



with Nejobla Korris

CIVILWARS

Plane TALK



Recently there was a woman from New York visiting her mother-in-law here in Edmonton. Her mother-in-law just had surgery, actually a hysterectomy, so the gal's husband insisted she come and spend some time with the "old biddy" while she was in the hospital. I found out that it was gruelling for her to spend two weeks in such an "uncultured city" called Edmonton. "I know" she says "no one has ever heard of the place really!"

But this was not all to her story. I also found out that she was having a lot of trouble getting pregnant. This 40-something cosmopolitan New Yorker was clearly in angst about it. Finally, after visiting several doctors and holistic practitioners, she believed that she finally had a solution to her problem. Firstly, she started to "meditate in earnest" (I don't know what it means not to meditate earnestly). As a matter of fact, her uterus was tipped back so I learned about the various sexual positions the holistic practitioner recommended to help her get pregnant. Some of the descriptions given were just too vivid to recount here... suffice to say I learned a lot from her.

You might ask why I would bother writing

about this. Well, I got all this information from her without ever exchanging one word with her. You see, she sat next to me on the flight and decided to have this candid conversation on her cell phone before the plane took off. I know what you're thinking: At this point, you just can't help yourself... you have to turn and take a good look at her. First, you try to be subtle about it but then you just can't help yourself.

We hear endless chatter about our right to privacy but I haven't encountered anyone who really walks the walk or talks the talk. We insist on privacy and are convinced that some stranger might look at a medical chart and actually remember or care what they read about us. We worry that an institution conducts a credit check in the course of an investigation and actually cares or remembers anything about our ratings. We are so concerned about hiding certain parts of our lives that the parts we insist on hiding are really not that interesting at all. Now our gal from New York... that was interesting.

I spend an inordinate time on airplanes and am always surprised at what people discuss on their cell phones in enclosed spaces. In a world where we proclaim our right to privacy and annihilate those who may trespass against us, we

sure do a lot of open talking without any regard for who is sitting next to us. I am mortified to have heard the sordid details of the New Yorker's sex life and ohms for procreation. And, I'm sure she never thought for a second her conversation would end up in my column.

So next time you decide to have a conversation about how you think your boss is stupid and a louse, make sure you hide that business card tag attached to your carry-on bag. And maybe refrain from using his or her name: You never know who is sitting next to you or if they care about what you say. Heck, they might even know the boss or the old biddy. ✓

Nejobla Korris is an international expert in area of interviewing skills and linguistic lie detection. She is a keen observer and fan of the human condition. Dubbed the "Human Lie Detector" by some clients, she is a popular speaker on lie detection, fraud prevention and investigation, workplace fraud, and organizational justice. Nejobla recently launched a new speaker's series on the differing communication styles between men and women.

Contact: nkorris@working-it-out.com

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