Ep #176: Pivoting When Your Trip Gets Canceled

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

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Points Talk®

Ep #176: Pivoting When Your Trip Gets Canceled

Alex: Sometimes things happen beyond our control and our trips get canceled and we have to, in the words of Ross Geller, “pivot.” Listen in as we share what to do when these situations arise.

Welcome to *Points Talk*®. 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. All right, we've all had times where things happen and either our trip gets canceled, or we have to cancel our trip. Today, we are sharing some real-life stories of what we've done when situations like this arise. And so this is where booking on points can really, really come in clutch because we always book refundable hotels on points. In our last episode, we talked about how we avoid the advanced purchase booking because things have just gone wrong in the past, and we've learned the error of our ways. And so, always check the hotel, check the cancellation policy.

I aim for ones that are like cancelable within 24 to 48 hours. I think those are the best. And so, if you're booking through with points, a lot of times the rate the rates are refundable up until 24 to 48 hours. You just want to double-check because every property is different. Some of the more like aspirational properties, like the, like Alex, what your Maldives one was like 21 days or something.

Alex: Mine was 21 days. I've even noticed too, like even at places like Grand Hyatt Kauai, Hyatt Regency Maui, if it's the peak travel time, like Christmas time, it was like 30 days. So, and normally they don't do that at that property. So, be aware of when you're booking and just make sure you know those the timeline there.

Jess: Yeah. And then the nice thing is at a lot of these points properties, you can automatically just get instantly get the points refunded back into your account. And so that's really, really nice because you're not losing out on thousands and thousands of dollars, like if you had paid a non-refundable cash rate and you were just out, you're out of luck.

I feel like also, so Southwest has always had a super generous cancellation policy. You can cancel a Southwest flight on points or any Southwest flight, but if you booked on points, you can cancel it up until 10 minutes before the scheduled departure, immediately get those tickets redeposited into your account and get the taxes refunded.

And I also feel like since the pandemic, a lot of other airlines like United and Delta have gotten, have loosened their cancel, their change and cancellation policies. And so that's something that kind of works in the consumer's favor. But there have been so many times where I have been saved by, either something my flight is delayed and I'm losing a day. I'm getting there a day later or I have to go, there have been times like when I was going to Japan and there was a really bad weather system coming in and I was like, I need to go a day early to fly out to where I was positioning to. And so, I just feel like there's so much peace of mind when booking with points and knowing if something goes wrong, I'm not out thousands of dollars every time I plan a trip.

Alex: Well, what's nice too about flights is if you're booking with cash, then if you have to cancel, most of the time, at least, I mean, I know you can pay more money to get it refunded to your form of payment, but it's so much more expensive to book those fares. And so I'm always, if I'm paying cash for a flight, I'm just booking refundable, or if I have to cancel, they give me a flight credit. That is eventually going to expire.

So, when you book with points, you just get your points back. There's no, okay, well now my money is stuck with Delta Airlines, and I've got to find a way to go use it. I'm in that situation right now where each of my kids has like a $250 Delta credit that expires next, no, I think it expires later this year. And I'm like, okay, we got to book a, like I have a plan for them, but it's like, you know, it's just it's something that's been hanging over your head where if you book with points, you're it's out of sight out of mind, you don't have to worry about it.

Jess: Yeah. So I think each of us, we probably have multiple stories, but we're going to share, we're going to share a story about a canceled trip, either not by any fault of our own or yes, because of something that we did and kind of how we pivoted and made it work for us. So Alex is going to go first. Hers is definitely the most recent of the three of ours.

Alex: Yeah. So I was supposed to be going on a trip to the Maldives and we booked this trip a whole year ago because getting those Qatar Airways Qsuite flights are not super easy to come by. And so I booked it right when it, right when the flights were released. And the day that we were leaving, I woke up in the morning and the flights were canceled. And so, I, the airline refunded all the taxes and fees to my credit card. Points came back to my account. It did take some time for all of this to go through because Qatar has had a, had a mess to deal with and a lot going on.

So sometimes an important thing to do is just having patience with these airlines. I never once called them or contacted them because I knew, okay, I filled out the form, I canceled it. I just need to do the waiting part and all my points came back to me. So I think that's something to keep in mind is don't just be like, oh my gosh, the sky is falling. I need to do all these things. Like, if you don't have to call the airlines, don't call the airlines because it's going to be a long time for you.

Now, the hard part with this was my hotel stay at the Alila Maldives had a 21-day cancellation policy. Well, this was, you know, two days before with the time zone change and all that, you have to leave two days before you actually arrive there. So that was well, well past that. But I was like, hey, like this is the situation. I actually can't get there. This is, I was planning on being there.
I actually called the Hyatt Globalist line and they were like, okay, let me call the hotel and they were like, hey, okay, the hotel said not to do anything. They're going to be emailing everybody, but do not cancel your stay. If you cancel it, you will be responsible for the cancellation policy, which their cancellation policy, if you cancel within 21 days, it's, you have to pay for four nights. And I'm pretty sure it's the cash rate. So four nights of the Alila Maldives is, that'd probably be about at least $4,000. So I was like, yeah, don't worry. I'm not going to cancel this.

So, I sent them an email proactively. I didn't wait for them to send me one. And the hard thing about a place like the Maldives is I can't just call them on the phone. Our time zones are crazy, and I even tried to call and it like my, it didn't even go through. So, it's not the easiest place to like work through all this, but email was great. They were easy to work with.

So they, I just said, hey, this is the situation. I'm not going to be able to make it and I'd really love a refund. And they offered, they emailed me back and said, oh, we would love, like, this is the policy, but we will be willing to extend to you to come back in the next six months, and we won't charge you any fee. And I was like, that's, I was very nice. I wrote a nice reply. I was like, oh, thank you so much for be working with me on this. In six months, that's going to be your rainy season. I booked this a year ago. With everything going on in the world, I don't feel comfortable planning a new trip yet, but we would love to come back in the future. I would really appreciate if you would just refund my trip.

They got back to me, no problem. We will re, your trip has been refunded. I had booked with a category one through seven free night certificate and then used points for the other nights. All of those showed right back in my Hyatt account. So, if you're offered something and you don't like what you're offered, you can kindly ask for something else.

My thoughts were as I talked to these guys about it and I was like, I'm pretty sure they're just saying this because this is what they're hoping that people will be like, okay, sure, we'll take that. But I wasn't, I wasn't wanting to go back. When I'm like, I won't be able to fly on Qsuite if I go in six months. This was a big part of the trip. So, anyway, the good news, oh, yeah. Were you going to say something, Jess?

Jess: No, I was just going to say people are probably faced with, oh, do I postpone for six months or do I lose $4,000? And so, a lot of people are probably just like, okay, we'll take the deal. But you can nicely always, you know, push back a little bit and see. I think most hotels are willing to work with people, especially in a situation like this.

Alex: I do too. So the good news is here is I hadn't paid for my seaplane or my overwater villa yet. So I had messaged them. I had upgraded to an overwater

villa and they emailed me a secure link to pay for my seaplane and my overwater villa. Well, every time I tried to do it, it did not work. It would decline my payment. I tried multiple cards, but I wanted to use my Hyatt card so I could get extra points on the, on the purchase. And I looked it up and apparently, like this is a common thing through like they use Bank of Maldives and it, I even called the bank, and they were like, yeah, we don't even see a purchase being trying to be made. So this is on their end.

So I let them know what was going on. They're like, oh, well, we can send you a wire transfer and you can pay. And I was like, I would really love to be able to pay on my credit card so I can earn the points for this stay. Is there any way at all possible, like we are coming, actually, we didn't, but we were planning on it. We are coming. Is there any way I can pay for these things on arrival with my Hyatt card? And they were like, yes, you can do that.

So, I did throw out I was Globalist. I didn't know if that was help, helped or not, but I was like, oh, I'm a Hyatt Globalist, and we're super excited about our stay. I just really want to earn the extra Hyatt points. Is there any way I can use my credit card on arrival? So they let me do that.

But the nice thing was, if I had already paid that, then I would be having to, and I'm sure they would, they would refund it, but I'd have to be just one extra thing of, oh, by the way, I need you to refund my overwater villa and my seaplane fee, which that was not going to be cheap.

So I think my, the overwater villa I did was like $200 a night. So that's like, I think with taxes it was like $1,200. Seaplane, I think, was $600 each. Like it's probably around $2,400 I was having to pay. So I was super happy I didn't have to like work to get that money back. So that just was kind of a lucky thing that was annoying that actually worked out in my favor in the long run.

Jess: And now they added a note to your file and they're like, this woman lies. She told us she was coming here and was going to pay this on her card and then she canceled.

Alex: Seriously. Okay. So that is what happened and my parents were already there watching my kids. And so we're like, okay, well, they're already here.

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They're here for the next like six nights, six or seven nights. We should probably take advantage of the fact that we have babysitters here. And we've already, like my husband had already taken work off. He'd already gotten all that situated. There's, if you're a parent and you leave your kids to go on a trip, you know the level of work that it takes to plan for that. And so we were like, well, let's figure out something to do.

So, that same day, trip was canceled, found out early that morning before like we got up to leave to drive to the airport to fly to Dallas and canceled all of that. Canceled my, that's how I have another Delta credit is I canceled my Delta flight for Mitch and I to go to Dallas, but anyway, within like that afternoon, I already had our next trip booked.

So we ended up going to Maui. We, this was on a Saturday, Sunday morning, we woke up early, flew to Maui. We flew on Hawaiian Airlines. They have a direct flight from Salt Lake City to Honolulu. And so we paid 17,500 Atmos rewards. So used, we had open Hawaiian cards before the, those disappeared before Alaska and Hawaiian merged. And so we have a kind of a nice little healthy stash there. So this was amazing. So it was from Honolulu and then on to Maui.

Worked out great. I was just amazed that we found flights so cheap. I do believe I searched seats.aero and that's how I found these. And it just made the searching for the flights so much faster, especially in a situation like this where you're like, oh, I've got a pivot, and I have to literally plan a trip today, one day to do all of this, what are we going to do? I don't have tons of time to scour each website and find the cheapest flight myself.

And then coming home, we flew Southwest Airlines. The flights were 27,000 miles each, but we switched... So if you have the Southwest Companion Pass, you can switch your companion three times a year. So we took my son off as Mitch's companion and added me as his because we didn't have a flight with him for a little bit later. I did have to, we did have one booked. So if you have a Southwest Companion Pass, you have to cancel that flight with your current companion before you can book with a new companion. So the reason we did his though is because I literally had a trip really soon with my son who's my

companion. So that's just something to think about and be aware of is who are we going to make the companion in this type of situation.

So, and then we paid 40,000 points a night to stay at the Andaz Maui. So booking last minute, availability can be pretty tricky and this was one of the hardest things about doing this pivot was what is available with decent flights and hotel stays, and it's not raining all week there. So we got really lucky that we, there actually ended up being a terrible storm in Maui and on the Hawaiian Islands. We were there the week or two before that. So, because that just would have been like, oh, we're canceling the trip we just rebooked.

Jess: Well, no, it did work. It's funny because you were texting, like we were bouncing ideas off each other. I was like, what about this? What about this? And you would be like, I checked it, it's not available. I checked it, it's not available. And so, we say like sometimes booking last-minute can work in your favor because availability opens up, but this was a prime example of it. I mean, it worked out.

Alex: Yeah, it just took work.

Jess: There were several suggestions that we were like, nope, it's not available. Nope, it's not available.

Alex: But I mean, Maui last minute is pretty, pretty good Yeah. So the one thing that was interesting, a little tip I want to share is when I went and searched on Hyatt for this stay, I put in, I went to like the points calendar, and I put in like, well, first I just searched for like five nights. And then I was like, okay, that's not coming up. Let me try four nights. Well, that didn't work. Let me just look at each night individually. So I went to the points calendar.

When I put in four nights, it showed me nothing. When I put in, well, it showed me dates but nothing that worked for us. So, but then when I put in one night, there were four nights in a row that were available. There weren't five nights, so it was only a four-night stay, which actually worked out just fine. We've been to Maui enough times that we didn't need like this huge long thing. We just wanted something. We were grateful for anything we could get.

But the reason, so the four nights showed up when I looked individually and the reason was is because they had mixed nights available. It wasn't the same room type available for every single night. So there would be like a queen room for a couple of nights and then a king room and then a queen room again. And so I was kind of nervous about booking it myself because this at this point, these were non-refundable hotel bookings because it was then next day. And so I was like, I don't want to book this and then something happens and they can't book me the next night.

So I called Hyatt and had them book it for me. It took the girl like five minutes. She was amazing. And I was like, oh my gosh, thank you so much. This would have taken me so much longer to do if I did this myself.

So, the next thing was she's like, yeah, I'll put a note in here that hopefully they can keep you in the same room type, and I'll put a note here asking for an upgrade. When we, that morning on the Hyatt app, there was a thing that said like text the hotel and I texted the hotel and I said, hey, here's the situation. We're coming today. There's any way we can stay in the same room, that would be great. Or if there's any upgrades available, we'd really appreciate it. We got there, they moved us into a queen room for the four-night stay. We did not have to move, but they didn't have any upgrades available. And I had even looked at the app that morning. I was like, yeah, there's nothing available. I don't think they're going to put us in the three-bedroom villa.

But they had like a big conference coming, so they couldn't, there wasn't as much moving, but I will give it to that lady working the front desk at the Andaz because she spent time like really trying to figure out if she could move things around to make it work for us, which was so kind of her. But we were just happy like to be anywhere and that we didn't have to move rooms during our stay.

So it was just crazy to me, though, that we could book a stay to Hawaii literally the day before, and our flights were not even expensive points. Like they were totally reasonable, as if I would have booked them nine months ago. And so that was kind of cool to me to be like, hey, maybe I should try this more often, where man, I'm kind of been home for a while or I'm really feeling the travel bug. Maybe I should go somewhere tomorrow because it's really like fun and just fills you with like… it reminds me one time my mom and I did this, where she was

visiting me and it was January and super snowy in Utah. And we were like, we have all these points. We should just go somewhere.

So we booked a trip to Hawaii, and we left like five days later. And it was just so fun because it was unexpected. So sometimes those spur-of-the-moment trips can be just even more fun than something you've been looking forward to for a week. So, I don't know. I was kind of thinking maybe I'll try this a bit more often and just see if I'm feeling like I need to get away. Do a last-minute trip. So I thought it was pretty cool.

Jess: That's awesome.

Alex: Yeah. All right, Jess, what about you? What's your story?

] Jess: Yeah. So the one that comes to mind when you brought up the idea for this episode was and this was probably three or four years ago now, but I had booked Alila Ventana Big Sir. A lot of you probably know that's like a super aspirational Hyatt property, really, really hard to find standard award availability there. So, it's adults only. So I had booked it as like a couple's trip for me and Ted.

I think we were going to go for three nights. And so, had everything planned, had our flights booked, had our rental car reserved, had Alila Ventana Big Sir reserved, and I actually had us staying like we were flying into San Francisco. We were going to stay one night at the airport at the Grand Hyatt at the San Francisco airport and then we were going to do three nights at Alila Ventana Big Sur. And so, had it all done, right?

Wake up, wake up that morning that we're supposed to leave, and Molly has like a 103-degree fever, projectile vomits all over our bathroom, and I'm supposed to, like, my mom is supposed to be coming to watch her while we're gone. And my mom is like in her 70s. And so I'm just like, oh my gosh.

So, I, you know, I make like an appointment at the urgent care and in the meantime, so this was when like, I was like, is it COVID? Is it the flu? Is it something completely? So we had those like at home COVID tests and I'm swabbing her nostril and she coughs all over my face, okay, while I'm like six inches from her face, okay? So she coughs all over my face. So I felt fine, but I

was like, I called Ted and I was like, I'm just worried we're going to get there, and then I'm going to get whatever she has because she literally just coughed in my face, and then I'm going to spend the whole time like being sick and miserable.

Anyways, I took her to urgent care. She had the flu. And so I just told him, I was like, I think we need to cancel our trip. Like I don't want my 70-year-old mom getting the flu and then like, you know, elderly people can have like serious...

Alex: My mom, are you like, hey, I'm elderly people.

Pam:. I'm actually cracking up at this, cause I wouldn't even give that a second thought if I came and kids had the flu and'd be like, oh, okay, I might get it.

Jess: Oh my gosh. No. No, it's, this was when so many people were being like hospitalized with co… I was just imagining like my mom watching her, getting the flu and then…

Alex: Yeah, it was a while ago. And also, you're a nurse, Mom. So you're more like, I can handle the sick. You handle the sick stuff really well.

Jess: No, I feel too guilty. I'm like…

Alex: But so you're giving me permission if this is me, I can still go. I don't need to stress and leave.

Pam: I guess so.

Jess: Our bathroom looked like a crime scene. And so I was like, I cannot leave my mom with this.

Alex: A crime scene of vomit, but not blood. To clarify.

Jess: I felt too guilty. So it ended up, I mean, we still haven't, we're actually going to Alila next, no, in a couple months, and we're finally.

Alex: Wait, hold on. Did you and Ted get sick?

Jess: No, I didn't end up getting sick.

Alex: Oh good. That's good.

Jess: Yeah, so I was kind of like, oh, I guess we could have gone, but you know, hindsight's 20/20. So I called the, I was outside the cancellation window for basically everything other than like we had booked our flights on United. I was able to cancel those and get my points back. I always book our rental cars through Costco Travel because you don't have to give, you don't even have to give any credit card information, and you can cancel up until you pick up the car. And so super easy to cancel that. I called the Grand Hyatt SFO and was like, I'm so sorry. My daughter has the flu. I can send you her positive test result. Like, and they were like, no, no, no, it's fine. They canceled, no issue and refunded my points.

Alila, I was concerned about, because this is an aspirational property. They have like, I think a 30-day cancellation window for them. And so I was like, there's no way they're going to let me cancel and get my points back.

So I used a little trick. I haven't tried this in a while, so I don't know if it still works, but I think it does. I called Hyatt, and I was like, hey, my daughter has the flu. We can't make it. Can you help me reschedule for later this year? And so they rescheduled me for like six months later. And then I hung up the phone, and then I was suddenly within the cancellation window of my new reservation, and I canceled it and I got all my points back. So, that's just a little trick if you ever are in that situation where...

Pam: I'm kind of worried about Jess. She has all these little side tricks that she passes on that may or may not be kosher, but you know, if you're ever looking to get around something, I think she's the girl to go to.

Alex: Hey, you can trust her. She's a lawyer.

Jess: I’m a lawyer.

Pam: That's right.

Jess: Hopefully, Hyatt's not listening to this episode. So, anyways, it was a huge bummer because I spent the weekend cleaning up sickness instead of relaxing in Big Sur, but it was a, you know, I would have been if I had booked this trip on

cash, we're talking about being out thousands and thousands of dollars had I had to cancel last minute. And so...

Alex: Well, if on cash, you wouldn't be going to Alila Ventana Big Sur.

Jess: No, I wouldn't. I would be like the Grand Hyatt SFO would be my destination. There would be no...

Alex: Or you would be going to the Alila Ventana campsite. They have campsites there.

Jess: The camp, the campground. Yes. The campgrounds.

Alex: That's what you could afford. The campgrounds.

Jess: So, anyways, ever since that experience, I was, I'm just like so thankful for Pam: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, I agree completely. I've had two really crazy experiences. I'm not going to talk about them very long because we have talked about them on previous podcasts. So if you want to go to our podcast about when I went to Australia and New Zealand, you'll find out about my New Zealand thing. And the safari that didn't happen is the other podcast. But basically, for both of these, I am already over where I'm supposed to go.

Alex: And that's a whole other level of stress. Like you're literally, you're not at home. Like Jess and I were at home, and we could pick, we could figure it out at home. You're in another country.

Pam: Yeah. So I'm in Australia and we are staying at the Four Seasons with an FHR certificate, which is really a great deal anyway. And we were at dinner, and we were sitting next to some people who happened to be from New Zealand. And we say, “Oh yeah, well, we're going to New Zealand tomorrow. We're heading to Auckland.” They go, “You have heard about the flash floods, haven't you?”

And I go, what? I mean, we're leaving the next morning. This is dinner time. And so we hurry up and eat, go up to our room, turn on the TV and we see all the flash flooding happening in Auckland and in the northern islands of New

Zealand, and we then pretty soon I start getting all these cancellations for some of our excursions, and I realize we've got a problem here.

And so basically what we did, it was a little easier because we were going after there we were going to the South Islands. We were going down to Queenstown. And so I was able to just hurriedly change some flights and then find a place for us to stay there longer.

So, I mean, it was, it is, I hate those feelings. You're laying there in bed in your hotel, and I'm just so stressed to the max. Just like, I've got to get this done. I've got to cancel these other things. I've got to do this and I have a few hours. I'm already tired. My husband's asking me questions and I'm thinking, don't talk to me, I'm getting more and more stressed. I need all my brain cells to work this out. So we did get it worked out. We did finally go back a few years later and saw what we missed in Auckland, and actually ended up liking that even more.

Then our other one was, this was horrible too. So we were going on a safari, and we're going to go to the Maasai Mara at JW Marriott. I am redoing that this summer. And this was a couple of years, two or three years ago. We decided that before we go on the safari, we are going to go over to the island of Mauritius, and we are there in Mauritius.

So we're having a great time, and it's our last night. We're leaving in the morning to go to Kenya for our safari. And I get a text or an email, and we're at dinner, and it said that they…

Alex: It's always at dinner.

Pam: Yes, they have canceled our the stay at the JW Marriott because of extreme flooding. And I mean, it was bad. There were people that didn't lose their lives there, but there was, you know, livestock and at some other camps, it was bad.

And I find that out. So we do, this was not the night before we were going to go. It was actually two nights. So the next, I had that next day. Instead of enjoying my last day in Mauritius, I'm sitting there by pool side again, begging my husband not to talk to me because my head has got to think. I'm trying to figure out where are we going? What are we doing? How are we getting somewhere?

And so for me, the thought was, well, where else in the world would I like to go? And we'll see what can work. Well, I have always wanted to go to Sardinia, Italy. And so I thought, okay, there's a Seven Pines place there that's a Hyatt. Let me see if they have availability. And so just kind of worked. They had availability.

Then I had to figure out all my flights. So it was like, and we had to go back to Kenya because we were on Air Kenya and Mauritius. We had to go back to Kenya. I had to get us flying out of Kenya to Munich. From Munich, we went to Sardinia, but then I had to get us going, how we would get home and I had to, I wanted to get everything figured out before I started canceling stuff. So it worked out okay. We ended up with a lovely trip to Sardinia, but boy, that is stressful. It is, you know, and like I said, we are there. We're out of the country. I got to figure out, we got to figure out where we're going and how we're getting home and quickly.

Jess: Well, and in both of your cases, I think it was towards the start of your trip. And so you don't just want to, you're like, I took all this time to get here. I don't want to just turn around and go home. I'm already here. But I do think that your husband attracts floods, apparently. And so, next time you want to go somewhere where you where like there's a chance it could flood, maybe don't bring him on that trip. Maybe bring like Alex or your sister.

Alex: Or Jess.

Pam: He's bad, he's bad luck because we've been on two safaris, we, we supposedly, we did go on one safari, he got kidney stones, second safari was canceled because of a flood. We're now scheduled for the third. If the third time isn't the charm with him having a great time, we're done with safaris.

Alex: He's done.

Alex: Yeah, he's done with safaris.

Pam: He's done. Yes. So I did want to tell you about another thing of cancellation that is a whole different type of cancellation that I think would be interesting for our listeners. And that is, this wasn't canceled, I didn't get this

canceled. I canceled this. And this can sometimes happen. This is again, something that can be good because of points and miles.

So my daughter and I had gone to Mallorca and, um, we had gone to stayed in oh, now I can't even remember my main city there, but we stayed, had a lovely visit. Our next time we were going over to the Zoa Tree Mallorca. So, you know, you look at these places online, you read the reviews, you, um, make your best guess. And we got there and when we first got there, I go, oh, this is nice. I love this. This is exactly what I wanted.

As we got to our room, as we walked further in, it was like, this is like a dorm room. And this wasn't the type of stay that I wanted to do and it was quite a few points, and this was a girl's trip and it just wasn't what I wanted, and I was like, oh my goodness, what are we going to do? You know, and then their food was, they had like one restaurant, it wasn't good. It was, buffet, and I just thought, oh my goodness, we've got three nights here.

Alex: And you had just stayed somewhere you loved, right?

Pam: Right. Yes, Las Palmas?

Alex: So that makes it hard too.

Pam: Yeah, so it was really hard. And so I'm like, this, I was just so disappointed. I thought, I really don't want to stay here. So I would love to cancel the rest of our stay. So and the guy had said, you know, let me know how things are going for you. And I let him know that I was, you know, didn't love it. And then and I can't remember what he, he said maybe he could move us to a different room or something. So then I, you know, being a Globalist, I decided let's reach out to my concierge.

And so long story short is that finally, after reaching out and talking to concierge, several people in Hyatt, I said, I'd be happy to stay, stay that first night, pay for that. I just would hopefully be able to get my points back for the last two nights. And I wouldn't say it was easy peasy. I would say I had to stick with it a little bit and just say that I was just, you know, it just didn't meet my expectations, and it would have been my, I said it was fine. It was fine. If I was there with family, I

would have been fine, but it just was not the type of stay I was looking for. Now I sound like a real brat. But uh...

Alex: No, well, I think the thing, just to help you, disclaimer a little bit more, is you flew across the world. Like you're, you're, this is a big trip. You're in a new country and you have in your mind, this is going to be a very relaxing girls' trip and it's going to be like a luxury, you're imagining a luxury stay.

Pam: It was luxury. It was a luxury stay, that was it.

Alex: And so when you go, and you're like, oh, this wasn't what I thought it was going to be.

Jess: Or it's like this isn't what the pictures look like, or you know.

Pam: Right.

Alex: So I don't think it's being overly difficult. It's just like, hey, if this does work out, I would love to switch. But it's not like you're running in there and being like, you need to move me. This hotel is terrible.

Pam: No, I was so nice the whole time. I was so nice and even the guy got back to me and said that he was sorry that was his price. I say, this is nothing. This is a wonderful place. This is great. I say, but I was looking at this girl's weekend that was more on the luxury side. If I brought my family here, I would have loved it. And so hopefully, you know, we all left in good…

Alex: "If I brought my family." My daughter is not my family.

Pam: Yeah, yeah, my other, you know, that's my daughter. There I go, not remembering my family.

Jess: Pam, I thought you didn't have a family,

Pam: I know. So anyway, just, this is just to let people know that sometimes if you want to cancel something because it didn't meet the expectation that you have, it is possible. The thing to do is just to be very kind. I mean, if we'd had to stay, I wouldn't have made a stink. It would have been, we would have, we would have pivoted to that expectation and we would have been fine. But it is

possible to sometimes cancel things that haven't met your expectation. So, anyway,

Alex: Mom, just to clarify, too, that hotel stay, like it was, we're staying at the hotel, we're relaxing at the resort. You weren't like, oh, we're going to go sightseeing and do this and this and this. It's like, oh, we came here to spend time at the hotel.

Alex: Right. There wasn't really much to do around there was the other thing. So we found another hotel in another part of the island that was, used to be a Park Hyatt, so you know it was very luxurious.

So, anyway, let's just talk a little bit about what makes a successful pivot. Number one, having a stockpile of points, because no matter what, I didn't need to worry in any of these or any of us needed to think, oh my goodness, what if it takes them a while to get me these points back. I'm going to have to pay cash. I'm, you know, how am I going to do this? We have a healthy stockpile of points. And because of that, we could go ahead and book even if we didn't get our other points immediately back in the system, which, pretty much for me, they always were. I didn't with this. It took a while for the hotel stay that I was talking about.

The other thing is I can't even imagine doing this without using a search engine, without using points.yeah, seats.aero, roam, whatever search engine you love. I mean, I was on them like glue. I was just like, you know, without them, I could never do that type of pivot.

Again, stay calm. And I was very calm within myself. It was just until my husband starts wanting to, "Have you done this, have done this? Well, what are you doing about this?" And then I'm like, okay, now I'm freaked out and now I'm, you know, all stressed out. So you need to, you know, maybe send that player two go to the other room while you try to figure this out.

You know, this, in most cases, this is just first-world problems. It's, you know, I we were safe wherever we were. We could have extended our stays where we were. It is definitely more stressful when you're in another country than if you're sitting at home and you're thinking, okay, I'm sitting at home. The worst that

could happen is we're not going to go for a week or two. Or we're not going to go till later, but I'm comfortable, and I'm safe at my house.

The other thing to remember, and I really second this with what Alex said, is that good deals are really found last-minute. I mean, I really, I still, in both of these cases, you know, I still stayed at luxury hotels. I still was able to fly business class and I was able to fly business class home because really a lot opens up. And so I kind of second what Alex says about, hey, we just need to do some more last-minute trips because there are good deals that are found out there. And so you don't need to completely freak out.

And 100% having points and miles. I mean, this would have been so all of this would be so much more painful if we'd booked cash or if we didn't have a stock pile points. We only had a few and we were kind of hanging on to these. Okay, Jess, you have a couple other suggestions for us?

Jess: Yeah, so my number one is if you are not using the Flighty app yet, what are you doing? Because you need to be using it. This is in no way sponsored. I pay, I pay for my own. But hey, Flighty, if you want to sponsor us, we will accept.

Pam: I need to do that.

Jess: Yes, you do.

Alex: Yeah, you do.

Jess: This is a must-have because I have gotten alerts twice recently from Flighty before I got them from the airline. And so, one was I was supposed to go to Portugal with some friends. I get an alert that my flight the next day is canceled. And so I immediately go into, it was a KLM flight. It was canceled. The only other options were on Air France. I immediately go into my app, and it says, your flight's canceled, here are your rebooking options.

So that's another recommendation. If you can do something as soon as you get that alert, and you can do it yourself and not have to wait on a customer service representative, then do that because there were four of us traveling together. Three of us immediately went into the rebooking options and rebooked on the flight out on Air France the next day. One was a little slow and she missed out

and she had to wait two days to get out. So she missed a day in Portugal with us because she just didn't act fast enough. So as soon as you can.

The other one was, I got, so after our Tanzania safari, Ella had flown back to Houston with us, and then she was going to fly from here out to Iowa, and I get, you know, she's at the airport. She's boarding her flight, and I get an alert that says like the Des Moines airport is closed due to a snowstorm from Flighty because I have like, I have my flights in flighty and then I have Flighty friends, and so I can see all their flights too. Like, I can see all of Alex's flights too. And so I text her.

Alex: It's actually fun because Jess will land. I'm like, welcome back to the United States, because it'll give me an alert. “Jess has landed in Houston.” I'm like, hey, welcome back.

Jess: So I text her, and I'm like, hey, I just got an alert from Flighty that the Des Moines airport is closed. Have you heard anything? She was flying United. She was like, no, I'm in line to board right now. And I was like, okay, maybe it was a mistake. Sure enough, 20 minutes later, “they just made us all get off the plane because the airport is closed.” And I was like, I told you that. Like, I like Flighty told me that 20 minutes ago. So that app has been invaluable for me.

I will also say that airlines have gotten really great about using social media, like X. The only reason I have X is to contact airlines and the Hyatt concierge

Alex: 100%.

Jess: That is the only reason I still have X. X, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, I feel like they're all using these social media channels now. And so that can often be a quicker way to reach them versus the traditional calling them on the phone. And if you're...

Alex: Well, and then you can move on with your day and then, oh, they messaged me back. Let me check this out.

Jess: And, you know, lawyer Jess likes having everything in writing. I don't like doing things. A, I'm an elder millennial. I don't like using the phone. I don't like calling people, but B, I like having everything in writing.

And then the last thing is just be kind to the representatives. Like, none of this is their fault. You know, I feel like I try to be extra nice, hoping that they will like help me out and find a way to make it work. And so, I'm just like, I hope you have a great day. Like, thank you so much. And so I try to be overly nice and hope like that karma comes back to me and like does me a favor. So those are my tips.

Pam: Okay. As you guys have all heard and you probably know, travel can be unpredictable. So having a plan, a stockpile of points and staying calm when things go wrong can make all the difference. Thanks so much for listening. We'll catch you next time.

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