Sh*T My Dad Told Me Before I Went Walk-About

You aren't so 'little' any more, but you're still my 'little' girl

Grad 2011

Have a great adventure!

Security

1) You are personally responsible for your own physical security – no one else is – you are
2) Look out for your own safety first – then your friends and then the general public
3) Make good choices – early and often, every day
4) After your personal security, worry about your physical belongings – no one likes to be a victim
5) Update your family on where you are, what you are doing, and who you are with
6) Your cell phone can be your best friend – don't ever let it run out of battery power – if you are going somewhere – where there is no coverage, drop a note – tell someone you trust where you are going and for how long – give your Dad a place to start looking!
7) Leave the GPS on – when taking pictures with your cell phone – upload them frequently – have a date and time stamp that is current and up to date on each picture
8) Drop notes, with sufficient detail, to your mum and dad, and your friends – let us know what is going on and who you are with
9) When you are at a nightclub – don't leave your drink unattended – finish it before you dance, go to the washroom, or leave it alone!
10) Don't leave your ID / valuables anywhere it isn't accessible only to yourself – i.e. don't leave it anywhere but on your body – carry your purse with you, don't set it down, never let it out of your sight or control

11) Never let yourself be vulnerable – don't drink to the point you can't remember or you can't defend yourself or put yourself in a position where you can't defend yourself or get home by yourself
12) If you take a cab – text the cab info to a safe place (mum and dad for instance – or a pre-defined address that your parents / key friend know about)
13) No means no – use whatever force is necessary, plus 50% to defend NO – You don't have an obligation for anything you don't want to do – period – particularly if alcohol is involved
14) Avoid conflict, as much as you can. Don't be a victim - but if you have to fight, fight like there is no tomorrow – do whatever is necessary to secure your safety – use whatever force and / or weapons are necessary – if you have to fight – there is no tomorrow unless you win – there is no option but to win, no matter what the cost
15) Never carry a bag, parcel or letter for someone else through security or on any mode of transportation
16) You are subject to the laws of the land that you are in – keep that in mind – all of the time
17) You are who you 'hang with' – keep that in mind when travelling and continue to choose your friends carefully

Airline Travel

1) Arrive early – let everyone else be stressed – a relax at the gate beats the daylights out of running through the airport or missing a flight
2) Double and triple check your travel documents and your gate – watch the gate boards for last minute changes
3) Never leave your belongings with anyone who isn't very well known to you
4) Never let your personal items, travel documents, ID and valuables be out of your reach – fasten them to your body – take them to the washroom when you go
5) The people who work at the airport might be having a bad day too – the difference is, they can make your day hell if they want to
6) A smile will get you where no amount of reasoning, arguing or 'being right' might get you
7) When you get a chance to charge your batteries – charge your batteries (personal as well as IPad, IPod, cell phone, etc.)
8) You can't take water through security, but you can take empty water bottles and fill them once through security (They must be completely empty when going through security – use the water fountain)
9) Keep hydrated – drink the airline's bottled water when it is available – avoid alcohol (yeah – your Dad talking)
10) Keep critical medicines with your carry on – including over the counter medicines (Imodium, anti-histamines, Graval, head clearing medicine (Otrivin), pain killers) – don't count on the flight attendants having what you need

11) Get up and walk around – a lot – stretch
12) I like the aisle – you don't have to climb over anyone to go to the washroom – conversely, other people will have to climb over you – on a long flight, most of it will be over water – so nothing really to see out the window anyway
13) Listen to the announcements – there may be times, like ½ an hour before landing where you are not allowed to get up and use the washroom – make sure you schedule around these – turbulence is usually predictable and they will announce it – if you are up and experience turbulence – hang on – if it is serious turbulence, get on the floor and hang on tight
14) If you plan on sleeping on the plane, make sure your seat belt is on the outside of whatever is covering you, and the flight attendant won't have to wake you up to ensure your seat belt is on - wear it, at least loosely, all of the time you are in your seat (you can often buy a blanket on board – doesn't count in your carry on weight that way) – same thing with a pillow
15) Sleep whenever you can, on an airplane – be very cautious sleeping in airports while waiting for flights, or at bus terminals
16) Always have a snack in your bag – many places you can't take fruit into or out of their country – so always have something sealed up and with a full list of ingredients on the packaging – avoid nuts (peanut as well as the human kind)
17) Place overhead items in the bin above the seats across the aisle – that way you can see what people are doing when they rummage through the bin

18) When you aren't using your IPad or phone, password protect it and physically lock it up whenever you can – Do not cache passwords – type them in each time
19) A bit of hot water, wrung out well on a microfiber cloth will clean your IPad / IPod screen better then anything you can buy – wipe it and let it air dry – keep one with you in your day pack (you can get hot water when they bring the tea around)
20) When leaving an aircraft, double check seat pockets, the floor and the overhead compartment – ensure you have your valuables and travel documents; as well as any 'ends' to chargers that might have fallen off
21) Layer your clothes – keep them in your day pack, with you – include a spare change of clothes, just in case, a sweater or hoody, extra heavy socks to keep your toes warm
22) Remember that they don't weigh passengers – if you think you are overweight on your luggage, layer on some clothes and tuck things in your pockets, hang it off of your day pack
23) Make sure all zippers, and buckles, etc., are closed all of the time – only open them when you need something, close them afterwards – all the time
24) Always wear comfortable shoes / boots – keep them on for take off and landings – running through burning jet fuel in bare feet would be challenging – again, if you are wearing it they also don't weigh it as part of your carry on weight
25) Most places will let you buy food before you board the aircraft (for sure once through security), and carry it on board. Sometimes the salad you carry on will be way fresher then the salad you can get on the plane, and even

be cheaper (I don't believe in carrying on steaming hot drinks – it is dangerous and I don't recommend it)

26) When you fly, you are responsible for what is in your bags – if you left them alone, then you may not know what is in there – double check
27) Security – gotta live with it - try not to give up your passport or ticket – tuck it in a pocket or hold it in your hand while going through security – watch your stuff going through the x-ray machine – you will have to take your IPad, phone, IPod, batteries and any liquids (in a zip lock bag) out and put them in a tray – try to leave anything else of value inside one of your bags
28) If you have to subject yourself to a physical search – watch your stuff on the x-ray out tray – explain what you are doing if they show concern – before leaving security – double check you have everything – including your gate pass (they will take it from you if they have to do a more detailed examination of your things – and sometimes they forget to give it back)
29) As a female, you are allowed a carry on bag, plus your purse – leverage it (carry on bag can be quite large – there is a weight restriction)
30) If the person seated next to you shows too much interest in you, excuse yourself and put in your earbuds – Be polite but firm if you think there is going to be an issue - if you are typing something and you think they are reading it, make the font smaller – drives them nuts
31) Try to be self contained when it comes to entertainment – load up your IPad and IPod – you have the extra battery that will run them both – keep them charged all of the time

– many planes have USB or 120 volt outlets on them – think about e-books on your IPad

32) If you keep an electronic diary, keep it password protected – use the down time waiting for travel or on planes to write to your family and friends – use a word processor – the same paragraphs, cut and pasted into emails later, can be used for multiple groups of people – remember, we want to hear about your experience, we want to know where you are and what is happening – share your experiences
33) Join frequent flyer programs – it can make a difference when you have excess luggage, get bounced, etc.
34) Duty free – purchased after the security gate isn't included in your carry on weight – don't drink it on the airplane, and you will have to declare it when you arrive at your destination (18 is the legal drinking age in NZ and OZ) – you should be able to purchase alcohol after takeoff from the US, but not likely be able to purchase duty free before you fly from the US (age is 21). A lot of airlines have duty free once you take off – you would qualify for that

Medical / Safety / Personal Concerns

1) Be calm, be patient, be understanding – manage your stress levels and those around you – get all of the facts before drawing a conclusion – look at all of your options – look for 'out of the box' solutions
2) Drink bottled water as much as you can – only drink bottled water when you fly and / or travel
3) Wear sandals or flip flops in the shower, and around common areas
4) Always carry meds for most common issues with you – in your day pack – if you don't need them, someone you are with, might (when you run low, replenish so you don't run out)
5) Talk to your doc before you go, and take meds with you – keep the prescription in the zip lock bag with your meds (PDF the prescriptions – password protected – put them where you can get at them on the web)
6) Don't put yourself in a vulnerable position – ever
7) Don't hitch hike – if you plan a ride with someone, push the info up to where someone you trust can get to it if they need to
8) Sunblock, more sunblock and even more sunblock - hats, sunglasses and did I mention, more sunblock
9) It is easier to keep the weight off then it is to take it off – eat healthy, exercise and build exercise into your daily routine
10) If you don't want to share info with your parents, share it with a good friend, or an account that someone you trust

has access to – remember, you are responsible for your own safety

11) You have family and friends that want to hear how your adventure is going – don't let them down – they have contributed to your adventure – or want to – it is something most of us will never be able to do
12) When you cross a street – look both ways – Down Under the cars come from the opposite direction that you are used to
13) Think about renting a cell phone in New Zealand http://www.travelcell.com/rates/australia/new-zealand.asp - even if just for safety
14) 1. SAFE text in New Zealand
    ~ SAFE text is a free service that allows you to register your travel details (whereabouts, destination, car number plate etc.) on a central database. This information can be retrieved by police only in emergency, if you go missing or involved in an accident etc.
    ~ The date, time, message and cell phone number is recorded for each free SAFE text you send. Each SAFE text sent is automatically confirmed. The data is held for 2 months.
    ~ Text your message to the destination number.*
    Examples of use: "Leaving Aotea Sq. and walking back to hotel via Queen St." "Hitching from Victoria Park to Dargaville car reg. AB1234." "Taxi XYZ cabs from ferry terminal to Mt Eden, driver reg 99."
    Note: You don't have to register your name.
15) ICE – In Case of Emergency – put some .ICE1 and .ICE2 names and numbers in your phone – attach them to your Dad's cell phone number
16) Homesick – your Dad and his brothers had to leave home at 14 to go to boarding school – a phone call home once a month was what we managed to survive on – with Skype, email and IM your parents and your friends are never far away – you can reach us just about anytime. It is ok to be

lonely or homesick – just don't let it take over your life and ruin your adventure (well you had better miss us!)

17) Set Skype up so that you can call North American phones – about $2.99 a month

Work

1) You need work to stay there – if you don't have work, you are there for a vacation, and will need to fly home before you run out of money (not the worst thing in the world – just don't get yourself in a vulnerable position by not having work / money)
2) Initially – take anything safe to do work wise – get your foot in the door – look for more opportunities over time
3) Whatever you do, do it with passion – always be upbeat, help out wherever you can and always leave on amicable terms – never leave an employer in the lurch
4) Local references are good – work on making sure you get them
5) Attitude and motivation, long term, is more important then experience – sell it to get that job and keep it
6) Leverage contacts you have with family and friends – and never let them down if you get the job – it isn't the rest of your life – it just may be a job that you don't want to do ever again, and that is ok – it builds character

Hostels

1) If it doesn't feel good – get out as soon as you can and go somewhere else
2) Pull your own weight and then some – no-one likes a free-loader
3) Take ear plugs, use them and wash them frequently – sleep is your friend to help manage stress
4) Lock up anything valuable - if at all possible (many hostels have lock boxes – I'll get you a cipher lock to take with you – always leave the lock combo – locked or unlocked set at zeros)
5) Even the best person, under the worst circumstances, can take advantage of you if they are desperate, and you let them
6) Treat others the way you want to be treated
7) Be open, be honest with yourself and others (honestly isn't meanness)
8) Don't contribute to gossip
9) Label your gear – all of it – including power cords, etc.
10) Do get headphones / earbuds for your IPad / IPod – your roomies will appreciate it when you are watching something when they want to sleep – if you are using Skype, it makes the call more 'private' in a public place
11) If someone wants to use your IPad – only let them while you are watching – something posted 'in fun' to the Internet is there forever – and it might have your name associated with their post
12) If you are traveling with a group – ensure your gear is locked up if you leave the vehicle and anything valuable is

with you, on your person (IPad, IPod, Phone, passport, purse, etc.) – don't let yourself be victimized

13) Even more so in a Hostel – lot of people coming and going, keep everything locked up

Communications

1) Keep a couple of copies of key phone numbers in several spots
2) Keep emergency contact information on your person, in your purse, in your backpack, etc. (.ICE)
3) Keep password protected pdf copies of your key documents (SIN, Driver's license, passport, Visa, etc.) locally and somewhere on the web where you can get at it
4) Your IPad is WiFi enabled – free Wifi should be easy to find (MacDonalds, Starbucks, etc.) See here http://freewifiwiki.net/index.php?title=Australia
5) Don't sign up for a long term contract on a phone – the cost to break it will be significant
6) Do get a phone, with a data plan, that lets you create a wireless hotspot when WiFi is not available – manage your use of it very carefully
7) Watch your data plan very closely – overage fees can be significant (I've found examples of $750 per day) – use public WiFi to upload bigger files / photos – not your phone's data plan
8) Cellular usage and payment Down Under is different then Canada – read and understand the rules – read them again, once in a while
9) When you take pictures, send them to a web site, Dropbox or email recipient for safekeeping. When a memory

cartridge is full, send it to your parents – and buy a new one

10) If an email to someone is confidential and not to be shared – clearly label it so there is no misunderstanding about sharing information with others
11) Build time into your day to send email, upload pictures, do Facebook, Skype your friends and family – remember the time zone differences!

Earthquake

1) Don't panic – think and act quickly – Be calm
2) Get under something sturdy – heavy desk, load bearing door frame, or get up against an inside load bearing wall
3) Cover your head with your arms – avoid windows, mirrors, heavy light figures, book cases, etc.
4) Stay put until the shaking stops – if outside, get away from light standards, buildings, etc. then hang on
5) There will be foreshocks and after shocks - be prepared for them
6) Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth or t-shirt – try not to breath the dust stirred up
7) After an earthquake – broken gas lines are a real concern – don't use open flames (candles, matches, etc.) – use that flashlight Dad gave you
8) Get a message to loved ones – send texts, SMS and emails – then try voice calls – there is a better chance of texts and SMS getting through after an earthquake (or any natural disaster) – give us your status, where you are, and your injuries – report on friends after we know you are ok – we

can pass 'traffic' if given the appropriate information to contact other people's family

Finally

1) Document your adventure and share it, frequently, with family and friends
2) We, your family, want you to be safe, successful and to come back to us one day – we love you and miss you
3) There will be ups and there will be downs – that is life – learn to suck it up when necessary!
4) You have friends in Australia – they would love to help you learn about their country – spend some time with them
5) You have to be nuts to swim outside the shark nets in Australia – don't be nuts
6) There are a lot of things in Australia that can kill you – in the water, on the land and in the air – listen to the locals and stay alert
7) Have fun, enjoy the adventure, make friends and keep in touch