

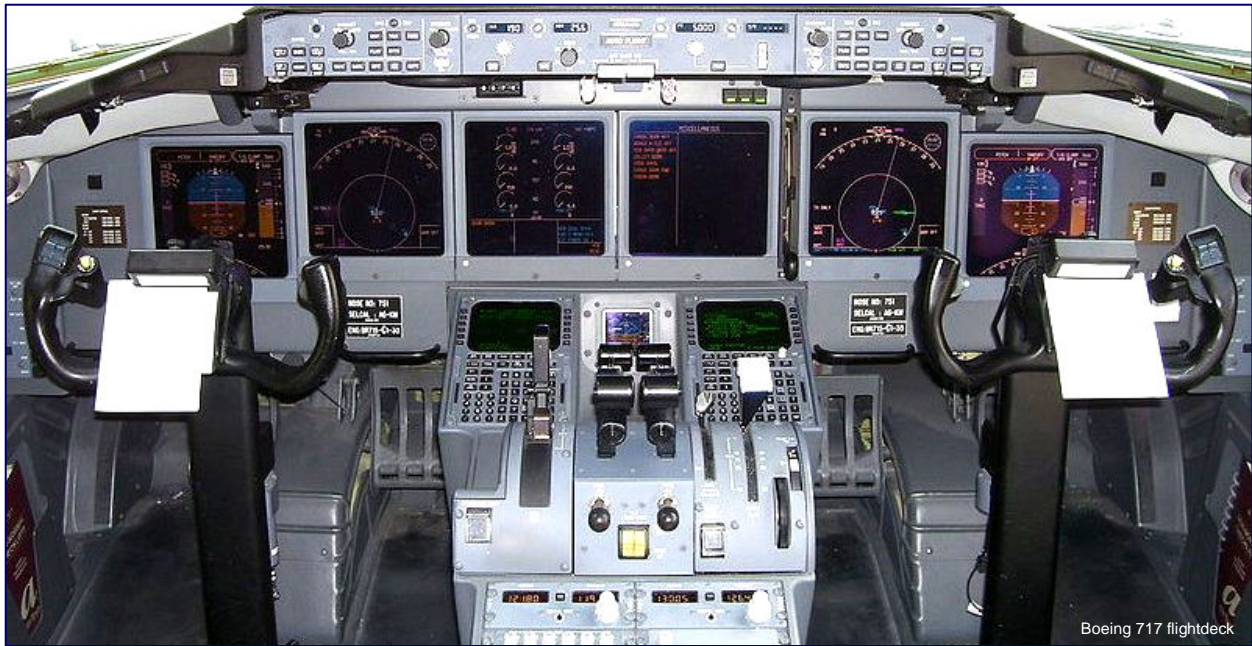
# **OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FLIGHTDECK**

- LIFE LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH AVIATION -

by Jerry Tobias

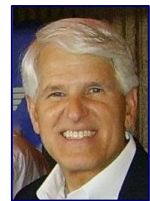
*"I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw."*

*Proverbs 24:32*



## **COMPLACENCY**

***...THE ENEMY OF SOUND JUDGMENT***



Aviation is a demanding and unforgiving industry. The standard effort required by everyone involved will always be defined by the words "thorough, exact and precise." Attitudes like "good enough," or "close enough" or "it's no big deal," therefore, are never appropriate or acceptable in management offices, flight planning rooms, dispatch offices, maintenance hangars or cockpits.

When such attitudes do appear, they are frequently the result of complacency. Why? When people become complacent, they often relax their standards and consent to short cuts and omissions. And even worse, every time a non-standard practice or operational deviation is "survived," it moves one step closer to becoming a person's (or crew's, or company's) "standard operating procedure." So, even though complacency might begin subtly and

initially seem benign, it can quickly escalate and - before long - chronically override sound judgment.

Here is one example. I used to ride on other airlines' cockpit jump seats from my hometown airport to my airline crew base. During those years I was stunned to watch - more than once - as crews at a no-longer-flying airline briefed arrival and instrument approach procedures using only these exact words: "This airplane, that airport." Such irresponsible short cuts, while obviously tarnishing professionalism and eroding safety, were incredible examples of dangerously complacent, "it's no big deal" and "this is good enough" attitudes. In aviation, though, everything is *always* a big deal, and "good enough" is *never* good enough.

Most of life is also a "big deal." Some of it, though, may actually *not* be as important as it first seems. Many of the overwhelming tasks that contribute to our busyness and stress, for example, will soon be irrelevant, obsolete, and forgotten; many of the things we struggle so hard to purchase will shortly be transformed from treasure into trash; etc. The truth is, much of the "stuff" of life is really *not* a big deal.

But, the *important* things in life will *always* be a big deal. Things like family, friends, other relationships, integrity, honesty, trust, credibility, character, and purpose will *always* matter. That's why you can't really win by taking "short cuts" to get ahead. That's why you can't be complacent about things that are important to your family. That's why you can't stay indifferent about the shortness of life and the certainty of death. And, that's why having a "good enough" attitude concerning your treatment of the people that you live among or encounter each day will *never* be good enough.

THE BOTTOM LINE? Short cuts, omissions, and "good enough" thinking can be very dangerous, and can lead to disaster both in flight and in life. Don't allow complacency to invade your mentality and corrupt your attitudes, your principles, your perspectives or your relationships (with God and others). *These* are the things that you need to carefully and continually guard and attend, for after all is said and done (or flown and landed), *these* are the things that will still really matter. ■

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