



DEPARTURES
IDEAS
INSIGHTS
CALMER
TRAVELS
AHEAD

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF AIRPORTS:

Liminal Space, Suspended Time, and Being Nowhere in Particular



Move Through It on Purpose Guide.

Use this guide to understand why airports feel the way they do, and to pass through one with a little more ease.



SAME
PEOPLE
DIFFERENT
DESTINATIONS
A KINDER
JOURNEY AHEAD



Gates 1 - 4

Ideas for a more meaningful journey



Food & Restrooms



Baggage Claim



SAME
SKY
BRIGHTER
DAYS
AHEAD

A
BRIGHTER
SOMEWHERE
WAITS

*Different
People.
Same
Human
Journey.*

Gate 1



A PLACE THAT IS NOT A PLACE

Notice the non-place around you.

- An airport has no identity, history, or relationships; it could be almost anywhere.
- For a while you are defined by a document, not by your role or your life.
- There is real relief in being nobody in particular, released from obligations.

Gate 2



THE THRESHOLD

Feel the suspended rules.

- Airports are liminal, betwixt and between, with ordinary rules relaxed.
- When you eat, what you drink, how you dress, and how long you sit all loosen.
- Everyone in the security line is reduced, briefly, to the same condition.

Gate 3



EMPTY, VIGILANT TIME

Understand why gate hours exhaust you.

- Airport waiting is unoccupied yet vigilant, which is unusually depleting.
- Buffer time is time you chose to waste as insurance, and it drains.
- Give it a genuine task or an absorbing book; occupied time feels shorter.

Gate 4



SPENDING AND FEELING

See what the environment is doing to you.

- Captivity, surplus time, anxiety, and suspended norms make people spend.
- A pause before a purchase interrupts a decision made in a strange state.
- Arrivals and departure halls are among the few places public emotion is allowed.

STILL
A GOOD
PLACE
TO BE
FOR NOW



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| Z Psychology

Connection heals. Conversations help.