

## Simple Travel Tips for Your Project Journey<sup>1</sup>

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In early June, my wife Peggy and I spent 2 ½ glorious weeks in France. Our trip included two weeks in the Provence region near Gordes and concluded with a few days in Paris to revisit the rebuilt Notre Dame Cathedral. Highly recommended it. Yet, getting ready for the trip was probably the most stressful part of our journey. Did we lock all the doors at home? Turn off the PC? What time does the flight leave? And where are those confirmation emails for the pre-booked hotels? The pre-vacation panic spiral is real, common, and can leave any traveler feeling like a chaotic mess before taking that fateful step in the airport. (Just think of how frantic that opening scene was in *Home Alone* and know it *doesn't* have to be that way.)

A very good article (*Travel*, May 29, 2025) offered six simple travel tips that I followed and made my trip considerably less stressful. The suggestions came from Samantha Brown, an experienced global traveler and journalist. Her travel prep style is all about reducing anxiety before it starts — keeping things simple, intentional, and calm. From how to pace one's itinerary to the importance of daily rituals, following Brown's tips made my travel feel like the break it was intended to be, before and during my trip.

On reflection, these simple travel tips may be astutely applied to any *project* journey. Herein are my suggestions to help reduce the stress and strain of our professional work aligned with the Samantha Brown tips for smart, stress-reducing travel tips.

### **Samantha Brown Tip #1: “Pack a week in advance (seriously)” /**

#### **Dr. Bill PM Tip – *Finalize Your Detailed Project Schedule at least a month prior to kickoff***

This Project tip helps avoid the last-minute scramble to publish the Project “Kick-Off” Package at the zero hour of the kick-off meeting. In addition, having your Project “bags”

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packed [published] in advance gives the PM and Team the mental breathing room to handle other last-minutes details of the Project kick-off meeting [departure].

**Samantha Brown Tip #2: “Arrive at the airport earlier than you think you need to” /**

**Dr. Bill PM Tip – *Arrive, well prepared, at all Project Meetings at least 20 minutes early***

Arriving early to project meetings allows adequate time for room set-up and the critical socialization time between the Team and the Project Sponsors. The best way to remove 90% of meeting stress is to allocate sufficient time for meeting preparation.

**Samantha Brown Tip #3: “Remember: even dream trips need a warm-up” /**

**Dr. Bill PM Tip – *Start the Project workweek with a Team warm-up***

My travel warm-up ritual is to review the local city map with a coffee [morning] or wine [evening]. My suggested warm-up to the project workweek is to review the project “map” – the Project Execution Plan / Executive Summary with by the Team. This warm-up may be held that best suits the Team - at 1 p.m. on Monday, 9 a.m. on Tuesday, team lunch on Thursday, or whenever. The important part is that the Team considers the ritual as a pre-start for the workweek journey ahead.

**Samantha Brown Tip #4: “Plan only one big event a day” /**

**Dr. Bill PM Tip – *Plan no more than one big Project event a day***

What a great tip! Executing a major Project event requires preparation, coordination and cooperation with the Project Stakeholders, and timely follow-up. This tip helps the PM and Team to properly focus on the big event with the proper prioritization while deferring other, non-essential Project tasks to later.

**Samantha Brown Tip #5: “Schedule a 3 p.m. break —no matter what” /**

**Dr. Bill PM Tip – *Schedule a late afternoon break -no matter what***

The afternoon repast on my France trip included a glass [or two] of properly chilled French Rose or an Aperol Spritz shared amongst our travel companions. [My “job” was to serve as the wine sommelier / beverage connoisseur.] Although the beverage selection will require modification, the intention is to take a mid/late afternoon reset and to slow down when one’s energy and patience both naturally tend to dip. Take permission to go slower, matching biorhythms with one’s physical, mental and emotional states.

**Samantha Brown Tip #6: “Create a simple daily ritual” /**

**Dr. Bill PM Tip – *Create a simple daily ritual***

Rituals help one feel grounded, even in unfamiliar locations or situations. Picking one comforting thing to repeat daily [e.g., trip to the local coffee shop, morning stroll, completing the NYT Wordle puzzle], affords one the comfort to relax without having to think too intently about the Project. The relaxed Project Manager is a very effective leader.

So, for a more pleasant project journey, incorporate the proper preparation, pacing, and the well-timed pastry break. These suggested PM Travel Tips will help transform even the most chaotic project journey into a composed endeavor.

As always, your questions, comments and criticisms are welcome. Feel free to contact me in care of email: [William.moylan@emich.edu](mailto:William.moylan@emich.edu)

Best regards,

*Dr. Bill*

**References**

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## About the Author



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