



Q: I fly frequently, and as a busy person, I use the time to work on my laptop. However, it seems every time I settle down in my seat, a gabby pest in the seat next to me wants to yap away throughout the flight. What can I do politely to tell the yapper to bug off?

A: First, when I want to sleep, work on my laptop or read throughout my flight, I try to get an entire row to myself. Another trick: a friend told me she wears a t-shirt with big lettering on it: **ASK ME ABOUT MY GRANDKIDS.**

You don't have to be rude, but if your seatmate starts gabbing in your ear, allow it to go on for a minute or two, then just say gently, but firmly, "Please excuse me, but I really need to sleep ... or ... I must get these reports completed before we land ... or ... I have to research this material for a meeting I'll be chairing in just a few hours." But beware: don't make your excuse too interesting, because that'll only bring on more gab and bothersome questions.