



Win!
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Picture POINTER

Write your answers to the word and picture clues in the direction shown by the arrows.

Confer holy orders upon	Investigate	Lubricant	Sticky hair goo	Germ	
Clock face	Bathroom powder?				
				Wood chopper	
List of contents	Sink fixture			Gok celebrity stylist	Crude mineral
				Which person?	Holey mint?
Flightless NZ bird	Graceful antelope	Mend			
				Formerly	Legal document
Health resort	Piercing craft tool	Afresh		Moisture at dusk	Strange, peculiar
			Cowboy skills show		
Opposed to	Beer			Finish	Rectangle
			Drag — a car on a rope, eg		Tower for electricity cables
Dread, reverence			Theatre productions	Continent	Your —, Elton John hit
			Capital of Norway		
			Group of criminals		

FINISHED? Now, from the top, list the letters in the yellow squares for the winning word! Write it on the entry coupon, enter online, phone or text. See page 57.

Our Lives

Queen Vee's flying high!

When our daughter Vicky had ambitions to take to the skies, we knew we had to do anything to make them come true!

By Gerry Silk, 63

Sitting in our seats and waiting patiently for take-off, I looked over at my daughter Vicky. 'Are you excited to go to Florida?' I asked.

A big grin swept across her face as she nodded in excitement.

My husband John and I had booked a family holiday to the Disney World in Florida, and we couldn't wait to get away.

Vicky, or Queen Vee as we called her, was John's daughter from his previous marriage. But she lived with us full-time and I loved her like my own.

She had Down's syndrome and was born with multiple heart and lung problems.

Doctors had warned she wouldn't survive past her teens, but our Vicky, now 21, was a fighter.

We'd vowed to make sure we gave her the best life possible, and going on holiday was one of her favourite things.

We first took Vicky to the south of France one summer, but realised the water was too cold for her.

Since then, we'd been

jetting off on long-haul holidays where the higher temperatures were guaranteed.

As the pilot began takeoff, I could see Vicky brimming with excitement.

She spent the entire time watching the cabin crew do their duties. From the onboard safety demo to the meal service, she was in awe.

As she watched them go up and down the aisles collecting rubbish, she kept saying: 'I can do that.'

She loved every moment. It was as if she enjoyed the flight more than the holiday itself!

And after every flight we took, John always bought Vicky a model aeroplane which he'd hang on her



John, Vicky, and me



Vicky with the Virgin crew

ceiling for her.

Two years later, after many more exciting holidays, John had a brainwave.

'I'm going to email some of the airlines to see if any of them can give Vicky work experience,' he said.

'That's a brilliant idea,' I replied.

Highly determined, John sent out a slew of emails. But as the responses came back, he looked disappointed.

'They all said no, but I get the feeling we might be able to convince Virgin,' he said.

I knew John — if there was something he wanted, he'd make it happen, especially

for Vicky.

So, he persevered and eventually Virgin agreed to offer Vicky some work experience.

We were ecstatic and couldn't wait to tell Vicky.

'Vick, guess what?' I said, popping my head into her room. 'Virgin want to offer you some work experience!'

She was beyond thrilled, and a big smile swept across her face.

A few weeks later, we drove Vicky from our home in Croydon, Greater London, to Virgin's head office in Crawley, West Sussex.

After an initial meeting,

they invited her back for a week of work experience.

She spent the week with the crew, training and helping to issue staff uniforms.

'How was it?' I asked Vicky on her final day.

'Amazing!' she replied.

A few months later, we had a holiday to Las Vegas booked.

On the plane, we got chatting to Ryan, an airline manager for Virgin, and told him how much Vicky wanted to be an air hostess.

'My parents were foster carers and I grew up with people with Down's syndrome,' he said. 'I'll see what I can do.'

Shortly after, Ryan came back and said to Vicky: 'We'd love to have you help out on this flight.'

Vicky couldn't wait to get her seat belt off fast enough!

'Thank you,' I whispered to Ryan.

She assisted the cabin crew during their clean-up, and everyone on the plane was so patient with her.

That really got our holiday off to a flying start!

A few months later we received a call from Virgin's head office asking to meet

with Vicky.

When we arrived, they surprised her by presenting her with her very own Virgin uniform.

They gave her the full kit — including jacket, blouse, skirt, scarf, badge, wings and even a handbag.

'Wow!' she said.

She wasn't allowed to wear them on flights, as it could've been seen as impersonating staff, but we were chuffed nonetheless.

Soon after, she did another stint at Virgin headquarters, and when we flew to St Lucia with them, they told us Vicky could wear the skirt, scarf and blouse on the flight.

But when we arrived at the gate, one of the cabin crew pulled her aside and handed her jacket to Vicky to borrow.

'Now you look the part,' she said.

Vicky soon got to work handing out the kids' packs to the children waiting to board.

Over the next years, Vicky helped on every flight we took. She was a natural, and all of the crew and passengers loved her.

With every trip we booked, Ryan — the flight attendant who'd first made Vicky's dream come true — always made sure to change his rota so he was flying with us.

And on our most recent trip to Orlando, Vicky was given the Vivienne Westwood uniform they all wear now.

When we checked in, she was whisked off to join the other crew during the pre-flight briefing.

Vicky is 31 now and continues to defy the doctors' gloomiest predictions.

Our amazing Queen Vee has proved the sky's the limit — and there's just no stopping her!

● Gerry is fundraising on JustGiving. To find out more, search for 'Gerry Silk' on justgiving.com