

The Artlessness of Delegation - Part 3

A windowless scenic drive...

Hotel check-out time: 10:00 am. Estimated driving time: 2 hours. Flight departure: 16:20 pm. A 100% risk-free equation, I reviewed with satisfaction. If anything, there was too much of an efficiency loss. Some filler was required. Not another jungle picnic or trek of course, we had an overdose of that. More like a factory outlet mall. You see, Aneesh already had his break, but . Add to this the Memorial Day sales bonanza at the nearby [Tanger outlets of Sevierville](#), the slight airport detour seemed too inviting to miss.

Next to the mall was an indoor amusement park. The siblings were dropped there, their mom at the mall, and I just listlessly hung out of everyone's way. A Cinderella-style decree had been issued to everyone: when the clock strikes 12, the car will depart for the airport—with or without , and we were off to the airport with (still) plenty of time to spare.

The GPS came out. For the kids, it was an exciting new toy. It's interesting to see how gadgets blend so smoothly in teenagers' hands these days. The two in the backseat were now my official navigators. Unfortunately, the traffic seemed unusually heavy, damn the crazy . 'There is no need to panic,' I reassured everyone, 'another 5 minutes, and we will hit the expressway.' But 5 minutes turned into 15, then 15 into 45—but the entry to the expressway was nowhere in sight! It was just not adding up, why was GPS taking us through local traffic-laden roads? As the vehicle nudged ahead at a snail's pace, the estimated arrival time kept climbing. I did have a printout of map quest directions, but it was locked away in the baggage trunk. Finally, when the airport arrival time of 3:20 pm flashed on the GPS, I declared that it was acceptable to panic now.


I pulled over, snatched the GPS from the kids and dived into the settings. My fears were not ill-founded—the gadget was preset at “shortest distance” mode rather than “shortest time”! The settings were hastily corrected; five minutes plus, and we were hurtling towards our destination on the expressway. The sceneries were amazing, but the car felt windowless. The navigators had suddenly gone quiet—it's difficult to converse when the heart is in the mouth. The only sound that punctuated the unnerving silence was that of the rubber screeching against the winding road passengers. With clockwork precision, the car was repopulated by 1:00 pm

The airport terminal met our zooming car around 3:30 pm, barely minutes before the check-in closure time. Fortunately, the terminal was tiny—the 'rental car returns' in the visible walking distance. The panting four and the six Samsonites came tumbling in—feet rushing towards the check-in counters, eyes darting towards the information monitors. And lo and behold, the beautiful message that brought everyone to a skidding halt: “UA 5290 Chicago 16:50”, our flight, had been delayed by 30 minutes! With a sigh of relief, tapering heartbeats and an Everest-conquering smile, we checked in our bags as the agent started glancing through our IDs and issuing boarding passes.

memorial-day shoppers

While we await our flight departure, here is another waiting-lounge question: in today's gadgeted world, where the parents have to compete against smartphones/play-stations for quality time with their teenagers, which of the following weekend activities is the most efficient family-bonding strategy:

- *Long scenic drives*
- *Shopping malls*
- *Movie theatres*
- *Fine dining*
- *Picnic/Amusement parks*
- *Sport/Trekking activities*

 *Loading ...*