



ordinary people

AMANDA COLE, 39, BUSINESS MENTOR, THE GAP

Your life can change in a single moment. My husband Brian and I were at a party one afternoon in 2004 and he left to take our six-month-old daughter Ellie home for a nap. He was supposed to ring when she was waking up so I could feed her but the afternoon got on and I hadn't heard, which was weird. He'd had a grand mal seizure at home.

When we'd married the year before, I'd acquired four stepchildren and the second-youngest, who was around 15, found Brian in the toilet, groaning, wedged between the door and the toilet bowl. That was how we discovered he had a brain tumour. It had been there quite a long time even though he hadn't had any of the normal symptoms. It couldn't be removed surgically. We found all that out in a fairly dramatic night at the hospital.

No one would actually tell us how long Brian had. He was determined he was going to beat it – he believed he'd beaten throat cancer through positive thinking – so we didn't really have a lot in place for what was going to happen if he was dying. He ran a successful peer-mentoring program for business owners but as the tumour started causing disabilities I gradually took over. By accident, we conceived a son, Ben, which was a real gift. Brian was there for

the birth, walking and talking, but went downhill when Ben was a newborn. His right side was affected first, then he couldn't walk. Virtually overnight he stopped talking so we didn't have a chance to say goodbye or talk about his wishes.

Ironically Brian's first wife, Pamela, had died from a brain tumour a year before we met and Brian had talked very positively about how she was cared for with the assistance of the Karuna Hospice Service [at Windsor, in Brisbane's inner north], so I knew he valued being able to die at home and believed dying was a normal part of life. I didn't know anything about palliative care but Karuna educated me and provided nursing support. Volunteers would turn up to help out. Brian died two years to the day of his diagnosis.

People don't like talking about death but it can be an amazing journey. I wouldn't be the person I am if I hadn't experienced that with Brian. It's taught me to focus on what really matters.

Brian hated the idea of being idolised after he'd died. He would say "don't forget the bad stuff". He was opinionated, stubborn and argumentative but an extraordinary person who had a profound impact on the people he worked with. He is a very hard act to follow, sadly. Hence, I'm still single! **AMANDA WATT**
Hear Amanda Cole at couriermail.com/ordinarypeople



my word

kim sweetman

Next time you're on a disgustingly ea flight somewhere, entertain yourself t watching the extraordinarily arrogant behaviour of air commuters.

On certain flights between capital cities, everyone back to about row 3; business commuting, meaning they'r all terribly impressed with themselves.

All it takes to turn an otherwise dec person into a flying pig is to put them in a suit and hand them a businesslike carry-on case, which they will use as a territory marker. A suit, it seems, automatically makes anyone Very Important and gives them the right to treat everyone else as a lesser person.

Once onboard an aircraft Very Important People must shove their car on bags into the overhead lockers. About three business-sized carry-on can fit in most plane lockers. But since the lockers generally service two row: three passengers, someone's stuff is going to fit. No-one will make eye con during this process because that wou mean having to admit that everyone behaving like selfish clods.

A suit automatically make anyone Very Important.

Then all the Very Important Peop place their elbows across the armre and unfurl their broadsheet newspap so no-one else has any personal spa They will speak badly to the cabin s and will treat anyone not wearing a like airborne dirt.

All labour is honourable and no-o job should be denigrated but it's ha to believe every single person in a f loaded plane is employed in a job cri to the future of humanity. Logic wor suggest at least some are just ordi: people wearing ordinary business at

Me, I like to sit among them wea my jeans and sneakers, no carry-or and smile at them. Drives them nut
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