

## **Anecdote One**

I'm going to tell you a story about my a journey I once took, and about how I learnt to plan ahead.

When I was younger, I went travelling with two friends across Asia. We flew from London to Delhi in India, without booking any hotels in advance, and it was quite overwhelming. It was my first time to leave Europe, and we really had no idea what to do.

Our plan was to travel to Nepal and go hiking, and we managed to figure out the best train route from Delhi to the Nepalese border. The train journey was long, and the border town in Nepal was very remote. Our goal was to travel to the mountain town of Pokhara by bus, and we bought our tickets at the tiny bus station. While we were waiting for the bus to leave, we met some travellers from Israel who were on their way to the capital city Kathmandu. We waited for our buses together in a small cafe.

When me and my friends boarded the bus, we noticed that the Israeli's were on the bus too! We thought it was odd, because we were travelling in different directions.

"Oh dear," I said to my friends. "It looks like they are on the wrong bus."

We road the bus for many hours, through dangerous, narrow mountain roads.

There was strange liquid leaking from the roof of the bus, and an old man fell asleep on my shoulder. The bathrooms at the rest stops were not very pleasant.

Finally, we arrived at our destination..... only it wasn't! The bus arrived in Kathmandu, not Pokhara, and the Israelis were not the ones on the wrong bus...

We had a good time in Kathmandu anyway, and later travelled to Pokhara.

However, I did learn that day to check my tickets more carefully.

## **Anecdote Two**

My son is a teenager now, but I have a funny story from when he was very young. I think it demonstrates how difficult it is to raise kids, and some of the unpredictable situations which can come up.

It was summer time, and my wife was taking a nap with him on the ground floor of our house. Because it was summer, the windows were open to let in the breeze and keep the room a little cooler.

Everything was fine when they first woke up, but then my son started to cry and hold his ear. He was very young, so he couldn't really explain the problem clearly. He was very unhappy, so my wife decided to take him to the doctor for a check up. The doctor looked into his ear and said she could see something stuck there.

Maybe that was causing the pain. The doctor carefully put her tweezers into my son's ear, and pulled out something black. It was a little beetle! The doctor and my wife both screamed!

I guess the bug came in from the garden, and saw my son's earhole as a comfortable place to make a home. There was no serious damage, and after the bug was removed my son was absolutely fine. After that day though, we made sure that the screens were securely shut when we left the windows open.

### **Anecdote Three**

When I was young I didn't really know what I wanted to do and I spent a lot of time travelling. When I look back, I did a lot of stupid things... but I had a lot of fun and adventures. Let me tell you about a dangerous purchase I once made.

In the mid 1990's I quit my job to travel around the world with a couple of friends. Our main goal was to reach Australia, and we spent a couple of months travelling across Asia before we arrived in Sydney. Sydney is a great city, and we found an apartment in North Sydney. It was small, and dirty, but it was also cheap.... and right next to the beach! We all found part-time jobs and had a lot of fun learning to surf, going out, and making new friends.

Eventually we decided it was time to move on, and we prepared for the next stage of our journey. We wanted to travel up the east coast of Australia through New South Wales, Queensland, right up to the North East point at Cairns. We met an Irishman who had just taken the journey in the opposite direction and was selling his van. We could sleep in the van as we travelled, and it was only \$400! The only problem was, it had no reverse gear. Well, we thought, we don't need to go backwards. So, we bought it.

Everything was fine until we got close to our final destination. We were driving along a coastal road when the brakes failed! Fortunately, there were no other cars on the road and we were able to ease to a gentle stop. A group of friendly Irish guys we had met earlier were not far behind us, and took us and our stuff to the next town. I guess the lesson from this story is that you shouldn't buy a cheap car from a stranger in the street.....