

Heidi
Hatch

SAVORING PARENTHOOD'S MEMORABLE MOMENTS



By Heidi Hatch
anchor, "FOX 35 News in the Morning" 7-9 a.m.
and "Good Day" 9-10 a.m.

Motherhood is hard work—rewarding of course, but never easy. I, for one, keep marching along day in and day out with the proverbial carrot in front of my nose. As a mom, the carrots are not the ones you put in your kids' lunch boxes but rather those "take your breath away moments" that make you stop and appreciate the joy of parenthood. All it takes for me is one tiny victory, celebrated by no one but myself with a little something I call the "mental end zone dance." I only imagine it—no physical dancing here—after all, I don't want to be penalized for excessive celebration.

Sometimes I do my mental mom boogies when I see one of my children's report cards with straight As. I also do my mental boogie for other less formal events in life: the events for which no Hallmark card is made. For example, my 4-year-old son will do anything to avoid dressing himself; usually he whines, I give in and he wins. Just when I've resigned myself to the fact that I may be dressing him in college, he marches into my bedroom fully clad in his Pull-Ups® and pajamas. Even if his pants are on backwards, I'll give out high fives and praise. I'm sure you have moments just like this when you realize that your kids are actually listening and learning, and you're the one making it happen. These moments are different for each of us, but they're equally satisfying.

In the last year or so, my husband came up with a plan to help us capture some of those fleeting parenting moments that make us smile. He created a file on our computer where we jot down our kids' funny and sometimes enlightening moments. This way, we have a little something saved for the days when there seems to be more naughty than nice. It's a fun way for both parents to be present in every moment of their children's lives. There are things my husband witnesses during the morning while I'm at work, which he saves and I can later cherish. On the flip side, I write down the conversations my kids have with each other on the way home from school. Someday, not far from now, our mutual writings will serve as a reminder of the good old days, when our kids were young and we were too.

HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR RECENT FAVORITES:

April 30, 2009 Jordan asked me: "When can we go to outer space?" I laughed and told him that only astronauts go into outer space and there are not many of them. I saw the disappointment on his face and said: "If you study really hard when you are in school and do your best, then you can maybe go to space yourself someday." Then, all of a sudden, he got a terrified look on his face and out came the crocodile tears as he wailed: "Daddy, I don't want to go to space by myself." I think he thought if he was smart in school then we were going to put him on a rocket and send him to space by himself. That's not exactly what I intended. – Derek

June 21, 2009 I've been at home recuperating from hernia surgery. The kids don't quite understand why I'm laying around so much. Yesterday, Hailey asked out of the blue if I could "get a refund if I didn't feel completely better soon." Later that day, Jordan lifted up my shirt and saw my three incisions from the surgery. He asked me, "Who cut you?" I told him the doctor did. His next question was obvious. "Did the doctor say he's sorry? You can't just cut people." In his 3-year-old mind, the doctor should have had a nice long "time out" for being rude. – Heidi

June 22, 2009 I'm sitting at the desk right now sending off an e-mail. Jordan just came in and asked me in the sweetest little voice if we could

"Celebrate his Daddy." I asked him what he'd like to do to celebrate Dad. He replied, "Eat cake." Nice try, but no cake. – Heidi

Sept. 15, 2009 Jordan and Hailey were busy talking in the car on the way home from school about why Hailey is older. It's an ongoing conversation they like to have over why Hailey has been on more vacations and had more time with Mom and Dad. I decided to turn down the radio and listen in. Here's the part I caught: Jordan: "So Hailey, what did you say to God to get you here first?" – Heidi

Nov. 12, 2009 I was getting the kids ready for school when I hear Hailey scold Jordan for not lifting the toilet seat and not wiping up after going potty. Then Jordan says, "I'm a little brother, I don't know how to do that." I laugh to myself, because it sounds like Jordan is giving Hailey a taste of her own medicine. Apparently, Hailey has been telling Jordan that he is "just the little brother" when it works to her benefit. Jordan seems to have learned to use it to his benefit now. – Derek

I encourage you to write down a few of your favorite moments, whether it's a parenting victory that makes you do the "mental end-zone dance" or a moment in your day that made you stop and smile. It doesn't have to be every day—just when the story is good enough to repeat to a friend or loved one. You'll never regret the few seconds it takes to save and savor the little things that will make you smile for years to come.

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