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DIFFERENT ADVENTURES ON PLANET EARTH...



BY CAMILA SANTOS SIMMONS

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Business Principles

At a young age, I developed my first entrepreneur skills.

Like most kids who have done it, it always felt pretty awesome to earn a coin and go straight to the candy shop, without having to explain to ANYONE where I had spent that money! Early days of financial independence...

I tried my hand at selling greeting cards, raffles, teaching (my first student was 7 and I was 10 - but from this one I charged no money), making perfumes (yes), selling fruits and cakes made by myself.

My story today is about selling cakes. I made this perfect batch - perfect for a 12 year old, that is - and went out to the beach to sell them. This was at our holiday spot during school holidays and my father's generosity with money was not enough for all that was on offer: amusement parks, ice cream parlours, and games arcades!

To put it in perspective, on the beaches in Brazil you will find a comprehensive array of goods being sold on the shores, from soft drinks to corn on the cob, beers, ice cream and even fashion. Talk about convenience! Between bathing and lying on the sand you quench your thirst from the comfort of your deck chair. It is a free country indeed, but what I didn't grasp at first was an important market rule: know your opponents.

I was still in my first lap, approaching sunbathers with a smile and a 2-for-1 offer and I was making a good trade. But then I got pulled aside by this angry 40-something who warned me: "I will say it only once - I am selling cakes here and this is my turf. SO BEAT IT!".

End of career, party in my house with a whole cake to share with my friends.

In Tramandaí, RS, Brazil

I'm hard work on work trips

In my field, one of the highlights of work trips is that we always stay at awesome hotels that offer even better breakfasts. Before a very early start, we were off to the buffet in a dark morning at 5am in the middle of winter in Queenstown. The buffet was still quite empty as most people with common sense were in bed recharging their batteries for a day in the slopes.

I had the ingenious idea of putting together a slice of bread, butter and cheese straight into the toaster (the carousel kind, where the bread kind of spins and is delivered to you on the other end). To my dismay, the bread made it to the other side but not the cheese. I count my losses and went back to my table to savour my toast and in a matter of minutes there was a burning smell in the whole room, a few more minutes and the fire alarm went off.

They evacuated the whole room, then the whole hotel and the fire brigade turned up as well. Guests still in their night gowns and red eyes were shaking their heads when they heard the cause of their premature start of the day was a clumsy guest that decided to put some cheese in the toaster. Needless to say I never came forward and actually helped the cries of 'who was this idiot?', hoping they didn't have any cameras in the area.

In Queenstown, Otago, New Zealand

Come crash with me

I love saving some dollars on air travel so that I can spend more money on cocktails with stupid names on arrival. It was with confidence that I opted to fly with a local budget airline to Cuba. Repeat with me: BUDGET airline in CUBA.

We were using said carrier to fly from Jamaica and, on the day before the flight, I had to go to the airport to withdraw some cash, so I decided to go on a meet and greet mission to find my airline and check on any updates. To my dismay, I had to speak with two different security people, one cleaner and someone at another airline before finding them, as nobody seemed to know who they were! At that stage I seriously thought I had been punk'd. Eventually some lady overheard my conversation and presented herself as check in staff for my airline, and told me to just rock up tomorrow and meet them, pointing to a general area where I would supposedly find some members of their staff.

Next day I did find them (phew), with an envelope with a PAPER TICKET for us. I hadn't seen one of those since I went on my gap year a hundred years ago.

More interestingly, it said we had "free seating" - yep, board and pick your seat. We were the last one to board and, interestingly, the last seats available were the exit rows, those ones we all fight for as they have more leg room. I was keen to work out why, and gave a light push to the emergency door, and it moved. I saw all my life before my eyes. How romantic/creepy/scary? Well, we came back to tell the story

In Kingston, Saint Andrew Parish, Jamaica

Brazilian girl meets Malaysian girl

I love getting massages, so when travelling to Asian countries I may indulge on a nice massage every day.

On our trip to Sabah I had a quite...unique experience. I was with my husband Luke, so we were both ushered to the massage room where we could have it done together. For enhanced relaxation, the out of tune radio blasted some thumping Asian pop.

The two masseuses were very good friends, it seemed. There was a lot of gossiping, and judging by the laughter, they were having a great time.

That day I also learned something about Malaysian culture: it's not only okay to burp in front of strangers. It's actually okay to burp in front of customers while half your weight is on their back. It was interesting to notice she had nothing to hide from me, she let a few ones go.

Oh, and the phones. I think they were getting lots of hits on Facebook! I wonder if they checked in and made comments about hating their jobs?

And then my masseuses order me to lie on my back. She started nicely working on my legs, and then stomach, and then the tits. Yes, the tits. It was so sudden and natural that I was paralised, I couldn't stop her. I was so self concious because I didn't want to be the stupid prude western that asked her to stop. Imagine that for a Facebook status? I was secretly hoping the other lady was not touching Luke's penis. I was also praying for her to not touch my nipples. For the record, she didn't.

Unfortunately this story was not exaggerated for comic effect.

In Sabah Malaysia

On the Art of Dating

My friend and I were having the time of our lives that summer when we were 18. Between ice-cream cones and alcopops, cover bands and beach volleyball, we always spared some time to engage in conversation with interesting boys. Or sometimes non-interesting boys.

Two single ladies were easy victims of smooth talkers in polo shirts. These two guys came up to us with the good old: "Do you come here often?"

When you are a teen, you haven't (as yet) heard the question so many times that you can easily recognise it as a pick up line.

The lads went on asking about where we were from, what we studied, star sign... (yawn)

My always political friend kept answering to the questions with a smile whereas I (borderline rude) would roll my eyes, answer questions with yes or no and/or look at my watch.

One of the guys finally felt uncomfortable and asked me if there was anything wrong.

"Yes" I replied, looking into his eyes for the first time. "You have a black bean stuck in your front tooth".

And that was the end of them.

In Tramandaí - Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Smelly Lessons in Life

When I was about 5 my mum had a demonstration of what you would call my "child's honesty". We got on a bus and took a seat.

Everything was going well until I heard and smelled a big fat fart. I went pale, and with wide open accusing eyes I shouted:

> "Mum, did you fart?"

Her immediate reaction was:

> "No I didn't, Camila!"

We repeated the dialogue a few more times, I wasn't convinced.

> "Are you sure, mum?"

> "Yes, I am sure!"

She said quietly, while pinching me, in a desperate attempt to make me shut up.

> "Don't pinch me, I know it was you!"

A bit of laughter on the bus at this stage

My poor mum couldn't handle it any longer, I just remember we got off the bus about 5 stops earlier. Up to this day, she promises it wasn't her. To the person out there who never came forward, you scared her for life and so did I...

In Porto Alegre - Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

About Author

Camila Santos Simmons

Living life between Australia and Brazil, enjoying all things travel and writing at my blog.

Why is the website called bytestories.com?

This is a place for "byte-sized" stories and there is a 1500 character (about 250 words) limit for two main reasons. Firstly, we want you to know that "War and Peace" isn't required to leave your mark. Secondly, it takes about 2 minutes to read each story meaning you can head here whenever you want a quick (and entertaining) read.

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