June 2025

Aero Crew News®

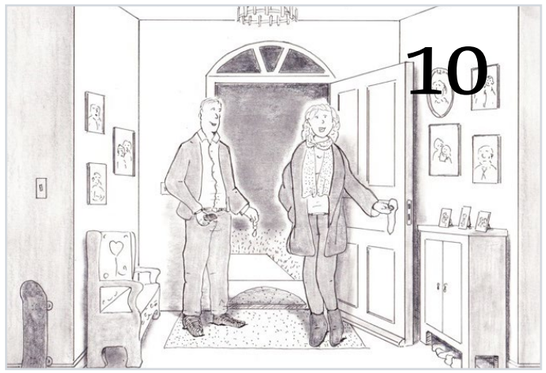
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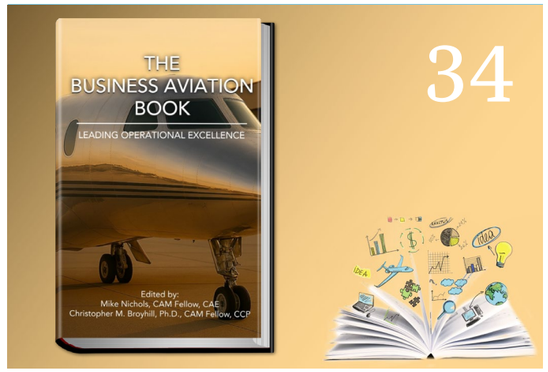


contents

June 2025

Jump to each section Below
by clicking on the title or photo.











Also Featuring:

Letter from the Publisher	4
Aviator Bulletins	6
Add to Experience with Something New	12
Single Pilot Operations - A host of hurdles to overcome	16
Move, Drink and Chill Toward a Healthier Summer	20
The Science Behind Building Resilience	22
The Secret to True Wealth	38

the grid



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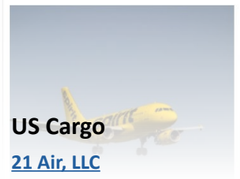
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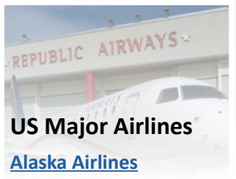


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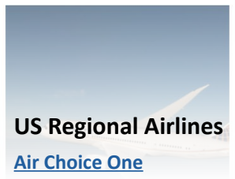
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Breeze Airways
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The Grid (contract comparisons, pay charts, company details, etc.) has moved online. Click on the airlines above to go directly to that airline's information, or go to www. AeroCrewNews.com/go/thegrid.

Dear readers,

Summer is just around the corner and the thunderstorms have been no joke! Enjoy your EDCTs and FAA ground stops. I predict we will see a lot more of them this summer. I say this every year, but I decidedly prefer the summer weather over winter weather. My pool is open and the sun is shining! (Although you will find me hiding under an umbrella because I don't tan, I burn.)

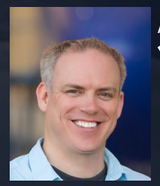
We've been hearing whispers of major airline hiring starting to pick back up with American Airlines plucking from their regionals and potentially another going back to full-scale hiring in 2026. If you are looking to move from your current airline, polish your résumé and start prepping for that interview! (Excellent help can be found at our partner organization, Aero Crew Solutions.)

Moonlight, our newest column appears again this month with the story of the birth of a new FBO in Ellensburg, Washington. We remain excited about this column and are in search of contributors. If you have a side-hustle you would like promoted in Aero Crew News, you can submit copy, or we can assign an author to get your story of entrepreneurism or beyond-the-flight-deck enterprise in front of others. What enterprise can't benefit from some free exposure? Contact us at info@aerocrewnews.com.

Fly Safe,

Craig D. Pieper

Craig D. Pieper



About the Publisher

Craig Pieper is the Publisher and Founder of Aero Crew News. Craig obtained his Bachelors of Science in Aeronautical Science, along with a minor in Aviation Weather, from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 2001. Craig is also a captain for a major airline with a type rating in the Boeing 737 & Embraer 145 and has logged over 10,000 hours of flying time since his introductory flight on November 14th, 1992.

BACK TO CONTENTS

May 2025

What you may have missed in May

Feature – "Seldom Seen Airlines" was the theme for the 2025 ACN photo contest. See the winning photos in this issue.

Baggage – Letting go can be cathartic and very important for your healthy state of mind.

Business Vector – Understand the safeguards against price fixing in pilot hiring.

Coffee & Pretzels – Have you looked at your ID lately?

Fitness – A period of recovery is vital after an injury.

Grey Matter – NOTAMs stands for what now?

Knowledge Base – How is low-level windshear detected?

Money – Tariffs, layoffs and a GDP moving in the wrong direction affects our mindset.

Perspectives – It's important to maintain motivation when things are hardly moving.

SkyLaw – We learn more about the FAA's aeromedical deference.

SkyWatch – The night views from the flight deck in spring offer some celestial highlights.



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Flight Attendant Union Reaches Tentative Agreement with United Airlines

United Airlines Flight Attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA), and United Airlines reached an historic tentative agreement for 28,000 Flight Attendants... Read More



Statement on the Origin of the SkyWest Pilot Initiative

The SkyWest Pilot Initiative is a grassroots campaign initiated and led exclusively by current SkyWest pilots — active line pilots flying across all seats, aircraft, and domiciles. This effort was created in response to longstanding concerns about pilot representation and working conditions, and reflects a broad-based desire for... Read More



JetBlue and United Announce Blue Sky: Unique Consumer Collaboration That Links Loyalty Programs

JetBlue and United announced Blue Sky: a new and unique collaboration that gives customers of both airlines even more options to find flights that fit their plans as well as new opportunities... Read More



Frontier Airlines Launches Three New Routes From Atlanta This Week, Including Service to Aruba

Ultra-low fare carrier Frontier Airlines is furthering its growth at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) this week with the launch of three new routes. Today, service to Will Rogers International Airport in Oklahoma City (OKC) launched, and tomorrow service to Kansas City... Read More



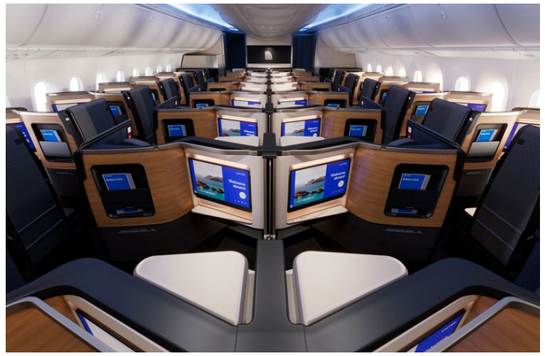
JetBlue Expands Transatlantic Service from Boston with New Flights to Madrid and Edinburgh Taking Off

JetBlue, New England's leading leisure airline, expands its transatlantic network with the launch of two new nonstop routes from Boston to Madrid, Spain (MAD) and Edinburgh, Scotland (EDI). Read More



Boeing and Qatar Airways Announce Historic Order for up to 210 Widebody Airplanes

Qatar Airways and Boeing today announced the carrier will purchase up to 210 widebody jets, which sets new records as the largest widebody order for Boeing, including the largest order for 787 Dreamliners and Qatar Airways largest-ever order. Read More



United Unveils the Elevated Aircraft Interior

United Airlines unveiled the United Elevated interior for new Boeing 787-9 aircraft that raises the standard of international premium travel among U.S. carriers and will include two, new business class suites, the greatest number of total premium seats in United's fleet, an Ossetra caviar amuse-bouche service... Read More



China Airlines Announces Order for Boeing 777X Passenger and Freighter Models

Boeing and China Airlines announced the carrier as the newest 777X customer with an order for 10 777-9 passenger and four 777-8 Freighter airplanes. The first carrier in Taiwan to order the fuel-efficient 777X, China Airlines will leverage the widebody jet's added... Read More



Spirit Airlines Unveils Next Major Guest Experience Enhancements

Spirit Airlines announced it is expanding onboard comfort and boosting the benefits of its Free Spirit loyalty program as part of the airline's latest initiative to elevate the Guest experience. The new advancements are significant milestones for the carrier, introducing a brand-new, extra-legroom seating option... Read More



ALPA Endorses New Air Traffic Control Modernization Proposal

Capt. Jason Ambrosi, president of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), issued the following statement in support of Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Sean Duffy's recently announced bill that would invest additional resources into modernizing the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) air traffic control system.. Read More



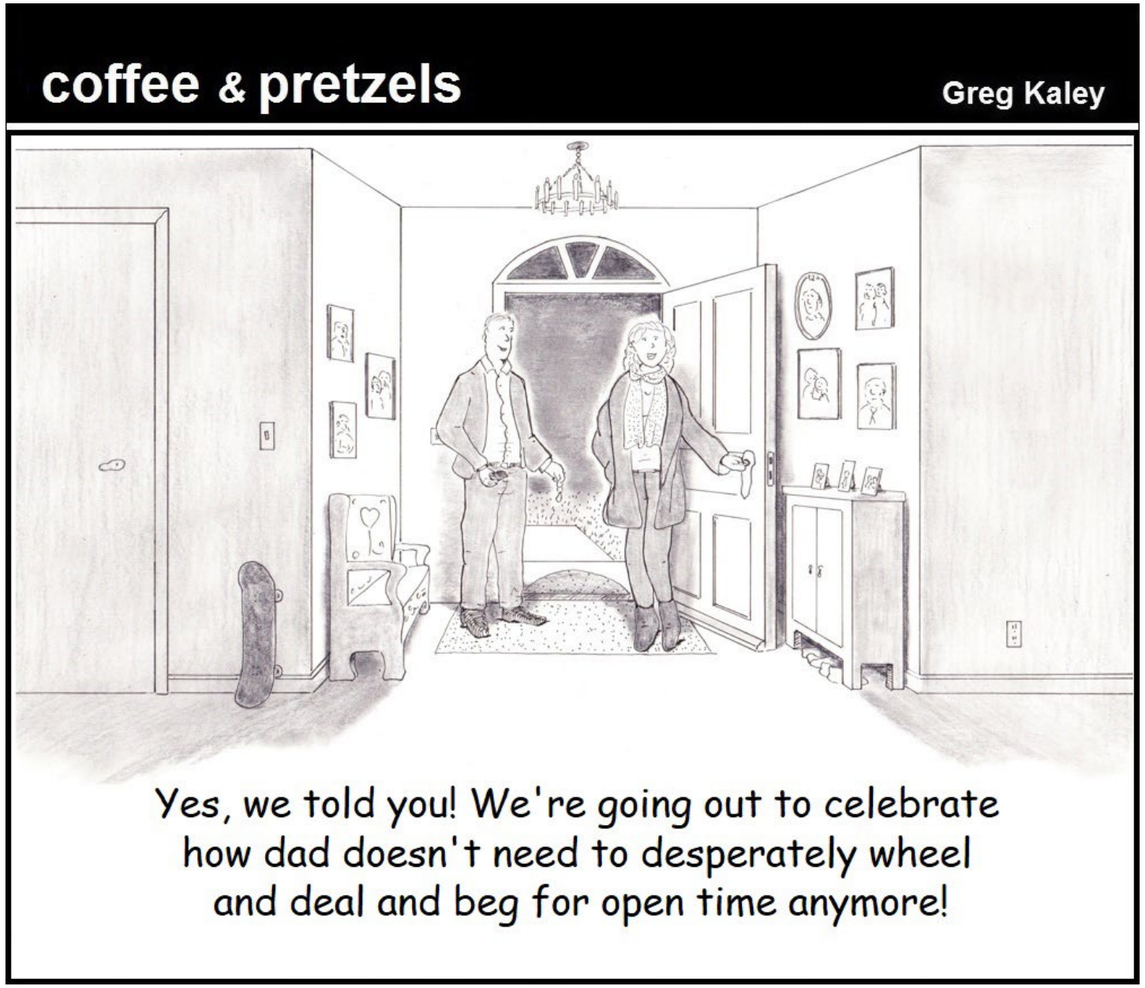
Alaska Airlines launches new era of widebody international flying in Seattle with daily nonstop service to Tokyo Narita operated by Hawaiian Airlines

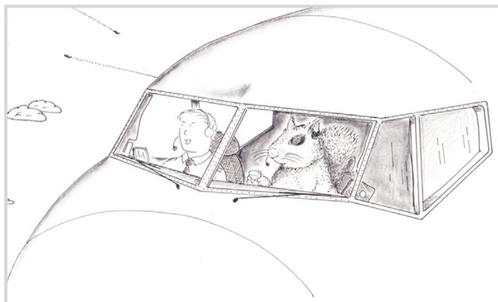
Alaska Airlines is celebrating a new global connection between the Pacific Northwest and Japan with flights between our hometown hub in Seattle and... Read More



American Airlines and Qantas announce additional flights from the United States to Australia

Enjoying the stunning natural landscapes, incredible wildlife and vibrant cities of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne in Australia will be easier this winter with enhanced services from American Airlines and Qantas. Read More





Check Out Last Month's Cartoon



About the Author

Greg Kaley is a pilot with a major airline who also happens to be a cartoonist. He started the cartoon "Coffee & Pretzels" in 2016. After graduating from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Prescott Campus), he flight-instructed and subsequently... Read More...

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Add to Experience with Something New

Written by: John McDermott

Young pilots nowadays often think of experience solely in terms of total hours; more flight time equals more experience, and more experience equals better pilot.

Equally important however, is diversity of experience. Not only should beginner pilots pursue more total experience, they should gain it by seeking various situations and different scenarios to build a greater base. Take two flight instructors with equal flight time as an example. While on paper they may seem equally experienced, the one who has flown a wider variety of aircraft types, in multiple parts of the country, or taught various courses of training, will have more experience than the other who has flown familiar missions in familiar environments. Even if the second pilot has more total time, the first will be more experienced.

Of course, seeking new experiences can take effort. When used effectively, social media can be a tremendous resource to find unique opportunities. Also, attending meetings, such as EAA chapter events, can be a great way to meet face-to-face with pilots and build connections that can offer the diversity of experiences you should look for.

This same concept holds for pilots at any stage. Student pilots often find that flying a couple of lessons with a different instructor can help them overcome a plateau or master a new subject. New private pilots can try flying to new (bigger and busier) airports or getting an instrument rating to add new skills. Commercial pilots who fly a wider variety of aircraft, complete long cross countries, or even devote time in high-performance planes can be more competitive in future employment situations.

In any case, a wider range of experiences gives pilots broader skills and a knowledge base that makes them abler, safer, and overall better pilots. Many pilots even book discovery flights in new cities while on vacations, for example. It can be difficult, of course, to find things so profoundly new they reinvent your flying completely, but often, doing small things like pattern work at the airport you visit just a little less, can provide learning moments you might not otherwise get. If grand new adventures aren't feasible, don't throw in the towel; even diversifying on a smaller scale can go a long way.

This isn't to say that people who do similar things over time aren't experienced; on the contrary, these pilots become experts in what they do and become especially skilled in that field. That expertise can be quite useful and can make pilots valuable at what they do. Without the ability to fly in unique situations, there are other ways to grow experience and knowledge. Outside of the aircraft, there is a lot of learning to do on the ground, during a commute, or while relaxing. There are a number of books, magazines, and other publications—from the FAA and private authors—that can help pilots grow their knowledge base. Many choose to listen to podcasts during downtime to get a range of information passively while doing household chores, commuting, or even heading to the airport.

In one way or another, there are plenty of ways to gain more advanced experience as a pilot. No matter the stage you're in, seeking more varied experiences is a critical part of expanding skills and maintaining proficiency. And in the process of building said varied experience, total time will increase and reflect the change in skill.



About the Author

John McDermott's passion for aviation began in a Michigan bookstore when he found a story about a chance encounter between enemy pilots during World War II. Soon, after watching countless hours of fighter jets and traffic from his home near O'Hare International Airport, he was hooked forever.. Read More...

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Hypoxia in Aviation: Understanding Risks and Prevention

Written By: Sergio Sovero



At altitude, available oxygen drops. For example, at 18,000 feet each breath has only half the oxygen as at sea level. Because the brain uses approximately 20% of inhaled oxygen, its function degrades first, causing impaired judgment. This condition, hypoxia, is a hidden danger for pilots.

FAA data indicates that at 25,000 feet, a pilot may have only about three to five minutes of useful function, and at 35,000 feet under one minute. In a rapid decompression, effective response time can be even less. Pilots must recognize hypoxia and act (use oxygen and descend) within this brief window.

Hypoxia often begins with subtle signs. Early symptoms can be yawning, fatigue or a mild headache. As it worsens, pilots may experience shortness of breath, headache, dizziness, fatigue, and impaired judgment. Other symptoms include tingling in fingers, euphoria, and impaired vision. Because judgment is affected early, a pilot may not notice anything is wrong. Any of these signs, such as suddenly fumbling with controls or failing a simple memory check, should be treated with suspicion.

In GA airplanes and helicopters, altitude poses a major risk. Under FAR 91.211, the crew must use oxygen after 30 minutes above 12,500 feet MSL and continuously above 14,000 feet; all occupants must have oxygen above 15,000 feet. Many pilots actually use oxygen even below these limits (e.g. above 10,000 feet or at night) for safety, because without it cerebral function quickly degrades.

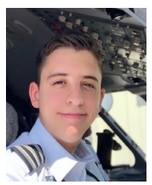
Certain conditions make hypoxia more likely. High-G aerobatics can cause G-induced loss of consciousness (G-LOC). Fatigue, illness or the stress of a cold can lower tolerance. Carbon monoxide (CO) from engine exhaust or smoking can incapacitate one rapidly. Inhaling CO can turn a safe altitude into a deadly one as it binds to blood's hemoglobin greatly reducing blood's capacity to carry oxygen. Prevention is key, but if hypoxia is suspected, don mask and descend. At the first hint of hypoxia, immediately set oxygen to 100% and begin a controlled descent. Maintain aircraft control, notify ATC if needed, and descend to a lower altitude (ideally below 10,000 feet). Treat the situation as an emergency.

The FAA recommends pilots take altitude-chamber or simulated-hypoxia courses so they can recognize personal early warning signs. In a controlled lab setting, one can recognize their very first symptoms and thereby be forewarned if they should ever experience them outside of the controlled environment.

Training and familiarity are vital. Always review emergency procedures for decompression or oxygen loss and brief all crew/passengers before high-altitude flights. Turn on supplemental oxygen well before high altitudes. Make sure masks, hoses and regulators are checked and working before flight. Avoid smoking or any source of carbon monoxide in flight.

By rigorously following these measures—using oxygen proactively and responding swiftly—pilots ensure hypoxia remains only a theoretical threat. Accident data consistently show that prompt use of oxygen and descent save lives, whereas delay can be fatal.

Hypoxia is a silent but preventable hazard. Pilots who understand its effects, use supplemental oxygen as needed, and act immediately on any symptoms will avoid its dangers. Vigilance, training, and disciplined adherence to procedures—donning oxygen masks and descending at the first sign of hypoxia— make the difference between safety and tragedy in flight.



About the Author

Sergio Sovero was born and raised in Lima, Peru, and is currently a captain for Delta Air Lines. Read More...



Single Pilot Operations

A host of hurdles to overcome

Written by: Richard Swindell

Single pilot operations in the airlines is a concept that's been around for years, and one that we are certainly, if slowly, marching towards. However, how long before it's here depends on being able to thoroughly address a number of significant challenges. In this month's edition, we're considering some of the issues associated with single and even zero pilot operations.

To start, it's pertinent to note that in the history of commercial aviation and in terms of required staffing and certification, we have never added pilots to the flight deck, we have only ever removed them. In the 1930's, Pan Am Clippers had six on the flight deck (pilot, co-pilot, navigator, radio operator, flight engineer, and a watch officer); down to four in the 1950's (pilot, co-pilot, navigator and engineer); reduced to just two with the introduction of the Boeing 737 in 1968. Many organizations, entities, and individuals would like to see this reduced to one pilot, and then perhaps zero someday, but we have a ways to go yet.

Before we can get to single pilot or remotely piloted operations (airliners as drones), designers and engineers, governments and regulators, airlines and operators must not only address substantial safety and technological challenges, but security and public concerns, as well. To this end, and rather than offer an expansive digest on the subject, the following are some of the key points we typically offer when asked by students, passengers, fellow pilots and others about the future of single pilot ops.

The first thing we often point out is the expansive **engineering** (in design and software) that will be required to remove a pilot position from the flight deck. Currently, airliners are not constructed or certified to allow a single pilot to reach all switches and control panels safely in order to fly solo. Flight decks would need to be completely redesigned around the pilot (much like fighter aircraft) in order to meet this fundamental challenge. Extensive automation would also need to be installed in order to assist the lone pilot with accomplishing myriad operationally overlapping tasks such as starting a second engine while taxing to the runway or running checklists while flying the plane and making radio calls.

Though not second in terms of priority, a comprehensive review of **safety** (which encompasses a Venn diagram of biology, security, and technology) is high on our list of single pilot ops requirements.

Within the biological quadrant of the flight-safety diagram, we have fatigue and bodily functions. Pilots get tired, need to eat and go to the bathroom. Having more than one pilot on the flight deck provides opportunities to stay awake through conversation and allows one to stretch their legs for a few minutes, either on or off the flight deck, all while cross-checking the other's work to ensure accuracy. Being able to eat or go to the bathroom also requires more than one pilot to be focused on the flight. Even in the reduced pilot format (where one pilot can rest or go to the bathroom while another pilot actively manages the aircraft), flight deck design must allow for this to occur while providing immediate but secure access to the flight deck and the second pilot station.

Cognitive state is also in the Venn, and although an extremely rare occurrence, there are a few documented cases (Germanwings Flight 9525 in 2015, EgyptAir Flight 990 in 1999, and possibly Malaysia Air Flight 370 in 2014) where a pilot intended harm to the flight, and another pilot assigned to the flight was absent from the flight deck. In these incidents, the lack of another pilot removed a vital security measure and safeguard—opposed to FedEx Flight 705 in 1994, and Alaska Air (Horizon) Flight 2059 in October 2023, where the presence of other pilots on the flight deck averted disaster.

Similar to cognitive state, what about a single pilot medical emergency? Although extremely rare, we must ask if an AI system would be sufficient to manage a flight with an incapacitated pilot.

BACK TO CONTENTS

Then there is the physical defense of the flight deck, which has become a consistent factor in safeguarding airliners since 9/11. What physical barriers and protocols will need to be developed to ensure the integrity of the flight deck under single pilot or remotely piloted operations?

Additionally, consider whether a single pilot or remote pilot operation (where control of the flight may be shared with artificial intelligence, an AI-based computer system) will have sufficient shielding to prevent hacking? Speaking further of AI, complex human decision-making might not be replaceable even by highly complex algorithms, especially when it occurs between two humans. If another US Airways Flight 1549 (2009) were to happen tomorrow, it is not likely that any current AI system would be able to create a positive outcome.

Government and regulatory actions typically come up next. Once technical, biological, and security issues have been wholly solved, the drafting and passing of internal and international laws, policies, and procedures, along with certifications and agreements within and between ICAO states (International Civil Aviation Organization) will need to be completed before domestic and international flights may be operated under these conditions. This of course takes time and relies not merely on reliable systems and facts, but indeed, politics.

However, just because technology and rules demonstrate that it can be done, doesn't necessarily mean that the traveling public will be ready to climb aboard a single-pilot flight – in fact, consumer and passenger surveys presently bear this out. Conversely, boxes don't particularly care who may be at the controls, so it's reasonable to assume that once all the other challenges are met, cargo operators would be likely early adopters of single and reduced pilot operations.
The reality is that it is likely we will get to single pilot and zero pilot operations one day—not next year, probably not in the next decade, but perhaps cargo operations inside the next 20 years and passenger operations in another ten or so years after that. But people need to get used to Waymo (autonomous taxis) first.

Yet, solutions do or will exist to address the issues mentioned above and others not reviewed here, but these will of course cost money—lots of money. Nevertheless, the current investment by companies in single and zero pilot technologies is decidedly underway and may yield future payoff through significant savings realized by economic, staffing, and time efficiencies arrived at by this slow but continually transitioning industry.
While you consider all of this, we'll be preparing our July installment of *Grey Matter* to discuss the future of supersonic flight.



About the Author

Richard Swindell left active-duty military service and transitioned to the airline industry where he flies and works as a line check airman for a major airline. Read More...

the right things are timeless.



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Move, Drink and Chill Toward a Healthier Summer



Written By: Eric Ray. NASM CPT, CNC

Memorial Day kicks off the start of the summer travel season which can mean many different things, like beach vacations, high school graduations, reunions, and even weddings. For us, it may mean more days at the controls. For some, those social options may mean looking in the mirror and thinking, "I need to drop a few pounds to fit into that dress (or suit)." For others it means looking better at the beach. While I can't conclude what your motivations are, it should be enough that being more fit equals being healthier. Since I have been away from my routines for a couple of months, I have put on a handful of pounds too, so I will be taking my own advice.

Here are some fitness "refreshers" in case that whole goal-setting/resolutions thing has fallen by the wayside.

Get Moving

It should be obvious that being more active has health advantages. Whether you decide to be all-in into fitness or just plain walk; move your body. I have been asked what the best answer is to how to lose weight. There isn't any single thing that will help you lose weight, but the choices are either to take in fewer calories or burn more calories. While talking nutrition is beyond the scope of this article, it is a combination of diet and exercise that will help you drop pounds. Remember, the real goal of losing excess body fat is to be healthier. We don't really care about the weight number; it's fat loss that counts. While vanity may start your journey, you should focus on becoming healthier to allow you to lead a more productive life.

Drink Water

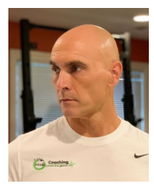
There are near-countless studies that emphasize water intake, and each offers some criteria of measurement: consuming half your body weight in ounces of water per day, drink 2.5 liters of water if you are a woman, drink three liters if you are a man, etc. Let's just conclude that you probably overestimate the amount of water you're drinking, and it is likely you aren't really drinking enough. A healthy body needs a lot of water to operate most efficiently. Increasing your hydration has the positive effect of lowering blood pressure and reducing fluid retention—not to mention keeping your kidneys running smoothly.

Get a Metabolic Boost

On the subject of water, take a cold shower or cold soak. (I am not a doctor and any advice I give here should be followed up with a medical professional.) Physical therapists and world-class athletes use cold-water baths or showers to aid in reducing inflammation and speed injury recovery. As a metabolic boost, cold baths can be used as part of your regimen. Try cold showers for 14 days, by alternating between the hot shower followed by 30 seconds of cold. Gradually build your tolerance over the next two weeks so that you are enduring for 5-10 minutes. Your body will thank you!

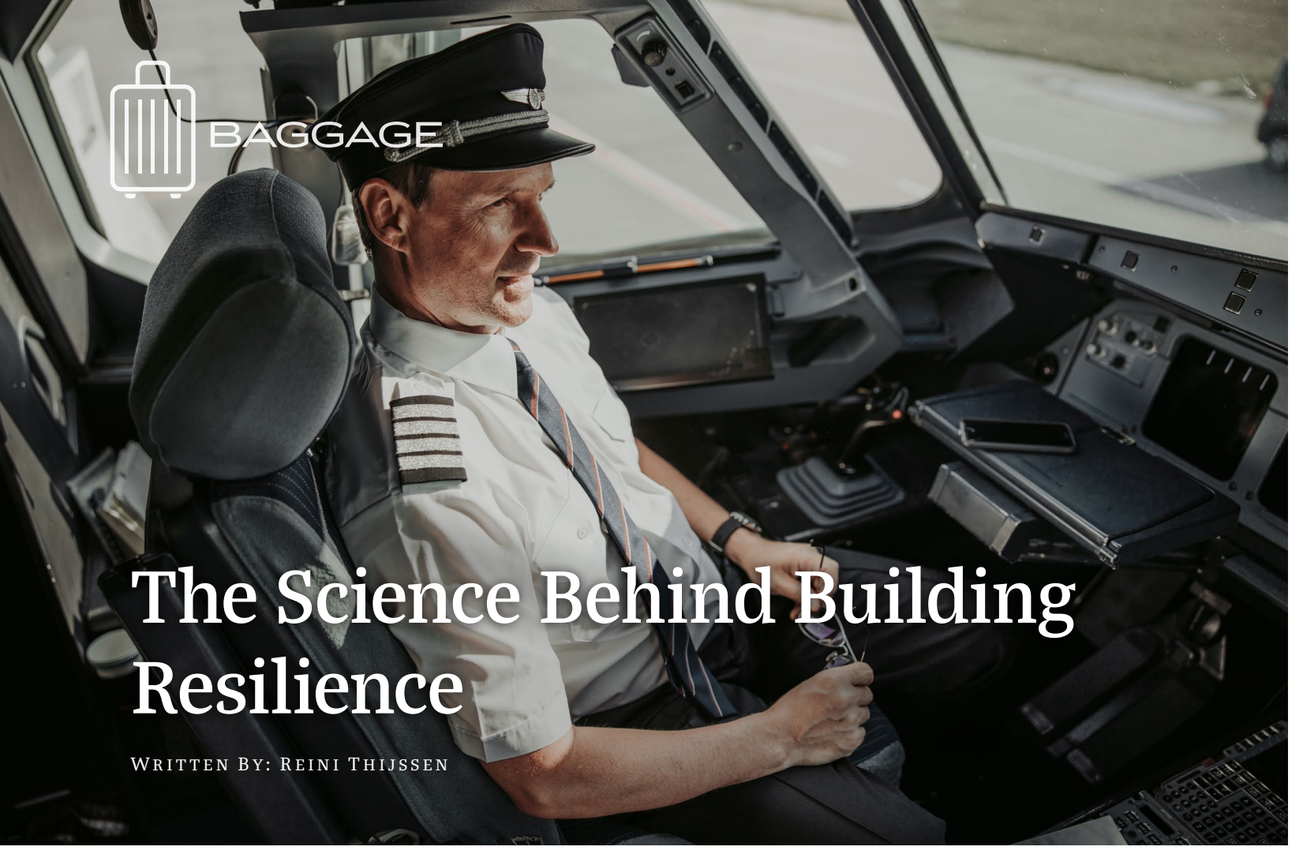
While no one thing is the panacea for getting you into shape, reducing your weight or improving your health, it is up to you to dedicate the time and effort to be the best version of you!

If you have questions or need a guiding hand, I welcome you to take a moment and write your question(s) to me at ericray4470@gmail.com.



About the Author

Eric Ray is a certified personal trainer and nutrition coach. He is the co-creator of the Hii360 Coaching Method and current president of Hii360 Coaching. Read More...



BAGGAGE

The Science Behind Building Resilience

Written By: Reini Thijssen

Taking care of your mental well-being does not just happen automatically; we have to work at it. Feeling good in your own skin and living a fulfilling life takes effort and attention. One of the best ways to support your mental health is by building resilience: the ability to adapt, bounce back, and grow through life's challenges. Resilience does not mean avoiding hard times, change, or challenges; it means learning how to move through them without losing yourself. The good news is that resilience is a skill you can build, no matter where you start. This article explains resilience and shares science-backed strategies for strengthening it so you can handle stress, setbacks, and changes with more confidence.

What Is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to adapt positively to stress, adversity, or change. It is not about pretending everything is fine or avoiding struggle. Instead, it is about navigating life's inevitable challenges in a way that preserves—or even strengthens—your well-being.
Think of resilience like a spring:

- A setback (like job loss or illness) is a weight on the spring.
- The resilience buffer determines how far the spring compresses.
- After hitting a low point, the spring begins to rebound.

Resilience is when the spring returns to its original shape—or stretches even further, leading to growth. It allows us to bounce back, drawing on internal resources (like coping skills) and external support (like strong relationships) to recover and thrive.

While genetics and personality play a role, it is important to remember that resilience is not a fixed trait. It is a process you can build over time, and experiencing some adversity is actually part of that growth. Research shows that people who have faced manageable levels of hardship tend to be more mentally healthy and satisfied with life compared to those who have faced either too much adversity or none at all. This challenges the belief that hardship only causes harm. In the right amounts, struggle can actually fuel strength.

Practicing these skills not only helps you handle stress better but also builds trust in your ability to navigate future challenges.

Your Environment Matters

Resilience is not just an individual effort. Your environment plays a huge role. Chronic stressors like poverty, discrimination, or long-term unemployment can erode resilience because the burden is heavier. Supportive environments—whether it is a nurturing community, workplace, or circle of friends—are essential for resilience to flourish.

Science-Backed Ways to Build Resilience
So, how can you build your resilience muscle in your daily life? Here are a few practical, science-supported strategies to start with today:

Skills Behind Resilience

Resilience is not something you are born with: it is a set of skills and habits you can develop over time. No matter your background or past experiences, it's possible to become more adaptable and emotionally strong. By intentionally working on how you respond to challenges, you can build lasting resilience. Three core skills play a particularly important role in this process:

1. Emotional and Stress Regulation: Managing intense feelings in healthy ways.
2. Flexibility: Adapting when things do not go as planned.
3. Coping with Setbacks: Learning and growing from difficulties instead of shutting down.

1. Reflect on Past Growth

Think back on hard times you've already overcome. What did you learn? How did you change? Reflecting on past challenges helps strengthen your confidence and resilience for future ones. When you consider how far you have come, you can see growth patterns and realize that you are stronger than you might give yourself credit for. This builds a sense of self-assurance thatncan help you handle whatever comes next.

For example, you went through a tough breakup or a challenging time at work. At the time, it felt impossible to get through, but looking back now, you can see how it pushed you to grow in ways you didn't expect. You might have learned to set better boundaries,

become more emotionally resilient, or even rediscovered things you love doing outside of work or a relationship. Reflecting on these moments of growth can remind you that you've already overcome hardships before, giving you the confidence to face new challenges.

2. Do Not Avoid Fear—Face It

Taking small risks or trying new things proves to yourself that you are capable of more than you realize. It is easy to shy away from situations that feel uncomfortable or scary, but it is in these moments that we grow the most. Each time you lean into discomfort, you build your resilience muscle and prove that you can handle more than you initially thought. Over time, what once felt intimidating becomes less daunting, and you start to embrace challenges as opportunities to grow.

For example, you have always been afraid of public speaking. The thought of standing in front of an audience makes your stomach turn. But instead of avoiding it, you decide to take a small step and volunteer to speak at a team meeting. Afterward, you realize that while it was uncomfortable, it was not as bad as you thought. You start to build confidence and feel more capable of tackling even bigger speaking opportunities in the future.

3. Reframe Failure as a Challenge, Not a Threat

Instead of seeing challenging tasks as threats to your abilities, start viewing them as challenges that you can handle. Everyone faces difficulties, but how you approach them makes all the difference. Remind yourself of past successes—big or small—and recall the moments when you overcame obstacles. This helps reinforce the belief that you have the strength and skills to handle tough situations. Visualizing positive outcomes also plays a crucial role in building courage. Picture yourself succeeding and imagine the steps to get there. This mental rehearsal boosts your confidence and primes your brain for success. When you shift your mindset from fear to opportunity, you're more likely to tackle challenges head-on and grow from the experience.

4. Find the Silver Linings

Even in the toughest of times, valuable lessons are often hidden within the hardship. When faced with challenges, it can be easy to focus only on the negatives, but intentionally looking for one good thing that came from a tough situation can shift your perspective. This practice helps you feel more in control and boosts your sense of meaning and resilience. By recognizing that even difficulties can offer growth or insights, you become more adept at finding opportunities in adversity.

For example, you faced a job loss recently. At first, it feels like a setback, but after some reflection, you realize it gave you the opportunity to reassess your career goals, learn new skills, or even take time for personal development. While the situation was challenging, you might discover that it opened doors you never would have considered otherwise.

Looking for silver linings does not dismiss the hardships—it helps you focus on how they can lead to something positive, even if the lesson takes time to reveal itself.

5. Stop Expecting the Worst

It is easy to fall into the trap of imagining the worst-case scenario, but this kind of thinking only adds unnecessary stress and anxiety. Catch yourself when you are catastrophizing, and ask yourself some critical questions to help reframe your thoughts:

Is this the most likely outcome?
What evidence do I have that supports this fear?
Have I handled similar situations before, and did they turn out as badly as I am expecting?

By challenging these negative predictions, you can break the cycle of anxiety and gain a clearer, more balanced perspective.
Instead of assuming disaster, take a moment to breathe and ask: *What's a more realistic or positive outcome?* This simple practice can help you regain control over your thoughts and reduce the emotional weight of fear.

6. Interrupt the Spiral of Negative Thinking

Break worry loops with quick actions—walk outside, splash cold water, move your body. A tiny disruption can reset your mind and help you regain control over your thoughts. Even something as simple as taking a few deep breaths or stretching for a minute can help interrupt the cycle of negative thinking and bring you back to the present moment. The key is to create a small, purposeful action that shifts your focus so you can gain clarity and step away from the spiral of worry.

4x4 Breathing Exercise: The 4x4 breathing exercise is a quick way to calm your mind and break negative thinking. Here's how it works:

1. Inhale for four counts through your nose.
2. Hold for four counts.
3. Exhale for four counts through your mouth.
4. Hold for four counts again.

7. Let Your Emotions Guide You—Not Control You

Emotions are signals, not commands. Tune in and ask yourself: *What is this feeling trying to tell me?* Then, respond thoughtfully. By acknowledging your emotions rather than suppressing them, you create space to understand what you truly need, whether it is rest, boundaries, or connection. This process allows you to act intentionally rather than being swept away by reactive impulses.

8. Remind Yourself That This Moment Will Pass

Stress often feels overwhelming and permanent, but the truth is, it is not. Ask yourself: *How will I feel about this in five days? Five years?*
More often than not, the intensity of stress

BACK TO CONTENTS

fades faster than you expect, and what feels like a huge deal right now may seem much less significant in the near future. To help gain perspective, you can also ask: *What would my future self want me to remember about this moment?* This can help you detach from the immediate pressure and recognize that you have the resilience to navigate through it. By remembering that everything is temporary, you can make it easier to breathe through the challenging moments and keep moving forward.

9. Spot the Upsides

Practice reframing small annoyances like traffic or delays. This strengthens your resilience muscles before bigger challenges arise.

For example, if you are stuck in traffic, instead of stewing in frustration, you might think: "This gives me extra time to listen to my favorite podcast or call a friend I haven't talked to in a while."
Finding small silver linings in everyday annoyances makes it easier to stay positive when bigger problems come your way.

10. Practice Positivity Through Stories

Watch movies, series or read stories and reflect on what characters learn from tough experiences. It trains your brain to find growth opportunities. The power of stories lies in how they engage our emotions and stimulate our brains to think about challenges and resilience in a new light.

When you observe characters overcoming adversity, your brain starts to recognize that growth can come from struggle. This rewires your brain to be more attuned to spotting opportunities for growth, even in your own life. The more you practice this, the more automatic it becomes for you to reframe your difficulties.

Final Thoughts

If you are feeling easily overwhelmed by change or struggling with fear when faced with challenges, it might be a sign that your resilience muscle could use some strengthening. The good news is that resilience is a skill you can build over time. By actively practicing strategies like reframing setbacks, leaning into discomfort, and reflecting on past growth, you can improve your ability to adapt and thrive in difficult situations.

If you are looking for support in building your resilience or managing anxiety and stress, contact Emerald Mental Health via www.emeraldmentalhealth.com or email reini@emeraldmentalhealth.com. Emerald Mental Health can help guide you through tailored strategies and provide the support you need to develop a stronger, more resilient mindset.



About the Author

Reini Thijssen is a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC, LPC) and a certified life coach specializing in supporting pilots and individuals in high-demand professions both within and outside of aviation. She has been a writer for Aero Crew News since 2019 and covers various aviation-related topics... Read More...

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No Hangar? Just Build a New FBO!

Written by: Phillips 66 Aviation

Like the misty vapor trails from aircraft that many youngsters yearn to fly, childhood daydreams often dissipate. But sometimes, maybe decades later, those daydreams lead to life-changing epiphanies—that and answering the question, “Where can I park my plane?”

Ellensburg, Washington native Aaron Greear, now 30, was one of those kids. His pilot dreams drifted away on the cold jet stream of time. But four years ago, after a life without any real connection to aviation, the mechanical-engineering major managed to earn his pilot’s license, while smack in the middle of running a successful paving business with his older brother and dad. Shortly afterwards, Greear bought a classic 1959 Cessna 182 and went looking for hangar space.

Finding nothing available at Greear’s hometown Bowers Field Airport (KELN), Greear went full-throttle on a childhood dream. He built a brand new FBO complete with heated hangar space, of course.

Contemporary and modular with views of Mount Stuart’s muscular peak along the horizon, Mount Stuart Aviation (formerly Aviation Services LLC, a Phillips 66® branded FBO) is poised to reinvigorate 81-year-old Bowers Field, bolstering the community’s fading ties to general aviation and giving Greear a place to park his plane.





“I like to build things,” Greear says, an understatement when it comes to constructing an FBO on a government-owned airfield. It was just three years ago that Greear and his brother Joel approached Kittitas County with their plan.

Today, pilots stopping at Mount Stuart Aviation indulge in a stocked fridge that resembles a mini convenience store; a self-serve kiosk dispensing meals, snacks and pilot supplies; a pilot’s lounge with large-screen movies and a library filled with Greear’s personal book collection; a snooze room and a courtesy car; plus, some competitively priced fuel. Outside, Greear added power, water, and sewer connections, creating opportunities to host events, including those featuring food trucks.

Building with Intent

Developing a new FBO from scratch can be daunting, especially when the dreamers are new to aviation. But in 2016, the Greear family had expanded beyond their Central Paving company work by constructing industrial buildings. Aaron,



BACK TO CONTENTS

the mechanical engineering major and recreational pilot, plus brother Joel, the construction management pro, made a productive pair.

"The idea," says Greear, "is to always build with vision and intent." Perhaps that's something innate in a mechanical engineer's soul. "We had the background of construction and building buildings, combined with my background in aviation—and we've been in this community our whole lives—so the stars kind of aligned," explains Aaron. "It was the perfect time to do what we did in Ellensburg.

"We really wanted to make sure our FBO accommodated anybody traveling through," explains Greear. "I probably have 800 hours of cross-country flight time, and I take notes at every FBO that I stop at. I take notes of what an FBO had that was awesome or missing features, and I tried to incorporate everything I learned, having traveled the country visiting different FBOs.

"Some things really make no practical sense, but I remember, for example, the FBOs that had a fireplace, which is really cool," he says, "So, I'm building one at our FBO."

Greear's passion for aviation extends beyond building a welcoming space for pilots—it drives his own flying ambitions. Early in his journey, he discovered STOL (short takeoff and landing) competitions—aviation's version of rodeo barrel racing—where pilots test their proficiency in short-distance takeoffs and landings. His exposure to STOL events sharpened his skills, strengthened his connection to the aviation community, and reinforced his vision for Mount Stuart Aviation as a welcoming place for pilots.

"STOL has been immensely helpful in building skills and confidence. That was kind of the initial rush," says Greear. "Then after I got into the community, I found aviation in general is just full of incredible people—good people who must have a certain level of skills and responsibility to remain a pilot."



Aaron Greear, founder of Mount Stuart Aviation and STOL competition pilot.

Strengthening Community Ties

The other "big vision," as Greear calls it, involves nurturing community ties to general aviation, something he never experienced as a child. He witnessed the results firsthand when his family-run construction company hosted community events that allowed children to sit in heavy, road-building equipment.

"Being able to build a facility that allows the community, especially kids, to come out on a weekend, see the operations and check out an airplane, might spark that desire to grow up and pursue aviation," he explains.

Just having an FBO facility the community can experience is new to Ellensburg. "We literally didn't have a building out here, and it's hard to do anything when you don't have a building," Greear says. "Well, it opens a lot of doors just having a building. I tried to build it very modular so that we can host all kinds of different things in the future."

Uniquely, half of Mount Stuart Aviation's facility features 16 offices for rent. "The offices are a way we could bring in some revenue to help cover the construction costs and also connect different businesses in the community to the airfield and the airfield to the community," Greear says.

For Greear, aviation is more than just a business—it's a lifelong passion. As he continues shaping the future of Mount Stuart Aviation, he's also focused on his own piloting journey. Having earned his FAA rotor rating last year, he's now on the lookout for the perfect helicopter to take his skills to the next level.

"You know, the flying is what got me into aviation, but it's the people who keep me around," says Greear.

For more information about Mount Stuart Aviation, visit Kittitas County Airport - Bowers Field or AirNav.

About the Author

Phillips 66® Aviation is one of the largest refiners in the United States and a major supplier of jet and avgas fuel to general aviation, commercial and military aviation. With over 90 years of experience, the company has established the largest branded network of FBOs in the United States... Read More...



BUSINESS VECTOR

Coming Soon: The Reference You've Been Waiting For

The Business Aviation Book– Leading Operational Excellence

Written By: Christopher M. Broyhill, PhD, CAM, CCP

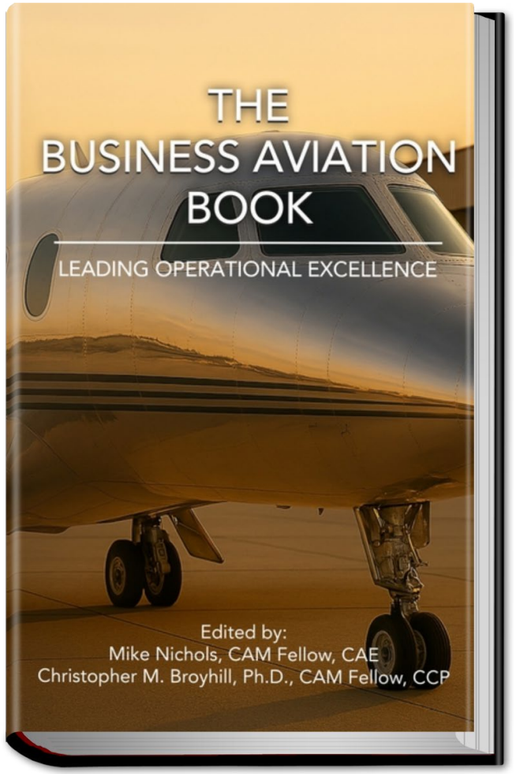


Let me start with a little backstory: It's autumn 2012 and after working as the chief pilot for a major telecommunications company in the Midwest, I was hired as the director of aviation to build a flight department for an energy company in the Chicagoland area. Of course, I thought I knew everything I needed to know. I had my NBAA CAM and I'd been watching my director do his job when I was chief pilot and figured, "How hard can it be?" Well, to say that I was naïve, ignorant, and even arrogant would be gross understatements. The problem was, I didn't know what I didn't know. And over the course of the next four years, as my team and I built the department from zero to four jets, one helicopter, two locations, and over thirty personnel, I was continually confronted with gaps in my knowledge that I had to scramble to fill. Fortunately, I was surrounded by personnel in the industry and within my company who were willing to help, plus I had become both humble and realistic enough to not hesitate to ask for assistance.

But what if there had been a book? A reference book—a source of knowledge that covered the most important areas of knowledge necessary to lead a business aviation flight department. It might not have had all the answers, but it would have raised my knowledge level to the point where I did know what I didn't know, and it would have provided me references to find the answers.

BACK TO CONTENTS

Well folks, that book is here.



For the past three years or so, a friend and I have been compiling and editing a book we titled, The Business Aviation Book: Leading Operational Excellence. It will become the most definitive work to date on the skills and subject areas required to run a business-aviation flight department. I wish I could say it was my idea, but it wasn't. After writing a book on my leadership research in 2020 and publishing a second edition in 2021, I thought my leadership writing might be over.

Enter, Mike Nichols, a longtime friend. I had known Mike for several years when he was an executive at the National Business Aviation Association and we had worked together on a few projects during his time there. In the wake of the COVID pandemic, Mike retired from the NBAA to pursue life at a slower pace. He had a pet project in mind, the aforementioned book, and he graciously looked me up to help him with it. I was honored to participate in the project. Initially, we both foolishly thought we could do all the writing ourselves, but it soon became obvious that despite our combined industry expertise, we didn't have the breath or depth of knowledge necessary to cover all the subjects required. So, we sought personnel we knew in business aviation, people who were authorities in their subject areas and who were willing to give their time for the sake of our industry. The resulting work is positively groundbreaking. Here's what it will cover:

Section 1 - Leadership
01 - The Changing Role of Aviation Director
02 - Leadership
03 - The Intersection of Leadership & Management

Section 2 - People Management
04 - Employment Regulations
05 - Management Theories
06 - Attracting & Retaining Talent
07 - A Culture of Belonging
08 - Developing and Advancing Yourself and Your Team
09 - Understanding Compensation and Total Rewards
10 - Mentoring and Developing Our Future Workforce

Section 3 - Effective Communication
11 - Introduction to Communication
11 - Executive Presence
13 - Managing Conflict
14 - Change Management

Section 4 - Structuring Strategies
15 - Flight Department Structure and Regulatory Compliance
16 - Aircraft Use Policy
17 - In-house Aircraft Management
18 - External Aircraft Management
19 - Internal Reporting Executive

Section 5 - Safety & Security
20 - Safety Management Systems
21 - Aviation Security
22 - Information and Cyber Security

Section 6 - Risk Management
23 - Risk Management

Section 7 - Maintenance Management
24 - Maintenance Management

Section 8 - Environmental Sustainability
25 - Environmental Sustainability

Section 9 - Aircraft Operations
26 - Aircraft Scheduling
27 - International Operations

Section 10 - Money Matters
28 - Aircraft Transactions
29 - Aircraft Finance
30 - Budgeting
31 - Aviation Taxation
32 - Book and Market Depreciation Concepts
33 - Public Company Considerations
34 - Carriage of Candidates for Election
35 - Fleet Planning

While Mike and I wrote a few of the chapters (as you might expect, I wrote the chapter on Understanding Compensation and Total Rewards, for example), the majority of them have been written by people who are well known and respected experts in the industry—people you have undoubtedly heard of. As you might expect, getting personnel in our industry to devote the necessary time to write material of the quality required for this book has been a challenge. It has also been a challenge for Mike and me to manage our own schedules to write and edit. It has taken over three years from the day Mike and I first discussed the project until its impending fruition. We think you'll find it was well worth the wait.

The Business Aviation Book: Leading Operational Excellence will be published this fall by my company, Chris Broyhill Books LLC and it will be available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Additionally, signed copies will be available through my website at https://chrisbroyhillbooks.com. The AirComp Calculator will pay to format and publish the book as a service to the industry.



About the Author

Dr. Chris Broyhill is an industry veteran with over 40 years in aviation. He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1982, served with distinction for over 20 years in the Air Force and flew multiple aircraft. Read More...

BACK TO CONTENTS



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MONEY

The Secret to True Wealth

Written by: Charlie Mattingly

"You've got to ask yourself one question: Do you feel wealthy? Well, do ya, punk?" This is a famous quote by Clint Eastwood's character in the movie, *Dirty Harry*. Of course, I did change one little word for fun.

Though airline-pilot pay rates are at an all-time high, it still seems like the answer to this question is often a resounding, NO! More often than not, instead of realizing how wealthy we really are, our focus is more likely on the painful tax bill we recently paid to Uncle Sam. I understand the feeling. It hurts!

On the other hand, what does it mean to be wealthy? What is true wealth? Is it accumulating as much money as humanly possible? Some people would initially say, yes. However, when challenged, we often realize true wealth might also include our health, time with our family and the quality of our relationships. Unfortunately, all those values are often in conflict with making as much money as humanly possible.

Within the last week, I have spoken with three people who were given life-changing medical diagnoses. It's amazing how our perspective, and life, can change so dramatically within minutes. In each of these individuals' cases, their lives and their definitions of wealth changed very quickly.

In my personal life, I've had two major injuries that could have been permanently life-altering, physically. One of those injuries was with exercise bands. Please don't judge, but I'll admit that during one careless (really dumb) moment, I nearly, permanently blinded myself. The exercise bands were under significant tension and snapped back to hit both of my eyes simultaneously, blinding me for what felt like several hours. I don't know exactly how long it was because I couldn't see the clock. (This was pre-Siri!)

It only took a few seconds after that painful impact to understand where money fit into my NEW priority list. My definition of wealth changed instantly! Don't get me wrong, I knew money was still a very important necessity (I was an airline pilot at the time), especially if my blindness at that moment turned out to be permanent.

As an example of how our priorities change, the thought I remember focusing on the most at that moment sitting alone in my condo was how goofy I was going to look when I had to touch my daughter's face to know what she looked like as she grew older. Isn't it amazing the detail our minds are capable of during physical and mental stress? Clearly, prior to my eye injury, appreciating how my daughter would change and grow over the years was not on my priority list.

After remembering my own experiences and the recent experiences of my friends' health diagnoses, my definition of true wealth and success was put into its proper perspective.

Obviously, we shouldn't need life-altering health experiences to wake us up. So how do we live with an attitude of true wealth? Furthermore, how can we feel at peace with our current financial situation, to know that we don't just feel wealthier but recognize we really are wealthy by every definition? I believe that through focusing on thankfulness and practicing gratitude we will come to focus more on the wealth we have versus the things that matter a little less, such as the nasty tax bill due on April 15th.

However, this takes real intention and practice. As I continuously challenge myself, I challenge you to take action on the steps below. It's not easy. It takes commitment, time and a little vulnerability. You may even feel a little silly about some of the techniques for practicing gratitude. However, the research and evidence are clear that practicing gratitude can increase our feelings of contentment, peace of mind and overall state of wealth. Check out additional articles and research here, here and here.

> *"This isn't just a nice sentiment, either. There's plenty of scientific back-up as to why gratitude is essential to the successful. As this article states, mentally strong people choose to exchange self-pity for gratitude. Doing this will result in things like improved relationships and networking, improved physical health, improved sleep, and improved self-confidence."* ~Leah Gervais, from the blogpost and website Leahgervais.com/the science of getting rich.

BACK TO CONTENTS

Mindset of Gratitude and Abundance

Our thoughts have a tremendous impact on our lives, both on conscious and subconscious levels. They shape our perceptions of the world around us, influence our emotions, and impact our behavior. In fact, the thoughts we have on a regular basis become ingrained in our subconscious mind, which in turn influences our actions and habits.

Our thoughts translate into words—the way we communicate and express ourselves. Our words, in turn, influence our actions—the way we behave and react in the world.

Questions for you:

- What is your mindset right now? Are you focusing on what's missing or what's working?
- What does "enough" mean to you, and how has that changed over time?
- Do you have a scarcity mindset?
    - Negative, ungrateful, focusing on limitations, fear of not having enough, or already worrying about the next recession, stock market decline . . .

Ways to Practice Gratitude and Change Your Perception of Wealth:

1. Do the planning work. What does "enough" look like in financial terms? Here are a few questions you can ask yourself or your partner to start the planning process:
    - What are your financial goals and savings targets?
    - What do you want (not the things other people say you should want)?
    - What is your personal definition of success? Write it down.

Prior to his death in September 2005, former KPMG CEO Eugene O' Kelly, wrote an inspirational memoir as he was dying of brain cancer called, *Chasing Daylight: How My Forthcoming Death Transformed My Life*.

His definition of success became the number of perfect moments he could accumulate before his death. The book's summary description on Amazon put it this way: *The book's "...haunting yet extraordinarily hopeful voice reminds us to embrace the fragile, fleeting moments of our lives—the brief time we have with our family, our friends, and even ourselves."*

2. Get good at Gratitude: *"When gratitude becomes an essential foundation in our lives, miracles start to appear everywhere."* ~Emmanuel Dagher

Make a daily list of things you're grateful for. The part of your brain, called the reticular activating system, acts as a selective filter that determines what enters your conscious awareness and influences your overall level of alertness and attention. After a while, the reticular activating system in the brain starts "looking for" things to put on your gratitude list.

An alternative to writing things down is to develop the habit of a gratitude walk, which is simply observing the things around you or saying what you're thankful for while you're walking. Like many other ideas, I stole this one from one of my favorite authors and podcaster, Jon Gordon. You can see a list of his books here and a link *to The Jon Gordan Podcast here.*

The gratitude walk has been a challenge to integrate into my daily habit and routine. To be honest, it felt very awkward and cheesy when I first started. What do I say? Do I say it out loud? After a while, I made it my own and began to enjoy this ten-to-fifteen-minute daily walk. After a few weeks of consistent gratitude walks, I found myself enjoying little moments more, being more thankful and it even seemed like the days and weeks slowed down a bit. I was more aware of the blessings all around me. (And less aware of what was on the news!)

3. Stop putting the wrong things in! We are great at adapting as human beings. We will adapt to our environment, physically and mentally.

Recently I enjoyed a Ted Talk by Peter Sage titled, *How to Eliminate Self Doubt Forever and the Power of Your Unconscious Mind*. In his talk, Mr. Sage said, "The two biggest things that impact us unconsciously more than anything else are the mainstream media and the peer group we spend time with..." He went on to say, "Turn off the news! For those of you who think the mainstream media is about reporting the news, I got news for you, you're in Disneyland ... the job of mainstream media is to stimulate another part of the brain called the amygdala ... designed to notice negative before positive"

He used an analogy of being in the Amazon rainforest at night. Of all the amazing things going on in the forest at night, "... the news takes your flashlight and points it at a snake eating a rat ... but you could choose instead to look at the hummingbird being born." What's important is what's going on in your world. Where are you pointing your flashlight?

4. Practice Generosity and Giving. "Gratitude by definition, is focused on others' care or on entities outside of oneself. It is not about one's own accomplishments or luck." ~Monica Y. Bartlett Neurosciencenews.com: *Practicing Gratitude Builds Resilience and Hope*

Use your financial resources to give back, whether through charitable donations, supporting loved ones, or acts of kindness. Gratitude for your own abundance naturally fosters a desire to help others, reinforcing a sense of purpose and fulfillment.
An article on NBCnews.com titled, *Money can buy happiness — if you give it away* says it all. The article declares, "New research reveals that when individuals dole out money for gifts for friends or charitable donations, they get a boost in happiness, while those who spend on themselves get no such cheery lift."

Next Steps

Look back on what you've been through and what you have achieved. What are the things you wished for when you first started out that now you take for granted? (E.g. three car garage, flying commercially to your vacation

destination versus driving, the ability to buy a new car, etc.)

When you practice gratitude and thankfulness, you experience life differently and you learn to believe each experience offers learning and growth potential. Further, there's an abundance of opportunity waiting for you:

1. You bounce back faster from disappointments.
2. You become more psychologically resilient.
3. You're willing to keep trying because you believe good things are in store for you.

I challenge you to try one new mindset habit this week (e.g., gratitude journaling, gratitude walks, gratitude checklist, defining your "enough" number, or sharing abundance with someone else).

I believe if you work to build these habits, you will see the ripple effect in your life. When we notice good things in our lives and in others, we're more likely to feel content, generous, resilient, and truly wealthy. Give it a shot and let me know how it goes!



About the Author

Charlie Mattingly a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional, is a first officer for Southwest Airlines based in Atlanta.
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FEATURE

Professional Pilots of Tomorrow

The all-volunteer organization dedicated to mentorship for anyone aspiring to a career in aviation

Contributors to this story:

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Joseph Tar Schmidt, PPOT President

Emily Kretschmer, PPOT Vice-President of Industry Relations

In any industry, there are unique challenges to cultivating a culture of success, professionalism, and legacy. Aviation certainly is no exception! Professional Pilots of Tomorrow was created in 2016 by founders, John Hackworth, Marc Cervantes, and Vesselin Slaveykov, as an IRS charitable 501 (c) (3), non-profit nationwide organization to address the need for unbiased mentorship in the industry, proudly provided free of cost to all members. From its humble beginnings as a small group of pilots looking to share their experience and guidance, it has grown into an organization of nearly 2,500 members. Professional Pilots of Tomorrow prides itself on supporting pilots through the sharing of information, knowledge, and guidance based on three key tenets—*Confidential, Insightful, and Unbiased.*

As we approach the ten-year anniversary of PPOT's inception, we would like to thank Craig Pieper, and the entire team at Aero Crew News for this opportunity to share the history of our organization, highlight our members and their stories, and to keep you in the loop about what we are doing to support the future of aviation in the United States.



Founder and former PPOT President, John Hackworth, shares the following regarding his experience with the organization:

Professional Pilots of Tomorrow started out of necessity—a need for a community that supported one another through mentorship, network building and the dissemination of unbiased advice, information and resources—an idea between friends that formed a community from which countless relationships, connections, and careers have been forged. Making informed career-path decisions is critical to achieving long-term job satisfaction; the question then is simple—where and how does one find guidance?

A recurring issue with mentorship spanning multiple industries is, of course, the limitations of the mentors' backgrounds and experience, and how those align with the ambitions and curiosities of the mentees. Unique to Professional Pilots of Tomorrow is the community we have built. Members are provided with various tools to bridge the gap, such as our "Pilot Directory," which mentors are instructed to utilize in facilitating further connections for the mentee depending on their interests. This allows our mentors to leverage our greatest assets; the combined experience, background, and knowledge of hundreds of pilots to provide the best experience possible for our mentees, and to help answer important questions before making career-altering decisions. In a seniority-based industry, it is important that our members can be introduced to the "big picture," and become informed about all of the opportunities available to them.

Fundamentally, Professional Pilots of Tomorrow is a means for helping others. Ingrained into the mission, the culture of the leadership team, and the very DNA of the organization is one simple concept—if we can say that we helped at least one pilot navigate their career, then we have succeeded in fulfilling our obligation.

I'm proud to see how many lives PPOT has positively impacted. The relationships and bonds created through PPOT are countless, and to this day, over nine years since we first began, the friendships formed are probably my favorite part of this community.

Mentorship Success

Anyone who has spent time in the aviation industry appreciates the value of a high-quality network. Many have found their first aviation job, been hired at their dream airline, or taken the next step in their career because of someone they knew.

Equally, many people join the aviation industry without any guidance or knowledge of how to get through training, build flight time, and find entry positions en route to their dream career. While PPOT is most visible on social media and at industry-wide conferences, the most vital part of our day-to-day organization is our one-on-one mentorship program. Hundreds of volunteers support the organization to ensure consistent, quality mentorship on a day-to-day basis. PPOT walks with people of all backgrounds; pilots with varied experience levels, unique hopes, goals, and aspirations to ensure long-term aviation success.

PPOT member ***Jacob Gleske*** shares that PPOT helped him get back into aviation after taking a non-aviation job out of flight school. Although he was forced to earn a living elsewhere due to the financial recession in the early 2010s, Jacob used PPOT as a path back into the flight deck as soon as he was able, and he eagerly shared with us that PPOT gave him the confidence to trust that he could follow his dream while still providing for his family.

Some PPOT members make complete career changes to become pilots. Member ***Atanas Malamov*** had a successful dance career when he decided he wanted to make a shift into aviation. With nobody else to turn to, with no aviation in the family, Atanas joined PPOT, and is grateful for his PPOT mentor, Mitch, who was present through all his training to offer advice, encouragement, and firsthand industry insight. Not only was Atanas' mentor an important





career aid, he also became a close friend, and the two have met in person to fly, chat, and grow together in their careers. Now flying at a national Part-135 air carrier, Atanas is a PPOT mentor himself and is excited to help the next generation of pilots launch their careers. Atanas says his story is a great reminder of "how mentorship can lift a dream off the ground—and keep it soaring."

Behind The Scenes

Key to PPOT's day-to-day operations is the proprietary Pilot Management Portal (PMP) developed by PPOT's in-house technology team, consisting of ***Riley Shannon*** and former President ***Cameron Shulak***. The Pilot Management Portal (PMP) can be found on the organization's website, (www.theppot.org), and is accessible to each member, after completing the sign-up process. The PMP allows mentors to submit regular updates they receive from their mentees, as well as provide direct feedback to the organization. The portal allows mentees to access various resources that are available exclusively to PPOT members, including discounts with partner organizations such as the popular logbook software, LogTen Pro, powerful training tools from SkyBot AI and Lindbergh AI, and even tuition discounts from Purdue University Global.

One of the most useful resources members can use is the Airline Comparison Chart. For those who are looking to take a step towards the airlines, the Airline Comparison Chart provides valuable information in a simple format that is easy to navigate. Whether an aviator wishes to compare pay, pilot domiciles or any of many other key variables, this can be done easily across many ultralow-cost and regional carriers while utilizing the Airline

Comparison Chart. This resource plays a critical role in allowing members to make the most informed career decisions possible.

Another resource provided for our membership is the mentor directory, mentioned by founder John Hackworth. In addition to having an assigned mentor, members can access this directory to facilitate communication with countless other mentors with various backgrounds who may be better able to answer specific questions. The aviation community has a vast body of knowledge and experience, and it is crucial for the next generation to be able to tap into it through this shared community. Just as pilots do during any flight, members of PPOT are strongly encouraged to utilize all available resources to ensure success.

Subject to the state of the hiring environment at any given time, historically, Professional Pilots of Tomorrow has also offered the "Low Time Networking Program" that aims to educate members regarding pilot-career opportunities that do not require qualifications equivalent to ATP minima. While many newly minted commercial pilots decide to pursue a path as a certified flight instructor, there are others who do not wish to instruct and would prefer to pursue other opportunities. This is where the Low Time Networking Program can benefit PPOT members as opportunities with the organization's partners are highlighted on the PMP.

While Professional Pilots of Tomorrow currently has numerous resources available, it is working to expand resources through future projects and is open to partnerships with organizations willing to support its mission.

Not only can it be incredibly difficult for upcoming pilots to decide which company they may like to apply to, but it can be difficult to even know when to begin this arduous process. Many airlines offer pathways to the right seat of an airliner that begin as soon as the completion of an instrument rating. To help navigate this process, Professional Pilots of Tomorrow will be launching "The Airline Cadet Program" in 2025.

The Airline Cadet Program aims to be a reliable resource to provide information pertaining to many current cadet programs. Like anything in aviation, it is important to identify an "end goal," and then determine how best to work towards accomplishing that goal. Members will be able to use the Airline Cadet Program to learn about which cadet programs are affiliated with which airline. This will be an effective way for members of PPOT to begin to plot a career path towards their airline of choice.

This program is also designed to help those who are uncertain about which path to the airlines they would like to take. It will provide important information like application requirements, benefits and flow agreements. Taking individual preferences into consideration, members will be able to weigh potential options and decide which cadet programs may make sense for them. Joining a cadet program is a big step towards accomplishing the goal of becoming an airline pilot and PPOT is excited to support pilots during this process.

Professional Pilots of Tomorrow is also excited to introduce the "Military Transition Program" slated for late 2025. The organization is grateful for the service of the many men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. The sacrifices service members and their families endure is deeply appreciated and not taken for granted. Therefore, PPOT is working to make support for current and former members of the military a focal point of the organization. The Military Transition Program will be designed to aid those who are currently in the discharge process, or have recently discharged, from the military. Transitioning from the military to civilian life can be extremely difficult, especially when a clear path to a civilian job has not yet been established. Members who opt into this program will be paired with a mentor who is a military veteran. The mentors will support mentees in making the transition by means of reflecting on their own personal experiences as well as drawing upon current available resources.

Continued Mentorship Success

One mentee, ***Rich Couture***, started as an Air Force pilot and connected with PPOT while transitioning to the airlines. After 20 years in the military, civilian flying was an entirely new world from what was comfortable and familiar. PPOT was a key resource for Rich, who shares that his personal mentor, Stephen Griffiths, dedicated countless hours of phone calls and emails, as well as résumé coaching, to assist with his transition to the airlines. With PPOT's help, Rich was selected for Southwest Airlines' Destination 225 Military Pathway Program. Rich has since flowed into a first-officer position at Southwest flying the Boeing 737 and is looking forward to an exciting and successful career.



BACK TO CONTENTS

"Here's a photo from my first flight last year (LAS-BOI) which I will always cherish," Rich says. "Thank you PPOT & Keep on Aiming High Everyone!"

No matter in what phase our members are in their lives, PPOT is eager to help them grow as professional aviators and uplift them. We love success stories, and we are eager to continue expanding to reach as many people as possible.

Communuity Engagement

PPOT has the unique opportunity to partner with industry leaders and attend industry-wide conferences, year-round. Of particular importance have been partnerships with companies such as LogTen Pro (the first major partnership our organization landed), as well as Spitfire Elite Consulting and Purdue University Global. PPOT is grateful to those organizations that believe in our mission to make aviation more accessible to pilots from various backgrounds and is excited for future opportunities available to the organization.

We have enjoyed opportunities to attend a number of industry conferences over the years, such as those hosted by OBAP, PAPA, WAI, and NGPA. These conferences help us reach a wider audience and allows us to connect in person with pilots in need of guidance from members who share similar identities. With appearances planned at conferences throughout the year and across the nation, PPOT plans to continue growing and expanding its reach, and is particularly grateful to these organizations for supporting our mission, despite our limited financial resources. (Each of our 600+ mentors is a volunteer.)

We are also excited to announce partnerships with Lindbergh AI and Skybot AI, two start-up companies that have developed tools to make the training process for student pilots as seamless as possible. As we continue to grow our reach, we are excited to provide not only quality mentorship but also offer members more options to learn and develop as pilots.

As PPOT's mentorship network grows, so does our desire to support our members. Connecting so many like-minded aviators means there is a wide group to offer support. Some members of our network are especially skilled in certain areas and can offer expertise in a variety of situations, and even connections to assist new pilots land their next position.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we were all completely upended by a crisis directly affecting our industry. Rather than being idle, the organization's leadership sprang into action, creating the "Pilot Support Network," offering members an opportunity to discuss their situations with confidentiality. The program offered additional resources to members through a challenging time in the industry via webinars and town-hall meetings.

Another Happy Story

Mentee ***Andy Mak*** joined PPOT last year and recently achieved an important milestone, his first pilot certification! Andy shares his story:

> *My experience with Professional Pilots of Tomorrow (PPOT) has been nothing short of transformative. I met PPOT President Joseph Schmidt on a flight from Paris to New York. I was a student pilot in the jetway, and he graciously welcomed my request to visit the flight deck—a simple gesture that led to an incredible mentorship and support system. Prior to joining the program, I had the misconception that success in aviation required significant financial means or a family legacy in the industry. I found myself overwhelmed by the complex and often intimidating path to becoming*





BACK TO CONTENTS

a professional pilot. Through Joseph's thoughtful and consistent mentorship, I was able to craft a personalized and realistic pathway toward my goals. His support—including regular check-ins and a mock checkride during a particularly challenging period—helped me regain the confidence I needed to pass my Private Pilot License (PPL) checkride on the first attempt. Thanks to the guidance of PPOT, Joseph, and my exceptional flight instructor Matt McKeon, I now feel equipped and inspired to continue my journey in aviation.

Scholarahips

As we know, aviation is an expensive industry to join, and costs continue to increase. In 2019, PPOT launched its first scholarship to directly support the future of aviation, awarding $1,500 to recipient Krista Morisen. Despite the hurdles and challenges faced in 2020 during the world-wide pandemic, it continued to provide support with additional scholarships. In 2021, PPOT was proud to announce a partnership with LogTen Pro to provide additional scholarships in support of our mission, and all are extremely grateful for their support throughout the years. In particular, we'd like to recognize Paul Edney for his unwavering commitment to supporting our organization. Last year, Spitfire Elite Consulting sponsored two $2,500 scholarships, further increasing our reach. Most recently, we received an anonymous donation of $5,000 to fund the 2025 PPOT "Carmen John Lomando Memorial Scholarship."

Amanda Herrera, a winner of the 2025 PPOT Carmen John Lomando Memorial Scholarship shared the following regarding her experience:

Aviation has always been my passion, but mentorship has been my lifeline. Without the guidance of pilots who came before me, navigating flight training while balancing work and financial challenges would have been overwhelming. From earning my Private Pilot's License while furloughed as a flight attendant during the pandemic, to now preparing for my commercial certificate and cadet interview with PSA Airlines, I've leaned on the wisdom and encouragement of my aviation community.



BACK TO CONTENTS



Receiving the 2025 Carmen John Lomando Memorial Scholarship is not just financial support—it's a reminder that I am never alone on this journey. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity and excited to continue the cycle of mentorship, supporting future pilots through Professional Pilots of Tomorrow. If you're chasing a dream, find your community and keep going. I promise, it's worth it.

Our scholarship department consists of many dedicated volunteers led by mentor David Correa. It continues to seek opportunities for funding and reviews hundreds of applications each year using a multi-step rubric to award scholarships to candidates who demonstrate excellence and meet various eligibility criteria.

Kayla Maedche, another winner of this year's scholarship, said this about her experience with the program:

I have been flight training in the Midwest since 2022. Flying has always been a passion of mine as a child, marked by moments of earning airline wing pins on my first commercial flight, flying with a family friend, and watching planes fly overhead from the nearby airport. I love being able to use my life to help positively impact other people: I work as a high-school teacher, serve as a chaplain for our local Civil Air Patrol squadron, and volunteer weekly at my church. I have been on 13 different serving trips in nine different countries in the last 11 years. My dream is the same for aviation—to use it not as a hobby or a paycheck, but to do mission work and deliver humanitarian aid in remote areas of the world. Every single person deserves access to live a healthy, successful, joy-filled life! This scholarship will be a tremendous help to me as I almost had to quit taking lessons several times this spring, because I just could not make ends meet between multiple jobs to pay for continual lessons. Thank you so much, PPOT! Thank you for helping me pursue my dreams!

Since the inception of our first scholarship in 2019, PPOT is proud to announce that it has awarded $21,000 to 12 deserving recipients from varied backgrounds. We encourage you to support our mission if you are able and are forever grateful to the many people who have donated their time, efforts, and financial support to help us with our goals.

Conclusion

We'd like to conclude our story with a message from our President, Joseph Tar Schmidt.
We appreciate you taking the time to read about our organization. I have enjoyed my nine years as a member of this incredible group of aviators. After joining as a mentee and relatively new entrant to the industry, PPOT has given me so many opportunities to learn, grow and give back to this industry. As Professional Pilots of Tomorrow continues to grow, we are actively seeking new volunteers to join our team. Currently, we are looking for additional team members for the following departments:

- IT (coding experience preferred)
- Fundraising & Events
- Lead Mentors
- Outreach

I'd also like to take this opportunity to ask that if you are able, please consider making a donation to our organization. We are proud to be able to support the industry free of charge for all of our members, and as a non-profit organization, we rely entirely on your support. We are pleased to offer the ability to accept donations of any amount, on both a one-time and automatically recurring basis. Even small donations go a long way, as PPOT prides itself on our extreme fiscal responsibility. A donation equal to the price of an airport coffee can cover the annual critical infrastructure costs for five mentorship pairings. All donations are documented, and you will receive a receipt that can be utilized for tax purposes. All contributions made on our website are voluntary and because no goods or services are provided in return, the full amount donated is tax deductible. We hope you are as excited as we are for what lies ahead. We would not be where we are today without your involvement and commitment to our cause. As always, thank you for your continued support.

More information regarding PPOT's 501(c)3 status and non-profit filings is available on request at info@theppot.org. Scan the QR code below to make a tax-deductible donation today to support our operation, future scholarships, and the hundreds of pilots who donate their time, efforts and resources to support the future of aviation. Thank you and fly safe!

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About the Author

Professional Pilots of Tomorrow is a mentorship organization founded on the principle of providing free, unbiased guidance to aspiring aviation professionals, as well as providing the resources needed to succeed in the industry. Read More...



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PRESIDENT
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