

## Window seat

Tick ...Tick... Tick.....It is 10 in the morning and my elder son Aryav is still taking turns in his bed, but my younger one Rio is in full form today. Not that he got to brush his tooth first something which he takes pride in but because he will be travelling to Bhubaneswar for his maasi's wedding and that to by air. From the time Rio has started understanding things he has always been fascinated by airplanes. Blame it on my dearest hubby who used to pamper our little hero with various models of toy helicopters and planes, the radiant smile that comes to the boy's face is worth a million bucks.

Until last night both Rio and Aryav have been arguing over the window seat occupancy. Aryav gives all sorts of excuses to trap Rio and strike a deal but alas! he can hardly succeed. To add to Aryav's woes there is Lata our nanny who is travelling with us and this being her maiden flight she has an eye on the window seat too. Yesterday only she told me "Bhabhi , my sister said do take the window seat as you will get to see how high you are and how tiny things look". What could have I said, a return smile was enough.

Lata and my younger one are both excited and nervous at the same time. Excited to fly above the clouds and nervous owing to the feeling of being in motion at such a great height. But they cannot be blamed for this. Somewhere all of us become apprehensive when we fly on air for the first time. It's hard to know what to expect leading to utter confusion. I very well remember my first flying experience in the winter of 2005 when I was on a domestic flight travelling from Bhubaneswar to Mumbai. Travelling by plane and that to alone...a chill ran down my spine. Excitement coupled with anxiety was perfectly reflecting on my face. There was my Dad who cheered me up and said "You have grabbed your dream job and from here you need to be independent in the truest sense, go and prove yourself". Those words were enough to boost my spirit. But still my mom was secretly nervous and she gave me all mantras to

chant while I was in flight. There was a box full of head balms, cotton plugs, motion sickness medicines and so on in my cabin bag. Once we took off and were air borne the feeling was amazing. That day and today so much has changed, I have taken n number of flights but that two and half hours was something which I can never forget.

Today I see the same curiosity in Lata and Rio's face. Finally, Lata could zero down on a particular blue bag which she was going to carry with her. My two kids had their respective bags and we husband wife settled for one single big trolley bag which seemed just enough for both of us. Together we started for the airport. Once we reached I could sense a certain degree of fear on Lata's face. What's the matter? I asked". Before Lata could answer Aryav spilled the beans "Lata aunty is petrified of the fact that her blue bag is going to be checked in with other luggage's of ours.....sad na mamma, Lata aunty ka blue bag to gaya." What a mischievous lad my elder one is?. Lata on the other hand was silently staring at me as if I am the third umpire and my verdict is awaited. `No, I said Don't worry dear, Bags are to be checked in and we will get it back once we reach Bhubaneswar ..so no need to panic.' By this time Sanjib was back from the ticket desk with our boarding passes. `We need to go for security check in 'he said. Finally we did our check ins and were waiting near Gate no.5 for the next announcement.

Suddenly Lata came running towards me with joy and I could see the spark in her eyes. Bhabhi `Come on I will show you something' she exclaimed dragging me in the opposite direction. `look she is Ms.Priya and her cookery show comes in our TV' ...Her joy knew no bounds as her pale face had suddenly lit up. Great, I said as I caught a glimpse of a beautiful lady reading a journal on the other end of the lobby. Seeing her happy I too heaved a sigh of relief. In between my little one was busy with his snack packet while constantly showing his acrobatic skills on the floor. The more I was telling him to be disciplined the more restless he was becoming hardly paying any heed to my words. Aryav by that time had finished

one coke can and was about to grab another. When I rebuked, he made a grumpy face but thankfully the can was put inside the bag.

As soon as the boarding announcement was done both my kids jumped with joy. We went inside the aircraft and as we had five tickets altogether I thought of letting Lata enjoy the visuals from the window seat, placing myself comfortably next to her, while Sanjib and my boys settled for another set of three seats. Sanjib in the aisle one and kids in the next two. Everyone seemed to settle down in their respective seats letting me to believe that the window seat chapter is finally over. Suddenly I heard my little one scream, 'Mamma, Bhai is not letting me take the window seat. This was followed by elder ones justification and arguments for the same. 'You are small na Rio, so it's good if you are placed between papa and me' next time I will surely allow you, but today it's my turn' Aryav said. Somewhere both me and Sanjib knew that the so called "next time" never comes. On a more serious note I could realize that it was becoming increasingly difficult for Sanjib to pacify both. I was about to open my seat belt and go when Lata interrupted "Bhabhi, bring Rio here, let him enjoy and I can sit next to him, No worries kids wishes are to be prioritized".

That was enough to make me speechless. Controlling my emotions I kept turning the pages of the inflight magazine lying next to me. I remembered the day this elderly lady came into our lives and how with her caring attitude she has made a place in our hearts. Be it my elder one's tantrums or younger one's naughtiness she has handled it all and has come out victorious. My kids dote on her and that very moment I realized one thing for sure.....Family is not always blood, it's the people in your life who trust you, care for you and would go that extra mile to do things to see you smile.

Name : Jigyansa Mohanty

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