

Tiny Chrystal Salt and Pepper Shakers for All Students

I am early for a recent flight with connections to Grand Rapids, Michigan. You only have to miss one flight in your life to follow the two hour rule for perpetuity. I started killing time with head down reading my twitter feed, trying not to stick out. Everyone in airport was on their devices and it is uncanny how people were able to avoid walking into each other.

Twitter was dominated by articles about the new school year. My mind wandered as I reflected on my time as a superintendent and how exciting the start of school was for students, teachers and administrators. I even started to think how I couldn't go to sleep the night before school started as a young child. Part of my insomnia was the anticipation of meeting new teachers and seeing old friends and part was the fact that school bed time was 7:00 p.m. and during the summer you were still catching fire flies at 10 p.m.

Came out of my trance in time to hear my group being called. Quickly, I switched from school thoughts to airline procedures. It doesn't matter how many times I have boarded an airplane, still get nervous. I always go through my own flight check. Pull seat belt from under my butt and hope it is not from the seat next to you. Pull seat up so you don't get reprimanded. Most important, I never push the reading light button. You only have to hit the flight attendant call button by mistake once to have that reoccurring nightmare.

I was getting comfortable when the flight attendant approached me. My paranoia immediately kicked in and started doing my landing check early. The attendant stopped at my seat and said, "Due to a booking problem, we are going to upgrade you to First Class for your connection between Dallas and Grand Rapids."

I entered the Grand Rapid flight, even before families with children. Again, wanted to fit in. Observed frequent first classers and tried to emulate the "attitude". My first dilemma was that the flight attendant was already serving drinks and I couldn't find the tray.

Next, the attendant startled me by asking for my lunch order. I pinched myself making sure I wasn't in a Twilight Zone episode.

Silverware (no sporks), three square porcelain dishes matched to the size of each course. Fresh salad with vine ripe cherry tomatoes. Cut in half to prevent me from

squirting tomato juice into the cockpit. Corned beef sandwich on swirled rye bread with aged cheddar cheese. Assorted fresh raw vegetables arranged in lines. Chocolate cake with double chocolate frosting topped with a strawberry. Butter shaped like a jetliner and tiny crystal salt and pepper shakers.

If passengers and crew hadn't already gotten drift that I was a First Class first timer, taking my phone out to snap a lunchie and asking "what is this for" when the attendant delivered the hot towel, sealed my fate.

A couple days after the flight, I shared my excellent adventure along with my lunch picture, when my emotions took a turn along with my stomach. It hit me hard and fast.

Every student deserves a personalized first-class educational experience complete with tiny crystal salt and pepper shakers. First class schooling should not be the result of a once in a lifetime chance upgrade or the ability to pay. This is one dream we can make come true. We must have courage to implement policies and dedicate the resources to guarantee that all students fly First Class!

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