



The Best Parenting Moments

By Judy Arnall

As a parent educator, I experience a lot of parenting problems spoken in groups and workshops, and sometimes it's necessary to look at the many little joys of parenting, not so much in taking trips to Disneyland or going to the Zoo. It's the little insignificant moments that are wonderful, fleeting and keeps us motivated in nurturing, loving and parenting our children. So here is my list.

Labour is worth it when...

As Babies

- Their little heads snuggle under your chin, and you can stroke their round little warm bodies swaddled in cloth.
- They smell so sweet after baths and sleeping.
- Their first smile breaks across their face as they recognize YOU!

As Toddlers

- When they sleep in those padded feet sleepers and they're lying on their tummies and their bum is up in the air. (How can anyone sleep that way?)
- When they raise their arms to you (and say, "up, up") and only you will do.
- When your child says, "I love you, Mommy!" for the first time.
- When your child gazes at the moon as she really looks at it for the first time with total wonder.
- When his sticky face has a ring of chocolate circling around his lips, under his nose and around his chin.

As Preschoolers

- When your preschooler wants his new little playmate for a sleepover and you remind him that he needs to get out of the family bed first.

- When your child emphatically tells his playmates the “house rules” that he never “listens to” himself.
- When you get to wear Mother-Daughter dresses and your daughter is so proud of you.
- When you’re all outside playing, the weather is gorgeous, and your children are getting along famously.

As School-Agers

- When your school-aged child takes a moral stand against his peers.
- When she learns a new concept and gets that “ah ha” look in her eyes.
- When your daughter and you share days at the spa, trade each other’s clothes, take car-repair workshops and share tissues while watching chick flicks together.
- When you have a disagreement with your partner and your child comforts you with hugs, tissue and loving words.

As Teenagers

- When they take great glee in correcting your bad driving habits because they learned the “correct way” in their Driver’s Education course despite the fact that you’ve been driving 30 years with no collisions.
- When your six-foot-tall sons carry in the groceries, mow the lawn, take out the recycling, repair the fence, unplug the toilet and rebuild the basement.
- When same sons actually clean the toilet!
- When you gain your life back in increasing faster steps, as they get more independent every day, and with the added joy of considering your children to be your closest friends.

As Adults

- When you look back at all the mistakes you made and you realize how resilient children really are.
- When you are proud of not just their educational attainment, but who they have become as a persons.
- When you not only have your children as close friends, but they add the joy of Grand parenting to your life and you get to experience all the wonderful moments of childhood again. “Remember when you used to...” becomes your most common phrase.

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