the whole thing about it for me. So...

Jess: That is the whole thing about it for me too. If these were Amex business cards we were talking about, and by the way, this family rule language does not currently apply to any of the Amex business cards. If it if that if these were business cards though, I would get the green. Because it wouldn't count towards 524, but because it does, I'm going to have to skip it. Well, I don't really have a choice because Ted and I both have had the personal gold and the personal platinum and so there's no going back for us. But if I were starting new, I think I would skip the green and go straight to gold. Unless, you said, if there was an amazing offer and if it was 80,000 points instead of 40, that might change things, but yeah.

Alex: So we've just I've done pretty good at keeping us well under 524 for the- we've been going really hard on business cards. And so the 524 issue wouldn't be an issue for us at the moment. But my question-

Jess: Because you have chill. You have chill.

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Alex: I know. Well, we've just done tons of business cards. But my question is, and I think I know the answer, but just for anyone else who's wondering, how do you make a Freedom Unlimited worth it to you for a 524 slot where that is only 20,000 points?

Pam: I haven't yet.

Jess: No annual fee on the Freedom Unlimited.

Pam: But I haven't done it.

Alex: I know Jess isn't too worried about annual fees though. For yourself. you'd be, I'm not getting that green card because I don't want to pay \$150.

Jess: Because, well A, I've had-

Alex: The points. You like the points more.

Jess: I have had a Freedom Unlimited. It was my second card I've ever gotten.

Alex: Yeah.

Jess: So now, post 524, I don't know that I would open a Freedom Unlimited because I can get an Ink Unlimited.

Alex: Yeah, that's true.

Jess: ...and effectively have the exact same thing. Freedom Flex, I do think is worth it because you're getting 5X on those rotating bonus categories. But the standard Freedom Unlimited offer, I probably would not get that at this point and would get the Ink Unlimited instead.

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Alex: Yeah. The only issue with that is with them being a little trickier to get inks, you wouldn't want to cancel your ink probably, you'd want to keep it. But to get it again, you'd maybe have to eventually cancel it. So, I don't know, it all- there's a lot to it more than you think. I think it just depends on what your 524 is too. If you're, I'm 124, then whatever, I guess I'll just get it now. But if you're 424, then you're, no, I'm not doing that.

Jess: All right, next up. I said at the beginning, we all know that Hyatt is our favorite hotel chain. We all agree on that strongly. But after Hyatt, what would be our next favorite? When we're talking mainstream hotel chains Hilton, Marriott, IHG, Wyndham, Choice, that kind of thing. All right, so Alex, after Hyatt, what's your number two?

Alex: My number two is going to be Hilton and strictly for their aspirational properties. I am not using Hilton points or anything of that sort to stay at a Home2 suites or whatever or a Hilton Garden Inn.

Jess: Hey, Home2 suites are actually really nice.

Alex: No, they are nice. I have stayed in one, but I paid cash for it because it was a hundred and something dollars. It was for a basketball tournament. But I'm not using points for those stays because I'm not going to drop 80,000 points on a Home2 suites. And that's probably being dramatic. It's probably not that many points, but you know.

Jess: Probably 50.

Alex: Yeah. So I really value Hilton for giving me the opportunity to stay at really bougie properties for free. And I'm talking Waldorf Astoria, Conrads, that's just really amazing to get to stay in some of those properties. And I just you don't really get that opportunity with some of the other hotel brands as easily. If you want to stay at a Marriott, it's going to be 200,000 points. And yeah, they have free night certificates too, but it's capped at 85,000 points. Whereas Hilton, free night certificates, there's no cap. As long as there's standard room award

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availability, you can use it and you can use them at almost any Hilton property worldwide.

So they are just incredibly, incredibly valuable. We're go- I've been to Hilton Conrad Bora. I'm going back there. I've done Waldorf Astoria, Los Cabos Pedregal a couple times. There's just so many great options. And then they have the small luxury hotels they've partnered with. So that to me is a huge selling point too. We just returned from Tabacon recently up in Costa Rica and that was really cool. So it's got to be Hilton for me. What about you, Jess?

Jess: I am also a Hilton fan, which is surprising.

Alex: I know, I never thought I would be.

Jess: For a long time, I was, eh, Hilton, and then Marriott completely destroyed their program. And so they're dead last for me now.

Pam: They're dead last for all three of us.

Jess: But with Hilton, another thing I like is that you can transfer one to two from Amex to Hilton. We don't normally, other than transferring from Chase to Hyatt, we're not huge proponents. I mean, obviously, you do you. We're talking if you want to get max value for your points. We're not usually big proponents of transferring from Chase to Marriott or transferring from Chase to IHG or transferring from Amex. And so, but with one to two, it often does make sense to transfer Amex points to Hilton, especially considering that if you have any sort of status with Hilton, which you can get from holding a Hilton credit card, holding an Amex Platinum or business Platinum credit card, you get the fifth night free on awards stays.

And so if you combine the one to two transfer plus the fifth night free, you can often get really, really great value from your Amex points by transferring them to Hilton. And I mean, we've seen what, a couple of transfer bonuses in the last year from Amex to Hilton, making your Amex to Hilton transfer even more

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valuable. So that is one that we are starting. I actually transferred a lot of points from Amex to Hilton this year to book some stays in Iceland and Ireland and Hawaii. So they're growing on me.

But Pam, what about you? What's your what's your number two?

Pam: You know, I get what you guys are saying about Hilton because their aspirational properties are amazing and I absolutely love them. It's more difficult to get the free night certificates. I think the biggest reason why I don't pick them is because I have had all the Hilton cards. I got them early on in my hobby and so I feel like I don't have that many Hilton points and I can't really get them again yet. And so that's what kind of holds me off on them. But I do but I love them. They're great.

So what's easier for me to get in terms of points often is IHG points. And I love the Kimpton brand. I it's very boutique-y, it's um so cute. I love that they all are different. Um, and also, I they kind of remind me of Park Hyatts a little bit. I just really like the vibe of them. Now, you they don't transfer from Chase, um...

Alex: No, they do transfer from Chase. But it's just not a good value.

Pam: It doesn't make any sense to get them. It doesn't make any sense to um to use a transfer. I would never use a transfer.

Alex: Because you're going to pay double to triple what you would pay for an equivalent highest day. That's why we don't recommend it.

Pam: For me, the way I get a lot of my IHG points, if I've gone through the cards and I can't get another welcome offer yet, I am not opposed to buying their points.

Alex: So they probably have more sales on their points. Well Hilton has a lot of sales on points too.

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Pam: But IHG has a lot of sales on points. You can pick up those points for a half a cent um per point. It is really a great way. I routinely will buy at least 105,000 points when they have 100% bonus. That means I'm getting 210,000 points. That means I can stay at a property that is 70k a night and because of the fourth night free on awards stays as an IHG card holder, that means I'm paying that 210 for a four night stay at a property. I will pay about \$1,000 for those points. Those often go for \$1,000 a night. I mean, that is really a good deal.

And so I will do that at least once or twice a year. So it's really easy for me to have a lot of IHG points. And that's what makes them great for me. I mean if they had a brand again, I'm not using them to stay at the Holiday Inn Express.

Alex: And you do you. If you want to use them at Holiday Inn, that's totally fine. We just like using them for...

Pam: I mean you got a kid that plays soccer, you can do it like that. Yeah, that makes total sense. Go out of town and watch that child and stay at a Holiday Inn Express. I would 100% do that if that was the type of life that I'm in. But so that's my reason for IHG points. I can just get a lot of them without having to even depend on um opening up a new card and getting a welcome offer.

Jess: I do think IHG is consistently the best program to buy points from. There's multiple times a year where they're running those sales you said. And so I feel nine times out of 10 when I've looked into it, it has made more sense to buy points than to pay the cash rate. So I agree with you. IHG would be my number three. I feel Alex, you're the same.

Alex: Yeah. Yeah, I'm I agree with everything you said, Mom.

Pam: And Marriott, if you had another around. They have bonvoyed us too many times.

Alex: Marriott who?

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Jess: Pam, you need to get a pet and name it Kimpton. I feel this, I feel you need a dog or a cat or a fish or something named Kimpton because you just love that brand.

Pam: I do love that brand.

Jess: All right, last one is all about positioning flights and not whether you should take them because we all take them. But how, I guess, early you should arrive or how late you should stay after a positioning flight. So Pam, what is your philosophy on how early you're going to arrive from your, if you were flying from Denver to JFK to Milan, what is your plan going to look like?

Pam: Well, my plan looks different than it used to look. I used to feel, okay, as long as I'm there four to six hours ahead of time, that's fine. I am not liking the stress of that because I've had a couple times where we were delayed and I was freaked out I wasn't going to make that award flight. So my preference is to fly in the day before and spend the night using points at an airport hotel. That is my preference. And then it even got worse because I was noticing that as I've gotten older that jet lag is a lot more of a problem to me. So if I'm coming home late-

Alex: Do we could do a whole episode just on her jet lag.

Pam: Oh my jet lag, yes.

Alex: And how she follows zero instructions on how to beat jet lag and just does whatever she wants. And Jess and I always, oh weird, you have jet lag. Huh? You were sleeping the entire 14 hour flight home and now you can't go to bed at 10:00 at night. Weird. It cracks us up.

Pam: Anyway, back to...

Alex: Let's put another agree to disagree on how to not have jet lag.

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Pam: That's what we yeah, that's what we need to do. So anyway, so now coming back, if I'm coming into sometimes coming into JFK, sometimes even Houston or Dallas or something coming back and it's 7:00 or late in the day, I'm, why would I go all the way fly all the way home? I'm going to be just really exhausted. So I kind of to stay in that airport hotel coming back too. And it I mean it's easy for me. I don't have little kids at home that I'm trying to get home to or that I can't leave. I'm usually with my husband when we do this. And so it's we have both found with both of us that if we do this, when we get home, we have much less jet lag.

The day before is huge. Now, having said that, I leave tomorrow to go to London. And I'm since I just got back from a trip, I thought, I just can't go the night before. Just can't do that. I just need to stay in my bed one more time. So I'm doing the six hour thing. I'm going to hate six hours in the airport. And I'm hope I don't have any problems because I will I'm taking a chance.

Jess: Where are you positioning to?

Pam: Boston.

Jess: All right, Denver to Boston.

Alex: Well, the nice thing that you bring up too is when you position the night before, you don't have to spend your whole day at the airport. You can hang out in your hotel.

Pam: Exactly.

Alex: I except if I don't know, do you ever position if you have a 10:00 PM flight?

Pam: Yeah, I have.

Alex: And then what do you do? Do you just leave it check out?

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Pam: Well, and that's why I even thought with this one because that's kind of what I have. And so it was, it could be six hours either way.

Alex: So I thought because you're, I got to check out at 4:00 because I'm guessing you're staying at a Hyatt and you have late check out with globalist. So then you're, yeah, you have six hours.

Pam: The only thing is I don't have to stress. I'm there.

Alex: Totally. Yeah.

Pam: And it's the stress that really gets me.

Alex: Yeah.

Pam: It's not I'm going to get to stay longer. It's that stress.

Alex: Yeah. So I got a question for you. So when we were just in Costa Rica for spring break, I flew, my family flew home all the way home. We had a direct we had a flight to Denver. So it would have been a direct flight had they gone with us on the same flight. But they went through Houston, they flew United, we flew Southwest, and you guys were originally going to stay the night in Houston and then go home the next day. And then I was, why aren't you just going home?

Because it's not you're coming home from Europe. You're in the same time, it's even the same time zone. And she was, yeah, we're going to we'll, I'm going to change my ticket. And they changed their ticket and you guys went all the way home because I was, what? You guys are staying the night on the way home from Costa Rica? You can get all the way home. So how did you feel after I can after I told you just to fly all the way to Denver? How was that?

Pam: Exhausted.

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Alex: You had some delays though, too.

Pam: Yeah, I had uh jet lag for a couple days. You know what, blame it on my age. I really think that's it. I did used to have problems with this before even though I did follow all the good rules, Jess and Alex.

Alex: But you also went from Thailand home for a few days to Costa Rica and then back home. So I think you would have been dead either way.

Pam: I did Thailand.

Alex: Yes.

Pam: In fact, my daughter that went to Thailand with me, she said, Mom, there's no way I could have done that. And she's in her 40s and she says, there is no way I could have gotten on a plane and gone there. And Alex will admit, in Costa Rica, I was falling asleep during my dinner.

Alex: She was struggling. And let me also say, I didn't say, Mom, will you come to Costa Rica with us after you've been to Thailand? We had booked Costa Rica first and then she added Thailand and I was, what is she thinking right now?

Pam: Never say never, Pam.

Jess: Well, Pam, I would have encouraged you to spend the night in Houston because then I could have taken you out to dinner.

Pam: Then I would have fallen asleep during my dinner.

Jess: I could have met you at the airport. Um, no, but that's, yeah. No, I you can it's not really apples to apples with us and Pam. You know, because in another 30 years, I might be all about spending the night at the at the airport hotels. All right, so Alex, where are you on this spectrum?

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Alex: Okay, if I'm coming, let's go with going home first. I hate having to get a home or get a home, get a hotel when I'm coming home. I just want to be home. And part of it is yeah, I just want to get home to my kids and my family, but also I just want to get home. I think when the travel day starts for me, I'm just, I don't want to draw it out any longer. I just want to be home in my bed.

So there's I only do it if I have to. So the literally the only time I will do it is we're coming home from Spain next month. The flight gets in at 8:00 PM to Dallas. There are no other flights that night leaving for Salt Lake. So I do not have a choice, so I will be staying the night. And that is the only time when I do that. Now, when it comes to going positioning to leave on my trip to at the beginning of the trip, I still don't want to do it unless I absolutely have to. And it's for the same reason. I don't want to have to find a sitter for another day, just figuring, just feeling bad leaving the family for as long as I'm already leaving them, I don't want to add another night to that if I don't have to. And so the only time I will do that is if it's a early flight. So, for example, we went to Maldives, our flight left out of JFK at 11:00 AM. We had to get there the night before.

Now, if I'm leaving in the evening or at not even but at night, I will fly in the day before and I will get there six hours early. Sometimes I'll even get there five. If it's under five, it's a little too stressful. I also try to make sure I'm not taking the last flight on the day of the day on that airline. So if something happens, they can get me on the next flight that still would get there in time. So I think I definitely think you've got to have some backup plans in case something happens.

Knock on wood, I've been fine so far. When we go to Madrid, I'm flying into Dallas and I think I have five hours before we leave. So should be fine, but you know, you never know. It is a risk, but I'm willing to take it for now.

Jess: So I am kind of in the middle of Alex and Pam. Um, I stress more about I don't like spending the night before if it is an evening flight, but I also stress a lot about the day of plans. And this is actually funny because Alex and I are both going to Bora Bora this year and we're on the same, so we're not on the same

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flight, but we're on the same flight in that it leaves at the same time just on different days. And so I had booked a positioning flight from Houston to LA and it gets in six hours before our flight from LA to Tahiti. And I was stressed. I was, I hope this is enough time.

And then Alex sends me a voice text and she is, I'm so annoyed because the only flight that makes sense from Salt Lake City to LA gets there six hours before and, what am I going to do at the airport for six hours? So I'm over here stressing, I hope six hours is enough and she's over here, I don't want to get there six hours early.

Alex: It's true. Well, because I'm, there was flights that got there six hours early or two hours early. Two hours is not enough time. And so I was, why can't there be one five hours early? And the other thing too is getting to Salt or getting to LA from Salt Lake, it's not a super long flight. I can figure out a different airline whereas, sometimes when you're going different places, there's only a couple flights a day. So you've got to it's a little more stressful. When there's a lot of flights, I worry a little bit less.

Pam: So what do you guys do in six hours of sitting in the airport? I mean, you usually can't get into the lounge until it's about three hours, so you've got...what do you do? I mean, I usually just work or...

Jess: I mean, if they if it's an airport that has Southwest flights, I do my old Southwest trick, but otherwise,

Alex: Which is to buy a ticket on points, get into the lounge and then cancel it and get our points back.

Pam: I forgot about that.

Alex: You could do that tomorrow.

Pam: You can't get into the lounge. Oh no, it's...

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Alex: It's only what? Three hours before?

Pam: Yeah.

Alex: Which that's not very much time. So...

Pam: That Southwest trick isn't going to help me because it's not going to help me get into the Delta Sky Club because

Alex: No, it's not because you've got to be flying Delta.

Pam: Yeah.

Jess: Could you use your priority pass for the reserve lounge or did you already use that this year?

Pam: I already used it.

Jess: Mm.

Pam: That's a that's a problem when you're paying.

Alex: Well, I just in that case, I try to find a less busy gate and just hang out in there and work or watch a show and twiddle my thumbs and watch the clock tick by.

Pam: And just be glad that you made it, you didn't have delays. So it doesn't really matter.

Alex: Well, because even it's not even it's who want I don't even want to sit in the lounge for six hours. You're just you're literally just sitting there. What they really need to do is put in rooms just full of treadmills so at least you could get some steps in. Put a gym in there that's dark and plays a movie. That would be

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really cool. Because I just hate sitting for that long and then hopping on a long flight and you're just sitting and then I just feel I don't know, not great.

Jess: Yeah. Pam, I know what you can do.

Pam: What?

Jess: You can make some reels for Travel Mom Squad of you in the airport because people are always saying they want to see more Pam. So we got to give the people what they want.

Pam: Yeah, too bad Pam's not good at making Reels. That's not going to work too well.

Alex: We've got to be with her to get the Pam content.

Pam: You got to be with me when I make a fool of myself. Well, everyone, we hope that this episode has been informative for you or at least entertaining. As I always say, you do you. There is no one right way to do points and miles. And if you enjoyed today's episode, we would appreciate so much if you would leave us a rating and a review. We thank you so much for all of your support.

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