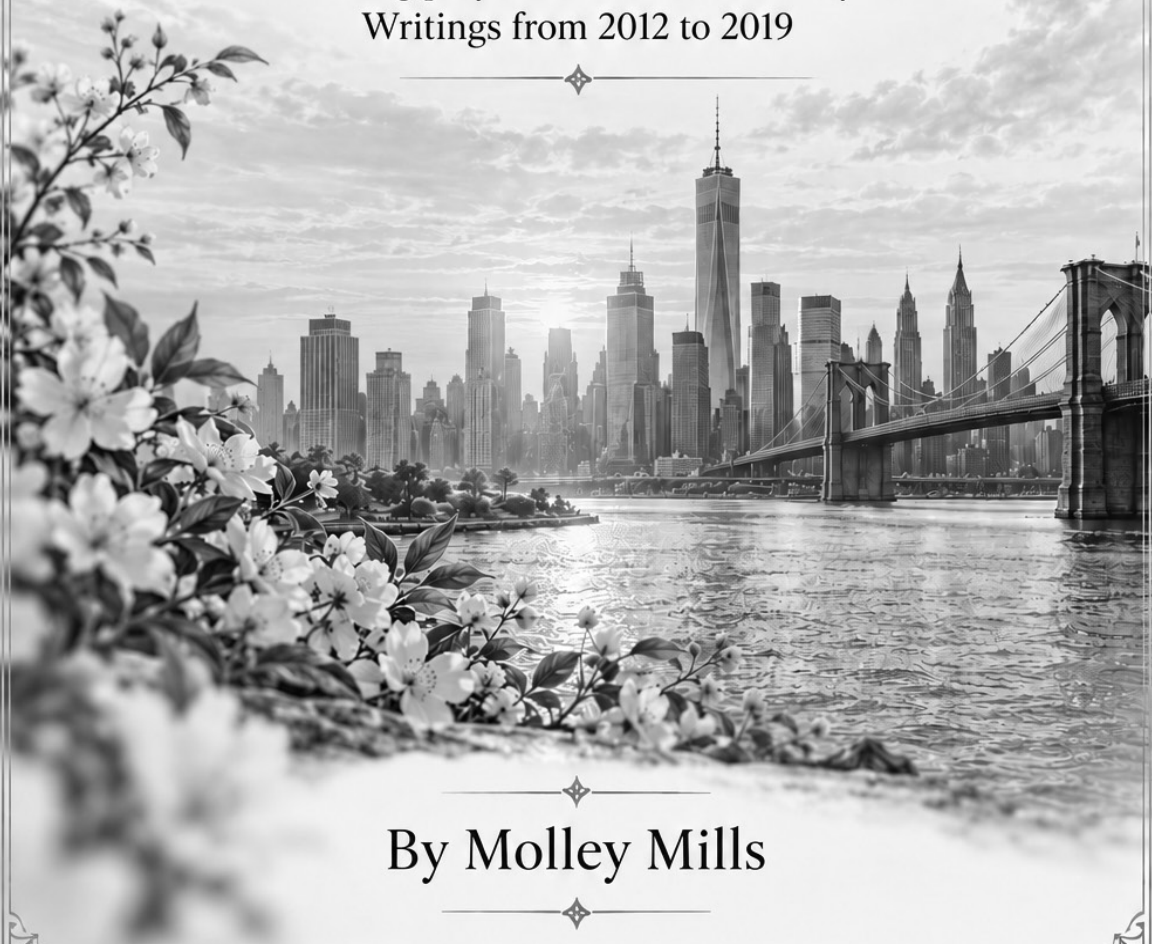
A Mother Life

The journey of an Australian wife, married to a mischievous Australian Viking polymath in New York City. Writings from 2012 to 2019



By Molley Mills



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2012 — A Mother Life

Well Hello

April 19, 2012

The King (that's what I call my obnoxious but brilliant husband) has deemed it important for me to share my worldly wisdom (as he calls it) about parenting and life on earth. So here I go. My first blog post ever. But what to wear, I mean share? she says mysteriously and flicks her blazing red hair in slow motion. The king is particularly happy because (he gloats) "Ive finally monetized my wife".

Introduction: Meet the Family

April 20, 2012



Hi, My name is Molley Mills. I am mum to 3 children and a husband. Yep that's right…22 yo Princess 11 yo Grand Master D 8 yo Miss Gremlin and The King who insists he's 7. Lord help me ☺

We have a brain damaged dog named Sir Lickalot, He's very special.

We live in Harlem New York. Landing here from Australia in 2005 with 9 suitcases… and a "we will conquer all" attitude! Let me tell you sometimes we're not sure who's conquering whom.

For a long time the King has been telling me I should write a book about my thoughts on child rearing. He said I should share the wisdom because no kids are as good as ours! Well I'm sure they're not perfect, nor am I but I can see so many things that are the current norm that I would never do.

I've learned though, sometimes the hard way, that you just have to shut your mouth and let people screw it up even when you KNOW how to help them. If they don't ask…DON'T offer…

Now a book sounded like too much commitment so here I am in the blogosphere!

I don't claim to know anything and I get it wrong lots but I have some funny things to share. If nothing else I know there are many of you who can relate to how hard it is to get this parenting thing right…

Sick enough to stay home?

April 21, 2012

So recently we've had quite the spate of illness in the household. Now usually we're great, not getting much and no one suffers from the dreaded allergies (hayfever) but the lergy has just been going around and around! I was managing to fight it off while looking after the kids. For a while, there were more days off school than on. Now after a while that gets hard because as we ALL know kids get miraculously better around 10-10:30 when it's too late to send them packing off to school!

So the days were spent catering to every need and watching tv and getting hot chips for lunch (cos that's what I got when I was a kid). I would think to myself. great they're getting better I'll have my time back tomorrow…but by around 4pm it would all start to come crashing down around me and I would see that tomorrow was gonna be lost too. I swear by the third week of one or the other kid being home tues-thurs, I was DONE. And it was showing… I walked into school one morning with a child trying to stay home (I'm of the opinion it's better to try and go and come home then to just stay home. I guess it comes from my old work days when you needed to prove you were sick by showing up and being sent home). A teacher even stopped me and made a comment about D being sick and that it was obviously stressing me out!

It was also getting to a point with Grand Master D that it was feeling normal for him to stay home and I could see I needed to seize on that teaching moment about work ethic and sucking it up and getting on with it. I could see he was sick but really not sick enough to be home for days on end. There must be something else going on. Stress from the pressure the kids are put under these days at school is crazy. The system has become so broken that the powers that be think that the only way to fix the problem is to make things more difficult for the kids. I'll go into details another time but for now I just needed to get this kid back to school.

It was nothing more serious than a bit of a cold which I was treating with all manner of home remedies, you know apple cider vinegar for a cough and flegmy chest, lemon juice, ginger, garlic and manuka honey with echinacea for the vitamins and immune building. Bicarb soda in water 3 x a day works too! I know what you're saying, just go to the doctor and get something… but we all know that doctors can't treat the common cold beyond anything we can do at home and short of having a full on respiratory infection in need of antibiotics what would they do??? In the end I just sent him off to school and the first day was rough and then he was just fine. Whatever was bothering him sorted itself out and he got back to his happy self.

It always so hard when your kids are sick. You want to do what's best but that is not always the easiest thing to know how. I have been really getting into natural

remedies for things. I find it fascinating that nature can provide so many remedies. I will continue to learn and share things I find.

Oho I think I'm going hippie ☺

Gone Paleo

April 21, 2012

I've been really trying for a year to get the baby weight off. Lets face it when your youngest is 8 then there can be no more excuses. I heard about this little iphone app called myfitnesspal. Now those who know me know I love my iphone and apps in general, so an app that I can actually utilise to do something good that I'm trying to achieve? I'm in! Well it's basically a calorie tracker on food and exercise and I've been going great. You just track what you eat and how much you exercise. The more you exercise the more you can eat! Who doesn't want to do that?

I didn't feel deprived of anything but it really makes you think do you really wanna waste 300 calories on one donut? I lost about 18 lbs (8kgs) but then I stalled and no amount of extra exercise, which I hate, was doing anything for me. Then I came across a thing called Paleo, not sure where from but the theory is this, eat like a caveman or Paleolithic man. It's not new, it's like Atkin's and some others like hunter gatherers and caveman diet. It's the same thing. You only eat things you can obtain without cropping ie, all meats, vegies, fruits nuts etc. NO grains or starchy foods like potatoes, corn, rice, pasta and some others. There are tons of blogs and sites and recipes! There are ways to substitute rice by making cauliflower 'rice' and making spaghetti out of spaghetti squash or julienne shredded zucchini. It's really working, now I'm down 23 lbs (10.4kg). I feel good and as it happens it's exactly the way the King needs to eat for some issues he has. The kids are getting the benefit of good healthy nutritious foods too!. If you feel like shedding a few unwanted lbs (kgs) give it a go.

Created by MyFitnessPal - Free Weight Loss Tools

I hate homework

April 21, 2012

Did I mention I hate homework?

Homework is a contentious issue. I often have interesting discussions with friends and teachers and the frustration they convey is palpable. Grand master D and Miss Gremlin attend public school in Harlem. It's a great school, getting great results with a very dynamic principal who is passionate about his charges. The current policy on homework is everyone gets it. This is pretty much across the board in public elementary schools.

So little kids in pre-k at 4 years right through to 5th grade are getting homework. (I do agree with older grades and high schoolers getting homework as their studies are a little different). This work is supposed to support the classroom lessons and give the kids the opportunity to practice what they learn. My experience has been it's just busy work without real benefit and plenty of unnecessary pressure on family

life. Today's kids are hyperscheduled, often getting home late as parents are working and they are in after school activities etc. Over the years I have clashed often with teachers regarding how long it's taking to complete set tasks! When they say that a 4th grader's home should take 1 hour and it takes 4 then there's a problem. Especially if they're penalised the next day for not completing the task. I don't want that fight! I don't want to clash with teachers or my kids…I don't know how many evenings I've had kids in tears frustrated over homework! Why is this MY problem? I ask this often. I heard this week that there are current studies being done in Europe on the validity of homework and whether it even works! Teachers complain about parents frustration, parents complain about non complying kids, it often ends up the parents are doing it just to get it done. The teachers know this and the point becomes moot because the children gain nothing, in fact it could be perceived as damaging because the kids learn that it doesn't matter, mum and dad will fix it for me. At some point parents have to step out and stop trying to save their kids on everything! The task is set by the teacher and the child is expected to complete it. Now if that doesn't happen then the child has to accept the consequences. If you do your child's homework so that it is just completed and the child won't get in trouble for incomplete work then what are you really teaching your child? I have been guilty of this to a certain extent but that hasn't worked so I have taken another tact. It's not my problem and the world isn't fair and children have to learn to stand on their own 2 feet and navigate life. Now don't get me wrong, there are some things parents must step in for, certain issues are beyond children to defend themselves, perhaps an intimidating teacher or a bullying child (we are all well aware of the bullying epidemic and the dangers associated) but every action has a reaction and a consequence. If you don't turn up for work or pay your rent or obey the law then you will come unstuck. Children need to understand that and learn how to navigate these things to grow up to become well adjusted, RESPONSIBLE functioning humans in society. The extent of my homework involvement these days is this…Have you done your homework? Do you need help? Mum out! I will always be there to offer assistance if required but I'm not going hold your hand or do it for you or constantly nag about it. I will, however, write a note to the teacher if I feel it is excessive or there's an extenuating circumstance for the incompletion but if it's just because they didn't do it then too bad, I'm sorry that this is happening to you but you will do better next time. I had my time at homework when I was at school. If I didn't do it then I had to accept the consequences. Why should I be doing my kids homework? I shouldn't… What I should be doing is supporting them so they can do it to the best of their ability. If they don't do it or understand it then the teacher needs to see that so the child can get the support they need.

I think that at least in the US public school system, homework for younger children is here to stay for now, so it will continue to be a source of frustration and guilt for parents. Give it back, let them fail…failure isn't bad, it's a step towards success. Take back your family time and enjoy your kids. Leave homework where it belongs, with the kids.

Everybody's working.

April 21, 2012

After all those long posts I thought I'd share some light relief!!!



This is where the King spends his days and dreams of ways to monetize his family… He has the kids' videos on youtube doing the job and me blogging…now if he could just monetize the dog ☺

It's Good to be King

April 21, 2012

Only The King could have a 45 minute bath, then need a shower to wash the bath off. He does this regularly. He just suggested he needs a steam shower now to wash the shower off. I have endless patience. Can you tell?

Repurposing

April 22, 2012

Recently I got an email from amazon about trading in old CDs and DVDs. I thought it was interesting but didn't give it another thought. Within 10 minutes I get another email from the king, let's do this cd trade in thing! We looked into the process and all of a sudden found ourselves knee deep in a cd frenzy! We sent off 33 CDs with a credit amount of $80 for the first shipment. Today, because it's miserable outside were going to finish off the CDs and start on the DVDs. This is where the money seems to be because 1 Disney DVD is worth $9 as a trade-in and we have 100's of those darn disney movies ☺ So guys if you have unwanted CDs or DVDs checkout the amazon trade-in program, you might get some extra money.

Is Sunday your fun day?

April 22, 2012

Sunday, the Lords Day, the end of the weekend, the beginning of the week, rest day, sports day, family day, whatever you call it in this house it always ends up being laundry day: (Try as I might I just can't seem to not do laundry on a Sunday. Sure, I do it other days of the week but so much is generated in this house of 4 people that the baskets are overflowing again by Sunday morning. Now this upsets the King no end.

We live in an apartment where there's no separate laundry room or basement to hide away and do 'women's work' and he doesn't want to hear the washer and dryer going all day. Laundry piles all over the furniture don't sit well either.

The weekend is supposed to be for relaxing but all you mums out there know that its just another day and the kids still need you to do stuff and breakfasts, lunches and dinners still need to be made and preparations for the work week often happen on sundays. I've tried to wash the kids school clothes on friday afternoons but something always comes up and saturday is a sleep in day because by saturday all those 6:30am's have taken their toll. There are family activities to do and the laundry gets forgotten. So it comes to sunday to get all those uniforms and sports gear and after school activities uniforms ready for the week ahead.

So how can we schedule our lives so we do have sunday off? How do working mums manage to balance time off and household chores and spending time with the family? It's a dilemma for millions of women. How did life get so busy that there isn't one day where we can sit and rest.

I think as women we have so much to deal with, especially those who work outside the home. It can be a very difficult balance trying to keep it all going smoothly and because we try so hard to be good mothers and good wives or partners, the person who ends up being last on the list is us. I was a working mum when Grand master D and Miss Gremlin were little and I had great difficulty keeping it all going. I was diagnosed with post partum depression and really needed to slow down. I ended up having to stop working and chose to focus on my children and my family and needed to get well. I was lucky I suppose because we could afford for me to do that. Many women don't have a choice and of course, some women prefer to work, finding it difficult to be home all day. No one thing is right or wrong and it should be a personal decision that works for you and your family but we should not forget to have some 'be kind to me time'. If we don't keep ourselves healthy and well both physically and emotionally, we can't be the best women we can be.

No more sunday laundry for me!

With National Women's Health week coming up May 13-19 (USA) I resolve to take my weekends back and relax more.

Kid food vs real food

April 23, 2012

With the current health problems in children, obesity, asthma, autism among others, new research has surfaced that products made with high fructose corn syrup are now linked to autism. Food coloring causes hyperactivity and the sugar in processed foods is crazy. So why do we need to feed our kids different foods? Why would we serve up a lovely meal with salad or veges and then serve our children a glump of mac and cheese and chicken nuggets smothered in high fructose corn ketchup?

As adults we all know how to eat healthily, we understand the pyramid, although I believe the pyramid is a little off and often funded by the dairy industry and grain industry to sell more products. So why serve up rubbish just to get something in the kids stomach? Convenience foods are convenient and the trap is many families having super

busy schedules say there is no time to prepare nutritious home cooked meals. I say there's a way to do it. I have seen many working mums have awesome meals for their families. A little planning can produce amazing results. Saturday could be cooking day getting the kids involved if they're old enough, kids love helping in the kitchen. Many meals can be precooked and reheated later in the week, lasagnes and pasta sauces can be frozen in meal sizes and produced when required, soups, stews, hotpots, all those types of meals are easily made in advance. Roasts are a favorite in my house and people think this is a special meal but in fact it's a lazy meal. Besides peeling some veges there's nothing to do for an hour! And it doesn't have to be a whole chicken or whatever meat you choose it can be a couple of chicken breasts seasoned or some drumsticks and lots of roasted veges. Just watch the kids scoff down the sweet potato and roasted carrots! Pork tenderloins for those who eat it are very quick and easy to do too. Since going paleo in my eating I have become very conscious of what I'm putting in my body and that of my family. I have eliminated almost all processed package foods and make meals packed full of vegetables and protein. Of course getting the kids to eat it every time is a different story but I have always chosen my battles and on this one I'm gonna fight. Miss Gremlin was starting to get a bit tubby, she has the kings genes and this will be something she'll probably have to watch all her life, so as a mum I must teach her how to eat properly with healthy foods and portion control, without giving her an eating disorder in the process. I am gaining ground now as I'm not giving her options, before I serve the meal she says I'm starving but when it's presented she says I'm not hungry, I know this is code for I don't like what you are serving, even though she hasn't even tasted it. I go with the knowledge that no kid will starve themselves intentionally. So, I say ok but I'm saving this and when you are hungry this is what you'll get to eat. After some protest she eats and often she finds she quite likes what I cook even if she eats around the dreaded veges! My theory is keep serving them, be consistent, they will eventually eat them. When they were toddlers, I always cooked fresh for them, using ice cube trays to freeze a weeks worth of food so it was available quickly when I needed it. Both children ate very well as babies and toddlers, mostly smaller portions of what I cooked for us just mashed a bit but then we moved to American and were living in hotels for weeks. Unfortunately, during that time my kids developed bad habits which have taken a long time to break :(It was disgusting that everywhere we went all the kids meal choices in restaurants were nuggets, spaghetti, Mac and cheese or burgers! Things are slowly changing but those items are still the go to kid food. What's wrong with offering kid size portions of healthy meals like roast meats or schnitzels and veges or fish with salads or oven baked wedges or fries because they're a little healthier. I wish more people would demand better food choices for children. What we teach them about food will continue through to their adult life. If we don't teach them to eat well now then we're just adding to the future health problems of our country. It's not always easy and I don't always feel like cooking but I manage to make healthy meals that don't come out of a package for my family most nights… The other nights there's always Thai food ☺

Computer time

April 23, 2012

This is an interesting issue and I'm sure many parents have to figure out how to deal with it. Computer access for your kids. How much is too much? There are so many differing points of view.

Well we're smack bang in the middle of this issue. We are a computersentric household, we have one in almost every room! The King works from home and has 7 screens which are attached to 2 separate computers! The tv's are hooked up to them so we can watch anything and everything any time we want! Netflix, hulu, any on demand tv shows, latest itunes released movies. We do everything on computer. My laptop even sits on the kitchen counter while I'm cooking so I can refer to the online recipe I've found for dinner ☺

I love technology and our children are very good at utilising it. Saturday morning sleep ins are lovely now Miss Gremlin can work the computer to watch something and keep herself entertained rather than coming to wake me up! However recently it has been taking over the kids free time. When checking on their homework progress I'm finding them on the computer when they should be studying. Of course, it probably doesn't help that we've just allowed them to get an online game called Minecraft but The King, who hates video games, checked it out and deemed it useful as it is a game where you create stuff, so it's different to just blowing stuff up or killing things.

I'm not sure yet what the best way to tackle it is because to be honest I enjoy the peace! I know that sounds selfish but I really am a person who needs time to myself. I never have and will never be my kids entertainment. They had to learn to entertain themselves. That doesn't mean I don't do things with them because of course I do but I'm not here to entertain them every minute of the day.

I will talk more about that little gem another time!

Being an avid reader, I love to obtain varied information on the best ways to tackle problems that come along in the parenting day to day. I don't have any favourites, I just absorb all I can and use the knowledge I've gained that makes sense to fix the current problem.

I would be interested to hear how some of you have tackled this issue or if you're like me-reluctant to give up the peace and quiet ☺

This one will take some thinking.

Tidy rooms

April 24, 2012



My kids' bedroom just kills me. I really think that there is just too much stuff in there and we need to go crazy with a clean out but it's not just that, they are little piggies. I try to stay on top of it and get them cleaning up but by the end of the week it's tragic.

They just seem to collect crap on the floor everywhere around the edges. An odd sock here, dirty tissue there, headless lego men, it all adds up then all of a sudden it's a

little rats nest and I'm going nuts at them on a Sunday to clean up! There I am working on a Sunday again. When they clean it up they do a good job but I need to figure out how to get them to keep it clean all the time. I need an organizational guru to come and give me ideas how to change the space and ways to keep it tidier. I want them to be tidy people, they'll have partners one day and they will need to learn before then.

This is one time where leading by example ISN'T working. The King is OCD, so you know he wants things lined up like Monk! I have those tendencies but have gotten more relaxed over the year since having children. Life is too short to stress over housework but a level of tidiness would be nice.

Going minimalist in the kids bedroom is going to be necessary, I can see it but I am gonna need a lot of coffee, a couple of friends and a whole pile of garbage bags to help, I think.

#Parent fail

April 24, 2012

Miss Gremlin and I were getting ready to go to her taekwondo class, when she couldn't find her uniform pants. I went from zero to angry in 3.6 seconds flat because as usual I assumed because she never puts stuff away properly, that they must be is some obscure place. So time is ticking, we're heading for the gonna be late point.

I look under the bed because she likes to sleep with her favorite things, her can be quite a sight some times, but no pants. I go thought the closet for the third time and finally strip down her entire bed…nothing! Where the #^* can they, be? Then I have an aha moment, so while Miss Gremlin searches the dress up box, I go upstairs and just for fun check my laundry pile which I haven't had the chance to put into the closet. I quickly scan for anything white and tada, taekwondo pants! I quickly come down stairs, head hung low, bottom lip out and hold them up for Miss Gremlin to see. She laughs through her tears, I hug her and apologize, she finishes getting ready and we leave the house marveling at mummy's fail all the way to the studio.

Quick bathroom cleaner

April 25, 2012

Ok hands up if you love to clean the bathroom? NO? me either and if you have several then I know your pain! I haven't found a single 'bathroom' cleaning product that actually works the way it promises. How many times have you bought something that promises to get rid of the mould and soap scum only to find that the only way this product will remove either is if you vigorously scrub down to you bare knuckles and get high as a kite in the process. Well, quite by accident, I discovered an end to this misery.

On this particular day the bathroom was so dirty that it was sending out resumes to scientific testing labs and I had no 'bathroom' cleaning product in the house. It was, for whatever reason, too hard to go and purchase some so I went with what I had-toilet cleaner, trusty old gel type squirt in the bowl cleaner. What's the worst that could happen right? So, I applied it by squirting high around the shower stall and then quickly spreading with a sponge so all areas were covered. I left it approx 5 mins,

not wanting to cause any damage, then rinsed it off, no rubbing, no scrubbing, just a shower head rinse off. The results were stunning! All the caulking around the tub was brilliant white, like new, no sign of the black mould which had taken up permanent residence. The grout in between the tiles glistened and the tapware sparkled. What had I discovered?

I'll tell you what, a 5 min sparkly bathroom cleaner for less than the cost of a latte and quicker than going out to buy one.

Never chase a toddler!

April 26, 2012

I had a conversation with a young mum recently who said she was having trouble with her 1 yo running from her and laughing, wanting to be chased. We talked for a bit and I conveyed my reasons against it.

When my kids were small, good behaviour was very important. Manners, no tantrums and first time obedience was what I strived for.

I didn't always get it but I was consistent in trying. Chasing my toddlers never made any sense. A one or two year old cannot distinguish between mummy chasing for fun or mummy chasing to grab him/her from the path of a car in the parking lot. How can you make a game of it one day and then get angry when they run away in a dangerous situation the next! You can't right? Case in point ☺

Chasing games were for other fun people. We had plenty of games but I NEVER chased! Something I did play was the go, stop game. We would be walking along and I would say go and give them a little distance and call stop. The object was obviously to make sure the automatic response to 'stop' was to comply, no matter what they were doing or how far away they got. It was a fun game and they didn't even realising I was training them for safety.

I have walked with friends over the years with my children and theirs and have been freaked out the entire time with children going wild everywhere and not listening and getting very close to dangerous situations. I had to stop doing it actually and say I'll meet you there because I couldn't handle the perilous situation, I had no control over. My kids always stayed close and walked properly in the street because it's what we did and what was expected.

Of course, I know there are friends reading this post saying to themselves "Ah, now I understand". I wasn't able to control the situation and feared the worst so I just removed myself and adopted some sage advise from mymum-NMP (not my problem).

However, I always prayed for safe arrivals. So far they have been answered.

Amazon trade-in

April 27, 2012

The second batch of cd's and first batch of dvd's is shipping today to the amazon trade in store. We're so interested in what amazon plans to do with all these used items. In the mean time its a great little money maker. Especially if you don't use them anymore.

It's so great to find things around the house that are just taking up space which we can turn into money. We've started buying in bulk on amazon because it's much

cheaper and you don't have to haul it home with the groceries. All the cleaner, paper and laundry supplies just get delivered in 2 days for free. Now with the trade in store we even have a credit for all those essentials.

When I open a bottle of laundry liquid or dishwasher powder, I write the date on it so I can see how long it's taking to consume. That way I can time my reordering so we never run out. It's the little things like this that can help a household budget.

My grandmother did this but on a smaller scale, she always had a spare on the top shelf and when she opened that one then the item went on the shopping list. We have forgotten how to be frugal over a time but in these economic times every little bit counts right?

Sticks and Stones

April 28, 2012

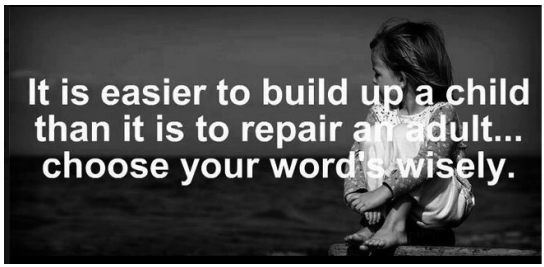
The image below caught my eye today. With so much bullying going on in our schools and even work places, I thought it was a great reminder to choose your words wisely.

This story was on Live with Kelly Rippa mid last year, I have heard it circulating for a while.

Its a great visual lesson about bullying. I got the txt from here but the story is easily searched with "crumpled paper bullying."

> ***"The teacher gave each student a clean crisp sheet of paper. She then instructed the class to crumble up the piece of paper, toss it around, get angry with it, and stomp on it.***
> ***After which, she told the students to return to their seats (with their piece of paper), flatten it out on the top of their desks, making it as flat and perfect as they can, and finally, apologize to the paper.***
> ***When all the students had done their best to iron out the paper and apologize to it, the teacher picked up the paper on the first classmates desk, held it up so the entire class could see it and said:***
> ***If this piece of paper had been another person, and you had done all those things to him or her, by making them feel less than perfect (through your words or actions), these are the scars you would leave. That person would never be the same, no matter how many times you tell them you are sorry, no matter how many times you try to smooth things out…"***

Please share with your children. Bullying is never ok!



Suns of Bitches

April 29, 2012

This article was originally entitled Sunshine On My Shoulder but The King, not being one for headlines, either conservative or John Denver in nature suggested the present. I consented, as it *is* all about him.

A number of articles have piqued my interest about the real healing effect of the sun. I've always believed the sun is good for you and can remember always trying to get some sun on my body, summer or winter.

Of course the current medical opinion will have you believe the sun is our enemy and we should stay out of it at all costs. This confuses me, if the sun is so dangerous, why is it the giver of life? Without sunlight nothing can live, grow or thrive. Yes, you must be careful with the sun, *burning* your skin is detrimental but getting 15-20 minutes of sun exposure on your skin daily is actually good for you. Not to mention it gives you a healthy glow!

The sun gives us vitamin D, an essential nutrient for the body. It's good for our bones, boosts immunity and helps regulates blood pressure just to name a few benefits. Most Americans, it says in studies, have a low vitamin D count, some dangerously! Could this be contributing to the high rates of osteoporosis, frequent illnesses and high blood pressure?

Vitamin D is produced by the skin when exposed to ultra violet light from *natural sunlight* which can prevent the growth of cancer cells. I ask this, Why don't the medical people want us in the sun?

Conspiracy theory time, Cancer--it's big business, it's an enormous money maker. Imagine if we had high enough vitamin D levels in our body, then our body's could prevent a cancer developing and wouldn't need surgery, chemo and radiation. This of course wouldn't make any money for the drug companies or the health insurance companies. No good for the bottom line but GREAT for the health of all.

The current level of recommended vitamin D is 200-600iu but in an article I read it was revealed that in actual fact the body needs at least 1400iu.

We've been brainwashed against the sun, being told we'll get skin cancer. While this is true to a certain extent, covering yourself with toxic chemicals in the form of sunscreen to stop this seems ludicrous to me. Where are the studies on the effects of prolonged use of those chemicals? Perhaps they give us other cancers while hindering absorption of vitamin D that can help us prevent it in the first place?

Let's block nature by slathering our own and our children's delicate skin, the body's largest organ, with dangerous toxic chemicals. That'll fix it!

The increase in skin cancer in young women in America has been linked to ultra violet tanning bed exposure and NOT the sun. So much so that there are moves to try and limit their use and regulate an industry which really doesn't tell you the whole truth about the dangers of using these beds.

It a documented fact that the internal cancer rates (lung, colon, breast etc.) in North America are higher in black people and higher in the northern states where there is less exposure to the sun due to the distance from the sun with the seasonal changes and the inability for darker skin to absorb as well.

I believe that there is much misinformation about the benefits of the sun. We have seen an increase in rickets in children, due to the shift in thinking over the last 30 years, to completely cover your child from head to toe in clothing or cover in 50+ sunscreen while in the sun.

While some danger is present, it has been whipped into a frenzied reaction with parents never letting their children go out in the sun. I know schools in Australia have new policies and have adapted their uniforms to completely cover children. All outdoor play areas are now covered and children play indoors more than ever.

As controversial as it sounds, I believe we need to put the sunscreen away, get outside and get some rays! If you are in the sun during the middle of the day, the intensity can cause burning of the skin, so for protection wear a light cotton shirt and a hat but during other times of day let the sun warm your skin, soak up those healing rays and be healthy!

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Get off the treadmill

April 30, 2012

So, I guess I should share that I dislike exercise intensely. Although over the years I've done my share of aerobics, water aerobics, gym classes etc. I know all the statistics and I understand why the body needs it but I believe that exercise can come in many forms and you don't have to go to the gym and get on a machine to be exercising. The King and I often have this discussion, sometimes heated, because I disagree that the only way to get the "proper" exercise is on all those torture machines we pay to get on in a room with no windows and lots of other sweaty people- UM, PASS.

I'm very active, I like to walk, I can walk for hours. I get a pace going, enough so as my heart rate is up so I can still talk but it's harder and from what I've read that's all that is required is 30 minutes a day of elevated heart rate. I do that just taking the kids to and from school, add in the dog's minimum walk and I'm done. Although some days I feel like doing more.

Last week I walked over to Riverside park with Sir Lickalot, it was a 70 minute round trip. So lovely to walk in the park by the river. I felt invigorated when we got back but Sir Lickalot didn't move from this spot for 4 hours! Poor little puppy. ☺



I try to incorporate exercise into whatever I'm doing then I don't feel like its a chore and I have technically worked out. You can't tell me that mopping and vacuuming aren't a form of working out.

Of course if you want to tone muscles or sculpt your body then there are specific

and different things you need to do but I'm not into any of that. I'll take the headphones, the dog and a nice big park anytime. Hills and stairs count as extra.

June 9th 2012 is National Get Outdoors Day. Let's take our exercise outside, not on a running machine in a gym with the news or stockmarket report yelling at you from a tv screen.

Reconnect with nature, breathe in the fresh un-airconditioned or overheated air, get the sunshine on your skin, which has been proven to be a deterrent for disease. Pretend for a moment that our lives aren't so stressful, over scheduled and filled with modern day pressures.

When I do this, the stress just melts away and I get a new spring in my step, feel reconnected with nature and my human spirit, even if only for a while.

Boys to Men

May 1, 2012

Grand Master D is in 6th grade and has started want to walk home with his friends after school. This is great. They are a good bunch of boys and they all live in a small block radius. He has an iPhone so I can check in with him if he's getting a bit late.

They like to call into the local bakery or supermarket for a snack on their way. Sometimes he has to bring his sister home but most of the time I pick her up so he can have his guy time on the way home from school. I find this a strange time, although I love that he's growing up and gaining independence, it also freaks me out that he's on the streets alone. Our neighborhood has been known to be less than safe at times… but we can't keep him in a bubble, we have to teach him to be responsible and to be aware of his surroundings. When you are aware then you can often predict if there is danger or a situation ready to arise.

Still, it's a funny feeling watching the clock, waiting for him to walk in the door. I wonder does it ever get any easier?

My dad used to tell me he'd lay awake at night waiting to hear the car drive up the driveway, often asleep by the time I got in the door but relaxed to know I was safely home. He would make comment the next day about being tired because *I* was out until 3am!!! It makes me smile now but it irked me no end at 18 and 19.

I guess I will wait for the subway train and the elevator in the future. But for now, I slowly, slowly let the reins go. God, I hope I've taught him well!

Natural depression fighters

May 2, 2012

This article is probably going to be a little more personal than I would have hoped but I want to share the information I've learned and how it's helped me. If I can help even one person, it's worth it.

I have come to the realisation that I have suffered for many years with mild depression. I had postpartum after both children although it was only diagnosed and treated after baby number 2. As with most sufferers, major events in my life tend to trigger it.

It comes and goes but there's always an underlying feeling.

Moving to America was a big one- we'll have a coffee together another day for that story!

I have only ever had medication to treat depression once and that was during the diagnosed postpartum. However, with the loss of my dad suddenly last July and coping with trying to support my mother from 16,000 miles away, along with my own grief, I was in such a state by Christmas, that I felt I again needed medical support.

The King, totally against anti-depressants, really wanted to look for an alternative. We did some research and discovered that high omega 3 fish oil was deemed beneficial. We found a pharmaceutical grade Omega 3 fish oil product called Omegavia.

As an experiment I agreed to take this and see how it went. Within 2 weeks I felt much better, adjusting the dose to suit.

2200mg a day works for me. I'm a small person so that was enough. As a side note it has also helped my dry hair, nails and psoriasis.

The king was also taking omegavia for elevated triglycerides (versatile little pill really) and his doctor recommended niacin to assist in that too.Niacin, it was suggested could also help me, so I began taking it. The ability of both supplements to help me feel more normal have been wholeheartedly accepted.

I've been taking the flush free, slow release pills but have discovered they can be harmful to the liver. (article below will explain)

We'd heard about the niacin flush you can get but hadn't experienced it.

We have now purchased pills which produce the flush! The flush is good for you as it flushes the system of toxins, although is described as a little uncomfortable lasting approx. 10 minutes.

The King took a pill to try them and within 20 mins he was hot to touch, flushed red all over and itchy. This is caused by the niacin increasing the blood flow though your veins and capillaries. The effects went away after about 40 mins. The first one is always the worst. He felt great afterwards and extremely relaxed.

Well yesterday I thought I would give it a go. Please keep in mind the king is more than twice my weight.

This is where it gets interesting! It took about 20 mins to take effect and when it came on it was a very strange feeling indeed. It felt like I had bad sunburn and it was itchy. Then it started to hurt. My skin felt like I had taken a laundry scrubbing brush to it with solvol soap! I thought it was as bad as it could get until I got incredibly cold then hot at the same time. I tried having a cool shower, which helped a little and then put moisturiser on my skin to help calm it down. This also helped. I then curled up on the couch with a warm feeling inside but bone chillingly cold for a time. It was strange to be warmed like that from the inside but comforting just the same.

The effects slowly receded but took about 4 hours!

Fear NOT, all the literature I've read says it's not dangerous.

I think the dose was too high for my size but I am going to try again with a smaller amount. I have certainly read a lot of articles touting the benefits so I don't want to discount it because of one experience.

I did feel very relaxed and we were able to laugh about the whole experience, so no harm, no foul right?

I would still recommend trying it out because I understand how it would work on the toxins in the body and from the articles, I've read the flush gets less each time and eventually disappears.

Taking the omega 3 since Christmas has been enormously helpful to my depressive mood and I can definitely recommend that! As for the niacin, I believe it will be good,

if I can just get the flush reduced to the normal reaction. Either way I haven't needed to take harmful medication with all those concerning side effects and that's a bonus in my book.

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Fly away

May 3, 2012

In November last year the Princess moved back to Sydney, she had been living in New York with us since December 2007. She came just before her 18th birthday, which is Australia is the legal drinking age. So imagine her chagrin when she comes of age a month later only to have 3 more years to wait! However being a Mills and a resourceful young lass she found a workaround. For the first 2 years she lived in the apartment, sharing the bedroom with her siblings, Grand master D and Miss Gremlin. At times it was total chaos but we all managed to function well in our limited space. The princess got very good at sleeping through kid noises and creeping in during the wee hours. Just prior to her 21st birthday an opportunity came up for her to purchase her own apartment and she moved into her own space with none of those crazy rules imposed while living with us. She returned to Australia to help her mum through some health issues, landed a great job and decided to stay. She has set herself up nicely in Sydney and has slipped right back into Aussie life. We miss her and her little dog too.

The king and I communicate regularly via Facebook, stalking her every move ☺ and Grand master D uses an iPhone app called voxer to chat with her. Miss Gremlin is missing her the most so we have started scheduling weekly family time on Skype. It's good fun and we just really hangout over the internet. At Christmas time she stayed up until 4am on Skype with us so that she could watch the kids open presents and open a few for herself that had made their way to New York.

Technology has been great at keeping us close, now if I could just work out a way for her to Skype babysit we'd be set!

Tantrum? What tantrum?

May 4, 2012

When was the last time your kids had a full on tantrum? Can't remember or was it this morning. Are you one of the lucky ones whose kids don't do that? If you are, well done you, pat yourself on the back because it's not luck, you're doing something right. I don't subscribe to them, don't allow them and firmly believe you can get through toddler-hood and beyond without them.

Really? you say, Is it possible? I say 'Works for me!'

There are some basic principles. First of all you have to be boss, 'no' has to mean no and you have to be consistent and follow through every time. Don't argue with a toddler. You're grown, they're not. I have, on occasion, caught myself doing it and I think, wait, I'm the adult here, why am I arguing with a 2 yo?

Choices are a big red flag to tantrums, little ones need very few choices because they can't decipher between important and unimportant. In their little minds it's all important. To you, whether you have the red or blue bowl really doesn't matter but stopping when told because there's danger ahead is important. Allowing choices on things comes as they learn to accept whatever they are given, when they can accept that breakfast is cheerios in the blue bowl today then they're probably ready to start choosing.

They're flexing their independence muscles to see how they work and you can help them become age appropriately independent with the right guidance but mum and dad still have to make the rules and make sure the rules are followed every time. There's that consistency thing again!

Clothing is another red flag, we all love our individual style but giving your 4-year-old free choice on today's wardrobe will probably do your head in and make you late for preschool when Sally wants to wear the tutu and sandals in the snow!

By 4 years old there should be some choices. Have a couple of outfit choices. Make it part of the bedtime routine to lay the clothes out for the morning. Offer a couple of things to choose from, not 10. That way they feel like they can express themselves but the morning runs smoother and everyone gets out the door on time and not frustrated.

Anything can be achieved with forethought and planning and if you think ahead then you can help to avoid the meltdowns and before long they won't even happen.

I've seen full on meltdowns in the playground because a child was told to keep their coat on when the temp was 30f (-2c). UMA. Health, safety, parent- trumps child! Or so it should.

On some things there's just no negotiation and you as parent make that call. It might be a safety issue or temperature or you just might be broken on a day the ice cream truck comes crawling by! Who wants to have a scene because you don't have a $1.00 for an ice cream. My kids don't even notice the ice cream truck anymore because it's not an expectation. Sometimes I say would you like one and they are excited and grateful, NOT pouty or stompy because I said no.

*Stompy. my word and I like it. Please feel free to use it ☺ *for freeeee*

Don't negotiate. It's like adding fuel to the fire. I have found ignoring or removing the child with no fuss works great. Reinforce why it's unacceptable and move on.

Adults can't think rationally when they're angry so why on earth do we think a child can articulate why they feel the way they feel. Trying to have a discussion is fruitless. If it's something you want to talk about then wait until the child has calmed down and then you can hear their side or discuss the problem.

We've all seen the YouTube videos of the little girl throwing a tantrum in front of the parents but when they don't engage she moves into their line of sight again and throws herself down. It's hilarious but you can see that it's just for attention so don't give it. When they realise you're not going to give it any energy it tends to fizzle out.

Of course, as children get older than a slightly different approach is needed. Although they continue to flex that independence muscle!

Give time warnings, so the kids know what's coming next. i.e. We are leaving in 5 minutes, so when you say it's time to go there's no meltdown or negotiation, you told them it was time to go, they knew it was coming and had time to prepare.

I can't stand it when a child comes for a play date and there's a scene at my door because the child doesn't want to go home. I make sure that I give verbal warnings so the visiting child knows what to expect. Sometimes I have to leave to do something too so the meltdown makes ME late! It can be very uncomfortable and it's a totally avoidable situation. I'm sure it must be embarrassing for the other parent too.

To date things have run smoothly in our family and we rarely have any tantrums. Occasionally we have to nip one in the bud however the teenage years are coming and that could be a whole other kettle of fish.

I'm confident though, that through our consistency, (that word again) guidance and lots of love and patience we'll sail through without too many problems.

Are We Sleeping Yet?

May 5, 2012

Sleeping through the night. Yes, it can be done, both of mine did it by 12 weeks, both breastfed. It was an important goal for me and prior to delivery I was thirsty for knowledge! How do I get them to sleep through the night? I read many books and I asked more experienced mums how they did it.

This is what I learned:

Work on a schedule rather than demand feed but be flexible. Try to stick to 3 hourly but *be flexible*. A good rule of thumb is no less than 2.5 and no more than 4, which basically means there must be a least 2.5 hours between each feeding but don't let baby go more than 4 hours. This is a general rule however because there will be growth spurts, first one usually around 6 weeks, where baby will probably feed every 2 hours for a day or 2, this is fine and helps build supply anyway. Then go back to your regular routine. Baby should have up to 8 feedings in a 24 hr. period. Are you seeing a theme here? Be flexible but not on demand.

A small scheduling trick, midafternoon shorten to 2.5 hr. for 2 feedings so as to begin to really fill baby. It also helps keep your supply going. Your schedule might look like this. 7,10, 1, 3:30, 6, 8:30 ,11, then let baby sleep until he/she wakes… they can often go 4-6 hours! Which might be 3am. Then back to bed and wake time 7am to start again. Some adjusting each day is often necessary but that is the flexible part! Baby might wake at 6:30 tomorrow, then you feed, 6:30, 9:30, 12, 2:30, 5, 8,10:30.

On the nights baby's last feed is a little earlier you can do something called the dream feed. If baby goes down for the night at 10 and you're not quite ready for bed, then when you are at say 11:30 then go in, without really waking baby and top them up! It's not a full feed but they will have a little filler and it will help them sleep longer and you know they are full and you'll have at least 4-6 hours uninterrupted sleep. If you maintain a regular schedule like this then baby will get into a rhythm. The key is to be consistent but also flexible. If you can get baby into a routine early you should have them sleeping through the night by the time they are 12 weeks old, sometimes a little earlier!

I have heard "never wake a sleeping baby" but I tend to disagree especially if you're trying to establish a routine. Often times newborns get messed up and want to sleep all day and hang out at night. So, you need to wake them at regular intervals so they get the desired amount of feedings in and also, they "reset" their body clocks.

The other thing to know is that it's important to get baby on a "feed, wake, sleep" cycle. It helps get the feeding schedule on track. That way when they wake up, they are genuinely hungry and not just fussy and you don't have a baby that you need to stretch out for another hour before you feed them again. This is when the routine comes unstuck. The schedule could look like this. Wake 7am, feed time (which can take up to an hour for newborns with burping time) awake/playtime 8-8:30, nap 8:30-10am, feed time 10-11, awake/playtime 11-11:20, nap 11:20, wake 1pm etc.

Newborns don't have very much in the way of wake time, sleeping most of the time to begin with. As they grow their needs change. They sleep a little less and eat a little more. They also get very efficient at feeding so it will take less time and they will want to play more. The schedule will keep being adjusted but if you're consistent, you can achieve your goal of an unbroken nights sleep

Single parenting, if only for the weekend

May 6, 2012

We're on our own for the next 5 days. The King is in Spain on business.

It is interesting how the family dynamic changes when someone is absent. For us, it's a bit of fun, a change in the routine. We eat easy meals. I get to choose the viewing AND hold the tv remote but for many it's an everyday life. Statistically the divorce rate has never been higher and women are choosing to have babies and raise children on their own. Young girls are finding themselves pregnant and alone. Single parenting is everywhere.

It must be so hard to be a single parent, having no help. I have great respect for those who do it alone, no matter what the reason. I'm sure there are many problems that single parents tackle daily that I couldn't even think of. I imagine it would be very lonely, not having anyone to share decisions with. Never getting a break, especially if you have low income and can't afford a babysitter.

The pressure of having to be the sole support for your children financially would be a strain. I have friends I see struggle every day to keep things going for their families. It saddens me but I know they love their children and do the very best they can.

Could there be an upside? I suppose there could be. Not having to disagree about decisions you might make for the children. Not having to consider another person's opinions. These seem frivolous though. I wonder if anyone really wants to be alone doing this tough job called parenting. I certainly couldn't imagine it without a partner.

I am thankful everyday to have a husband who loves and supports me as we get through this parenting thing together. Even if I'm loving having the king size bed to myself. ☺

Grrrrrrr…

The Sunday night homework cram.

May 7, 2012

We've had this conversation over and over. I thought we were done with it. The deal was get your homework done Friday night or early Saturday morning so it's finished and not hanging around to interfere with our weekend. Things were going quite well.

Both Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin having been getting it done. However tonight I discover Grand Master D had a #fail this weekend. He had a math sheet, a 2 page free write and a letter to a 5th grader explaining the 6th grade experience which he had to catch up from Wednesday. At 6:30 Sunday night he admits it's not done, in fact it's not even half done. Well, I didn't let him have it, I calmly asked him what was the deal? He had a free weekend and stayed up late both nights watching movies. His silence told me he had no excuse. I let him marinate in it for a little bit then I quietly said "Well that's disappointing mate". He hung his head. No repercussions required. I told him he'd have to go to bed on time as tomorrow was Monday and that he'd just have to get up early. No fight, no yelling. Just a fact that his lack of responsibility will cause him pain tomorrow. Not sure how much he has left, could be a 5:30am start for him. So be it. You can't save them, they have to do the work or suffer the consequences. I know he's mad at himself. He'll do better next weekend ☺

Simple Paleo snack

May 8, 2012



Looking for snack food today I discovered vegie chips. When I say I discovered, I've known about them but the Princesses Facebook status was a reminder. Simple to do, delicious and super low calories.

Get some vegies, zucchini, carrots, beets or sweet potatoes, slice them thinly, spray a cookie sheet with cooking spray.

Pat the vegies dry with paper towel, then season them to taste, place on tray and spray them. Pop in oven 400f for 20 mins turning them after 10 mins. Watch to make sure they don't burn. Cook until brown and crispy. Let them cool, salt some more and munch away.

Coming to America

May 9, 2012

Moving countries is not an easy thing to do. Don't let anyone tell you any different. It never entered my head that I would live anywhere else in the world than Australia. I didn't even know I would move to another town from where I spent my whole life!

Not that I was against the idea, it just didn't really occur to me. No one from my family had ever really moved around too much, just the one big move my parents started when they left Sydney to move to Albury. Everyone followed. We were a close family and we spent lots of time together in a large group as I was growing up and I just expected that's what I would continue to do when I grew up. My brother moved away when he was young but returned later on with his family and lives very close to where we lived as children.

All my cousins live in a 30-mile radius and they all still spend plenty of time together. All major holidays, Christmas, Easter etc. I think it's quite uncommon these days but that is how I grew up.

We were an immigrant family with my grandparents and their 6 children emigrating from England to Australia in 1956 after the war. We are a very diverse family with the 6 children marrying Russian, Dutch, German and Australian spouses.

I wish my grandmother had still been alive when The king decided to move us across the world. I know I could have used some of her valuable advice. We lost her the year before.

We were living on the Gold Coast in Australia. We'd been there since 1997 and had established ourselves well in the area with business and friends and a church community.

Both children were born and we were pretty comfortable with life. Well I thought so. The king had other ideas. He was travelling back and forth to America on a very regular basis, every 3 months. So much so, that he was away for 22 weeks of Miss Gremlin's first year!

Business had been doing very well but had reached a point where we could no longer expand. At the same time, The King won a competition for the World's Best Jingle in Hollywood and he was getting more speaking engagements in the USA.

Unbeknownst to me The King was plotting our escape stateside. After one highly successful trip he came home to announce that we should move there. He had mentioned it previously but I ignored it hoping it would go away. ☺ Although I was horrified by the idea, I remember agreeing to do it in the following January and that a trip in October would be a "practice run". I was just off the medication for postpartum depression and in denial that any of this was going to happen.

The August trip came and went and I was mortified to discover that our "practice trip" was going to be the move! The king, it seems, figured it a waste of money to go and come back, pack everything up and go again. Of course this is how I would do it. I like time to plan. I need time to process. Not my husband! He's a do it first, plan later type of guy.

I was devastated. I did NOT want to do this. There was a lot of discussion and trying to change his mind but in the end there was no other option. I needed my husband and the kids needed their dad. Being together was more important than where we were together. I'm so glad I was able to realise that because it really could have gone either way.

So the die was cast. The next six weeks were a frenzy of selling things, crying, packing things, crying…It's difficult to recall the exact sequence of events as I was in such an emotional state but I do remember the night we packed everything we thought we needed to take. This consisted of just personal effects, art work and clothing really. We were walking out on our whole lives. All furniture was to be sold, all kitchen appliances, bedding, linens were to be picked over by friends and employees to take what they wanted. It just had to go. The sum total of our lives were packed into 40 moving cartons.

The plan was that we would just go over and get settled and send for the boxes later. The King had put a deposit on a house in Indianapolis where we'd started business with some partners and that would be our base. He wanted to be in New York. I couldn't think of anything worse! I was a country girl and the thought of living in a high rise apartment with 2 kids and no back yard was something I just couldn't

fathom. He bought the house to appease me really, it was just a stepping stone to New York. Much easier to commute from Indianapolis than the Gold Coast of Australia.

It's funny how things have a way of working out. Upon our arrival in Indianapolis (India no place) the mood had changed and the business partners were in the process of stealing our company out from under us. In fact we have just won the court case against them recently. It was not the smooth transition we had hoped for.

With this action came a reaction that would change the entire course of our lives, or as the King said put it on the right track. We learned the hard way that America is full of shysters. We lost the deposit on the house because we were lied to about the loan amount we could get and the day before closing the deal fell through. We were to find out later that the vendor would have allowed us to rent from him until we were ready but the real estate broker just wanted his commission and never even suggested it to the vendor.

So, here we were in Indianapolis with 2 kids aged 5 and 17 months, no home, no car and no business. Everything we owned in 9 suitcases. So, it was decided we would go to New York. We got a car from a friend, took over his lease payments, packed it to the roof with our 9 cases and headed south, first to Washington DC where our immigration lawyer was. Yeah, we only had 3 months to get legal. We had just come in on our visitors visas. Part of the" let's just go and sort it out there" planning by The King ☺

It was a long drive. 18 hours from Indianapolis across to Chicago then down to DC. We were used to driving long distances but the kids, not so much. We did it in 2 days, stopping the first night at 1am after the kids woke up still in the car unable to handle it anymore. I think we spent 3 days in DC sorting out our status, then we headed north to New York City. We took up residence in the Sheraton in Weehawken which is on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, right on the water, very pretty views of the city. We took a suite, which was really only a stretched room about 16' square with a kitchenette. Two adults, a 5-year-old and a 17-month-old toddler, a king size bed, a roll away bed, 9 suitcases and a portacrib, all packed into 16' sq.



The King took off each morning on the ferry over the river to the City to do meetings and get the business going, I stayed put trying to survive with the kids in a hotel room for nap time and lugging the laundry on top of the stroller to find a place to wash it. We were not set up for city life at all!

After about 2 weeks of this the cracks were beginning to show. Grand master D and I spent 3 hours a day whispering on the king-sized bed while Miss Gremlin napped. There was nothing close by, I walked miles to find the basics so we could live in the hotel. We had to get out. We looked into subletting but that was an insane process and so costly. Eventually speaking to a friend at home, he had a friend who lived here and was going to see if they could help us. They were in Sweden at the time but sent an email with instructions how to drive to their



house and get inside. Marc and Deb really saved our lives that day. We packed up the Weehawken Sheraton and headed to Connecticut. By this time, we'd been in the USA for a month. I was over it, done, wanted to go back home. However, we found the place, broke into Marc and Deb's lakeside home and spread ourselves out. It was nice to have space and to cook something! When they arrived back from Sweden they came up to the lake, we met them one Friday night in November when they knocked on their own front door. It was a wonderful place, within the first week we had snow but the kids were not quite sure about that stuff.

We were pretty happy there getting things sorted out with what we were going to do. After 3 weeks though Marc and Deb said they would be needing their house over Christmas but they had a little 100-year-old stone cottage across the way that we could stay in as long as we liked. So, we packed up everything we owned into our Jeep Grand Cherokee and moved 500 yards up the road. The king went to the local goodwill and spent $300 ($200 of it on a bed) and furnished the entire place including crockery and cookware ☺

We had 1 foot think stone walls and a fireplace. We were home. We adjusted to life there, The King working everyday trying to get our investment apartment in Harlem closed, getting drivers licenses, continuing with the immigration process. Christmas came and went, Walmart was my best friend and after seeing a leg of lamb in the supermarket for $95 we had Christmas dinner of hot dogs, pizza and all American junk food fair. The kids loved it.



Three days after Christmas we packed our car to drive to Canada for our appointment at the American Embassy to get our visas. Not knowing if we would get them, we had no idea if we could even get back to the cottage where our expanding possessions were. Santa, in his wisdom, brought the children a dual screen portable DVD player for the car and a selection of movies. We were ready to get in the car again for 10 hours to Ottawa. We arrived, got our visas and headed back as legal aliens. (there's a whole story to these 2 days but I'll save that.)

We spent 5 months in that little stone cottage, trying to get our lives on track, working through American red tape, enduring our first northern winter. The temperatures got down to 7 degrees f (-17c). Our subtropical Queensland butts were not used to THAT! It snowed a lot that year. That was the year New York got 26 inches in Feb 2006 and Park Ave had a 10 ' wall of snow down the middle. At our lakeside cottage it snowed every 2 weeks and every time it snowed there was 14 inches on the ground. We had to learn to drive in it, shovel it and treat it so it wouldn't turn to deadly ice. We had to dig the car out, and adjust to a totally different lifestyle. Buy warm coats, teach the kids to keep their gloves and hats on. It was a real coming together time for us as a family. It was us against the big bad world.



Finally, after many problems and being lied to a lot, we were able to get what we needed to



close on the apartment in Harlem. We hired a u haul truck and loaded up our possessions. We had expanded a little in those 5 months with the help of Costco and Walmart ☺ We cleaned the cottage and made our way into the city. We parked the car and truck outside the building and went to the closing. It took hours, all those signatures, trying to keep the kids amused. Finally, it was done and we went back to start moving in.

It wasn't as easy as we'd hoped though. They gave us the wrong keys, so we sat in the hallway with our frozen groceries for an hour while the courier brought us the right key. Eventually we started to move stuff in. As if it isn't hard enough to move house, try doing it with little kids in an apartment. We managed, got everything out of the vehicles and started to unpack. That part didn't take very long, we really had very little in the way of furniture but we were in our new home. March 8 2006, 6 months after leaving everything and everyone we'd ever known.

This last March just gone we've been in our apartment 6 years. Many things have happened and we have many stories to tell. We've adjusted pretty well to living in America but sometimes it gets too much for me and I just have to get on a plane home for a month and ground myself so I can come back and face the American crazy again. It took a lot of courage on The Kings part to pack us up and move us here. It was a very uncertain time but now we have a good life and we are all happy. The next move is mine. I know it will be easier next time because we've done it and learned from it and every time you do something it gets easier. We can live anywhere in the world but for now we'll take the Harlem crazy.



My week long carb breakout…

May 10, 2012

Paleo eating has come up in discussions a lot lately due to my ever diminishing self. I have been eating that way for about 6 weeks. I have previously written about it. I feel great and can see the changes in myself daily. I am sleeping better, feel more rested , less stressed, have clearer skin and am continuing to lose the weight I started shedding in mid 2011.

However this week I have been craving carbs. I decided when I started losing weight that I wasn't going to be silly or annoying about it and if I wanted to have something I would. That way I am able to satisfy the craving and still stick to my diet. It's been more of a lifestyle change than a diet and losing the weight slowly, I believe, is better because you have more chance of keeping it off.

I have noticed that when I do have the carbs I feel sluggish. I also get hungry faster when I eat them but I just wanted to eat toast, garlic bread, pasta and spoonfuls of stuffing. Go figure. Sometimes you just need to give in to it. I'm still resisting the jam donuts from Dunkin' Donuts around the corner though.

With all the breaking out I did, I seem to have satisfied the craving, which is great, so I'm back to paleo cooking.

I love trying new recipes and there are so many available. It's fun to find things you can substitute for your favourite carb food. Yesterday we had Sang Choy Bow. So easy and very tasty.Tonight I made italian meatballs for the kids. Packed full of veges too.

I'm looking forward to baking paleo. I've heard you can make some very tasty treats. I'll keep you posted.

Recipe links:

Paleo Sang
Choy Bow
Paleo Meatballs

Don't forget Respect

May 11, 2012

Because I said so……

How many times have you used that phrase? I know I use it. Here are my reasons why.

I don't have to explain myself every time I ask a child to do something. I explain it when it's required. I'm the parent and I make the rules and decisions, some of them are non negotiable. I refuse to argue with my children. If it's something that is important then I will listen to what they have to say, as they get older it is important for them to have a voice. I am not always right but I try to be fair and honest in all areas of my life. Respect is something to be earned and by trying to always be honest and fair I hope to teach my children in a way they can learn how to respect someone and in turn how to gain respect.

Parenting styles in general have become less strict over the last 2 decades, kids get away with more and parents try to be friends with their children, therefore losing their respect. There's an old saying "Children should be seen and not heard". I don't agree with that but they do have to learn their place and it's not being in charge. You can't lead by authority if you let your children walk all over you.We all have people we look up to and respect. Think of those people and what it is about them that you respect in them. Instilling that same thing in your children is something to strive toward. But how.

I have found myself in ever increasing situations with children (not my own) where I'm having an argument with them. I have to remind myself to stop. Children will stand toe to toe with you and talk back like you're a piece of dirt! I witness, on a regular basis, teachers being treated this way and other parents as well. There are no real consequences for actions anymore. Kids can be disrespectful in class and the teacher really has to put up with it. It's not like the old days. I'm not saying corporal punishment was a good thing because it was open to abuse by sadistic people but there was a certain fear. If you were sent to the principal's officeat school you knew

you were in trouble. You behaved appropriately for fear of the punishment. What are the consequences these days? Time out, in school suspension or even none. Some parents when called to school to discuss a child's bad behaviour are often on the child's side, even when that child has done the wrong thing.

I believe in what's right and I defend my children vehemently but if they're wrong then they must accept the consequences. They must right the wrong and apologise to the wronged person, child or adult. I will not let them stand behind me unpunished. Though parents do. Their child can do no wrong, when often the child is a little turd ☺ Honour and respect are gone. People care only for themselves and they're passing that lack of respect for others onto their children.

There are plenty of reasons respect has been diluted for authoritative figures, police, politicians, doctors etc. Unfortunately having a good reputation, being honest, decent and kind have gone by the wayside and corruption and money grubbing and self interest have taken over. The few ruin it for the many who are decent and honest. The "It's all about ME" generation are loud and proud. So many people only ever think about themselves and how they feel and never stop to consider their actions maybe be rude or offensive and others know and just don't care. It makes me sad. It makes me mad.

When we allow our children to disrespect us, the people they trust the most and learn their first lessons from, then we set them up for a future of selfishness and disrespect of people, property and authority.

Our job as parents is to raise strong, healthy, happy, honest adults who can contribute to society in a positive way. Respect for themselves and others is something that I believe is a very important attribute of a well rounded person.

Children learn from watching us, probably more than us teaching them. If we can conduct our lives in positive ways of honesty, integrity and compassion they see that. If we're rude, short tempered, disrespectful, then they're going to learn that from us too. It's a delicate balance and difficult at times but overall a worthwhile one.

I am just one person and I fail sometimes but I try hard to live right, respecting those around me and myself. I hope for the same in return. If everyone did that imagine how nice the world would be.

The Post Toddler Tantrum

May 12, 2012

I've talked about tantrums in regard to toddlers. However I see an ever increasing amount of older children still having tantrums when they don't get what they want. I believe this behaviour is a continuation from toddler hood because it wasn't quashed when it first surfaced. Children use the tactics they know work to get what they want. If your little person got what they wanted by throwing a fit in the supermarket to get the cookie or candy bar then chances are as they grow they will throw a fit to get the shoes they want or go to the play date you have said "no" to.

Unfortunately it's more difficult to stop tantrums when children are older, especially if they yell and scream and lash out at you physically or verbally. It can be very hurtful when your child tells you they hate you. Which of course they don't mean. We need to remind our children that words hurt but also that you can't always have everything your own way and that kind of behaviour isn't accepatable.

Don't fret, it's harder but it can be done ☺ Here's what I reckon works.

We're not supposed to be our kids friends. That's not our job. Our job is to parent. I tell my kids that all the time. They don't have to like us. And let's face it, sometimes we don't like them very much either but ultimately we love them and do everything in their best interests. Teaching them right from wrong as best we can.

Socially acceptable behaviour doesn't just come overnight. It takes time to learn. Every day we teach something even if we don't realise it. Seize every teaching point. Point out a child who is throwing a fit when your child is calm. Talk about what it looks like, how ugly it is. Ask how it could be resolved differently. Make it relatable to them. I regularly do this. Quiz them on how would they handle that situation. You'd be amazed at what you're kids will say. This is also a great way to teach problem solving.

I'm a great believer in practicing things. For example, you could practice a behaviour you'd like to model in your home when your kids aren't tired, cranky or hungry. Kids can get right into role playing, you be the naughty kid and tell them to be the parent. Then reverse it and show how you'd like a situation to be handled. If you give them expectations then they know what you want. Kids want to please their parents but they just need some guidance on how to do it. You need to set new boundaries. Have a family meeting and talk about how things haven't been going the way you'd like and introduce the new goals and boundaries and how you want it to work and what you expect from them. You might be surprised how they respond.

Very recently Miss Gremlin and I were in the chinese take-out waiting for dinner (a non paleo cooking night). A woman came in with 2 children but the older child refused to come into the store. So she was trying to order, watch the small child and get the older child, maybe 6-7, to come inside. It was a potentially dangerous situation because the child was out of sight on the sidewalk, the chinese store was crowded and anything could have happened. Miss Gremlin was watching this all transpire in the space of about 3 minutes and I could feel her tension. She was very worried the child wouldn't come in and made a move to go out and get him. I stopped her and explained that although it's a very unsafe situation and she feels bad, we can't always interfere. Sometimes people get very upset if you do something that makes them feel inadequate. Of course if it's a life threatening situation that can be different but unfortunately people get offended when you interfere even if you have good intentions. She understood. Good teaching moment.We left with me feeling very proud that I had instilled in Miss Gremlin the concern for others and a longing to help.

We love the Super Nanny in our house. My kids love to watch it and can't believe some of the things they see children do! It's very amusing to sit back and listen to them yell at the kids on tv and talk with each other about what the parent should do to change the child's behaviour. I've been known the threaten calling Super Nanny to come save our family in the past. My kids are horrified that I think they behave badly enough to warrant a Super Nanny visit. Of course they're not even in the ball park but I see nothing wrong with using a little bit of shame from time to time if they're misbehaving ☺

It will be difficult at first but if you're consistent with the consequences it will start to come together. Compliment them when they accept you saying no without a fuss. Positive reinforcement works wonderfully. Be consistent and fair. If you have more than one child then if you say no to one then you have to say no to both. You can explain if you feel you want to but you can also just say it doesn't work right now.

They'll learn.

The world isn't fair and when you're kids say "It's not fair" they're probably right but getting what you want or getting your own way all the time isn't always what you need. Even some adults get the sulks when things don't go their way. So childish. (I guess they never learned how not to have tantrums.) ☺ You have to be able to see another point of view. You don't always have to like it or agree but things have a way of working out.

It's ok to be disappointed and upset. They are valid feelings but your child needs to be able to control their emotions enough that they can accept it if you say no. They'll also find that the better they behave the more they get because things are easier and your fear of a tantrum if you dare say no has all but gone. Harmony comes with much effort but it's so worth it.

The consistency must be with both partners though. You can't have one parent trying to change a behaviour if the other one isn't doing it too because that just confuses the child. A behaviour has to become automatic and an expectation from all carers not just with one person or another.

I don't always get it right, I'm just one person but I often get compliments on what lovely, well mannered, well behaved children I have. It's not luck, it's been a lot of hard work but I think it's worth every painful moment that I had to curb an undesirable behaviour.

Good luck as you make your way towards happy tantrum free days.

Happy Mother's Day

May 13, 2012

Happy Mother's Day to all you mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers, mothers in law et al. Do you celebrate? Do you feel the love? Are you cherished by your babies young and old? I know for many this is a difficult day. Some mothers are no longer with us. Some families are estranged. Some, like me, are far away from their mothers.

This year, more than others, I feel the distance. I long to be there because she needs me. Life doesn't always work out how you want it though. The closest I can get right now is the hour long phone call each day.

The important thing is caring about your mother and showing them that you do.

I hate the commercialism that surrounds Mother's Day. It should be about spending time with your mother and not about big flashy gifts. Of course I won't say no to a big flashy gift but I don't expect it or even need it. All I need is some time to me and some thought and attention from my family. Maybe breakfast and coffee in bed ☺ But not too early!

Being a mother is a very difficult job, we're not trained for it, we second guess ourselves often. We make mistakes. Most of us wish we could do more. There is so much pressure placed on mothers today. So many women work outside the home, which is great if you want to enjoy a career but many have no choice. Our lifestyles are such that we often live beyond our means. We have nannies or childcare and cleaners so we can do our jobs but we feel guilty because we're too busy and then too tired to be good mums. We miss the first word, the first step, the school play. We feel the pressure to get it right all the time, to look beautiful, to sound intelligent, to be

successful. When all we really want is to be a little less stressed and a little more loved. Being a good mother is so very important for your children. They need us for a very short time, then they're out in the world. I strongly believe we need to be present and awesome for our kids as much as we can.

So here's to all the awesome mothers out there…Happy Mother's Day.

Put me down, I won't break.

May 15, 2012

"My kids get me up too early" or "Why won't my baby sleep through?" "I can't even shower!" Have you heard these statements when chatting over coffee with young mums? I have. Or "He won't let me put him down". So poor mum has a baby attached to her all day! This would drive me insane. It seems that new parents are too afraid to teach their children to fit into the household. The household totally revolves around baby. That's tiring.

HAVE A SHOWER! It's ok to put the baby down, it's ok to lay the baby in the crib for 15 minutes while you have a shower. If you can't handle having them out of sight, then lay a towel on the bathroom floor and lay them there. If you have a toddler who you fear will bother the baby, then bring some crayons and a colouring book for the toddler into the bathroom and leave the baby safe in the crib. Although you should be teaching the toddler to be careful with the baby anyway and not be touching without supervision.

It's important to get up, get dressed and attend to your ablutions everyday, to feel human. It helps you get into a routine quicker and I believe helps to stave off the baby blues. You can't be a happy and healthy mother if you don't take care of yourself.

A trick that worked for me when the babies were young to get a 'sleep in', once they could move around, was to place some toys at the end of the crib after they were asleep so that when baby wakes in the morning they have some fun distractions and won't cry out straight away for you to come get them. Some mornings I was able to get an extra 45 minutes before having to get up! Let's be honest, 45 mins is almost heaven sent for the sleep deprived mum. This can work for older babies/toddlers too with toys and books. Don't be in a hurry to get them out of that crib because once they're out then the next phase begins. Unless of course they're already scaling the railing like it's the only thing between them and freedom, which really it is.

The earlier you start getting to your new normal the easier it is to adapt with a new baby in the house. As scary as it all seems, they're resilient little things and all forgiving ☺ . Just relax, enjoy your new little baby and accept help when it's offered. Soon enough, like anything people get busy in their own lives and expect you to get on with yours.

Sticking to a Budget

May 16, 2012

Over the years we've made many family budgets, vowing to keep track of our money and save by knowing where every cent goes. Yeah right! We go well for about a month and then it's out the window. Countless times this has happened. Still we try. It's quite

scary to see where the bulk of your money goes, it's never where you expect. It can get frustrating. It often becomes a contentious issue. Having to justify expenditure makes me feel like I'm under a microscope. Why do I always get the third degree? I'm no spending junkie.

So we find ourselves doing it again, however this time we're going to really make it work. Yes we are! The King found a very easy accounting program to use called Freshbooks, all you do is import your bank statements into it each month and it categorises all your spending. It helps you to see where your money is going and come December, the taxes are already done. Not sure how long we'll last on it this time but so far it looks good.

We also saw a neat little gadget late last night that scans all your bills and receipts so you no longer have to keep mountains of untidy paperwork. I bet there's one enroute to us already. I'll be happy to get rid of all the paper. Not sure if the two programs with talk to each other but we'll check it out.

Now if I can just avoid handing over my credit card statement to the King-I don't spend too much on Starbucks, really I don't. Not as much as his wine and cigars at any rate, that's my justification ☺ Will it be enough?

Pushing through the Fog

May 17, 2012

When you suffer from depression it can be difficult to do everyday things. I have a theory on how to get through the fog and rejoin the world. When you feel bad inside you have to look good on the outside. That way the looking good can help you feel better inside. When you look good, you get compliments and those compliments help to boost your mood. Seems to work for me most of the time. Of course it's all psychological. It's not tested that I'm aware of but being the common sense person I am, this thinking makes sense to me.

Another other thing that helps when you feel low is to do some exercise, whether it be the gym or just taking the dog for a walk. Something about the endorphins in your body lightens your mood. Sunshine also seems to help. Just sitting in it, enjoying the warmth of it's rays often lifts my mood.

Avoiding bad food helps too, although this can be difficult because stress causes many people, including myself, to want to grab a sugar fix. I swear I have craved a jam filled donut for a month or so now. Resisting-but still craving. I should just have one and be done with it I suppose.

Studies have linked bad diets to depression. The overload of sugar, carbs and fatty foods don't give the body the nutrients it needs to function correctly. The deprivation of these essential nutrients is a key component to depressive moods.

Somedays when you feel emotionally fragile, the last thing in the world you want to do is spend time dressing up but pushing through the feeling and making yourself do it has rewards. The mood lightens and you begin to function again. At least this has been my experience. Almost everyday I want to stay in bed and just hide but I know I am needed and I must get up and go about my daily activities. I am slowly lightening my load as far as the activities go because I think I have taken on too much. It's time to be kind to myself a little more.

RESOURCE ARTICLES:
road-to-health.com/endorphins
Naturalnews.com/poordiet-depression
naturalnews.com/topfivefoods

What happens when mum gets sick

May 18, 2012

When family members get sick mum is always there with TLC and whatever medicine or home remedy required. There's lots of chicken soup to cook and the days are filled with making the patient feel comfortable. Not to mention the sleepless nights but what happens when mum gets sick? Who looks after her?

I have managed to catch a cold. I don't succumb often but this time I did. The weather is so all over the place at the moment that it's very difficult to regulate our bodies. Grand Master D has been home all week pretty sick and feeling miserable. While I was caring for him, every time I sneezed I would call out "stinking kid". I would hear a snigger from the bedroom and a smiling sorry ☺ Wednesday he and I spent the day sick on the couch by ourselves. The King was out and Miss Gremlin was at school. We were pathetic in our sick haze and knee deep in tissues, watching daytime tv for hours. It was a mother son bonding time, with Grand master D laughing at one point that he was looking after me and I was looking after him. Not quite accurate but I'll allow it.

On the whole though we mums get a bum wrap. We have to take care of everyone but when we get sick who really looks after us? We have an inner resilience to it I suppose. We just get up and get going, even if we feel like death warmed up.

All I want is my mum to look after me, tuck me in and bring me chicken soup.

The lemon juice with ginger, garlic and manuka honey have been consumed at a great rate and also a teaspoon of bicarb soda in a small glass of water 3 times a day has certainly helped me to reduce the length and severity of my current cold. I also take extra echinacea and vitmin c. I don't like to take conventional cold medicine because it just masks the symptoms and it's so expensive. I would much rather search for some simple, cheap home remedies. I am managing to get some rest so I should be back to normal very soon. Until the next time :(

Freakin' Laundry

May 19, 2012

It has been said by those who shall remain nameless that I have a little obsession. It is said I love to do laundry, I'm always doing laundry, Molley and her laundry. So just to clear this up I detest freakin' laundry. That being said I do A LOT of laundry.

In my previous life when I had a washing line outside and the sun and breeze dried my clothes, I did find it therapeutic to hang it out and fold it straight off the line while enjoying the sunshine. I had a dedicated room for laundry, a place for the clothes horse and ironing board. All the latest appliances etc but most importantly a door to shut it all away and keep the rest of the house tidy.

Since moving to New York, the system is a little different, for some a lot different because their apartments don't have washers or driers. For those people doing laundry must totally suck. You have to either take it to a laundromat and do it yourself, putting

money in the machines or pay $1.00 a pound for someone to wash and fold it for you. Now maybe I'm strange but I don't like the idea of someone else washing my knickers.

Lucky enough for me I have a washer and drier in my home so I have the 'luxury' of doing my laundry at home. It is just never ending though. I often marvel at how much 4 people generate in the space of 3-4 days. I think we must have too many clothes. I try to be conservative, not everything we wear needs washing every time we wear it but I am still doing it all the time. My new laundry room is a closet with a washer and drier in it. That's it, no space for anything, certainly no room for a clothes horse or ironing board.

I'm trying to work out a way to cut down on the amount of laundry and the number of days I do it. At this point I have no clue how to do either. Maybe I need to wash everyday. This would work if I was home everyday but as I have a full schedule these days it just piles up.

This is what I had to deal with on monday morning. By thursday I'll have the same amount and then friday the uniforms will need doing or I'm back to working on a sunday and you know how that amuses the King.If I had the space I would hide it away… better yet it could be time for a maid ☺





Paleo breakfast

May 20, 2012

This morning I felt like ham and eggs. Generally you fry them in a pan but this is a fun way to prepare them and you can eat them with your hands. Great for eating on the run. The kids love them. You can cook them the night before and keep them in the fridge. Pretty simple to do, spray a muffin tray with cooking spray or rub with oil, line each with a slice of deli ham cut in half long ways, crack egg into the ham. Cook in 380f oven until egg is cooked, about 15 mins.





Weekend Away

May 21, 2012

I had the opportunity this weekend to go to my friends home in the country for a girls weekend. We've been trying to plan it since last October, it was supposed to be my birthday treat. With all of us having such hectic schedules it has taken until now to get a mutually available date. As I was packing, it occurred to me that this is the first time I've ever had time away for me since we moved to America 7 years ago. Oh I've had a couple of trips home to Australia on my own but I don't consider them breaks because of the travel and jet lag. The relaxation was wonderful. No one asked anything of me and I slept until I woke up, ate what I wanted, when I wanted it. I found a little piece of heaven if only for 2 days.

Although my kids are getting older and don't need me for everything they are still used to asking me for it and I have to remind them they are capable of helping themselves. I will be doing this more often because I really need some time to just be me and not have anyone depending on me.

Arriving home totally killed my buzz. I was expecting something different I suppose. Miss Gremlin was tired and whiny and didn't like dinner. The school uniforms weren't washed so I'm doing laundry at 9:30pm on sunday night. I cut my finger putting the trash out and I had to go get milk, bread and eggs from the store for breakfast… Now I'm not complaining, just a little disappointed that I don't even feel like I've been away.

My anxiety level has gone through the roof. Nobody's fault but mine because I probably had unrealistic expectations. It's just unfortunate that all that relaxing went to waste. :(

When is it appropriate to teach children about HIV AIDS?

May 22, 2012

A note came home from school last week informing parents that the children would be receiving instruction in HIV AIDS. This is a part of our society and it's something everyone needs to learn about in health and how to avoid it. However I'm not sure that teaching it to elementary children from kindergarten up is really appropriate.In my opinion, 5 year olds have no reason to know anything about it. I would think that middle school health would be soon enough to teach about these topics. The note gives the opportunity to opt out of the lessons if you feel you don't want your child participating but that creates its own problems with the children being excluded. When this first came home last year, I spoke to the middle school assistant principal to find out exactly what was being taught as I wasn't sure I wanted Grand Master D even discussing it at 10. After an in depth conversation, I decided the content for that age group was ok and when I spoke to his teacher she said she really skimmed over most of it because she found it uncomfortable to teach anyway. While I certainly agree with educating the community about at risk behavior, I worry that we're exposing our children to too much, too soon. We shouldn't be in any rush to take away children's

innocence by giving them adult information too early. The world can be a nasty place, why would we tell little children that! They'll learn it soon enough.

So Miss Gremlin had her first HIV AIDS lesson today. When I picked her up the teacher came to see me and said Miss Gremlin had some questions that were more appropriate for me to answer. Her questions were beyond what the teacher was allowed to say. So I had to answer her. Let's just say it was an educational walk home ☺ For both of us.

There are other situations that I think we need to shield our children until we're ready to answer the tough questions, not just about HIV AIDS. I remember riding the subway with the children when Grand Master D was about 7 and just getting proficient with reading. We were riding a car that had some ads that had adult content. As we're riding Grand Master D says "mum what's impotence?" as that's what the ad was about and he figured out the word. Now not being one to worry about the curly questions too much, I always answer honestly with the amount of information I think they can handle. Hmm how should I handle this one? Wait until later or explain it right there on the subway with everyone around. I decided to just answer it for him right there… How to answer, well I just gave him the 7 year old version of the truth. Those sort of things I believe are best answered truthfully, that way it can't come back to bite you later. I've heard some pretty funny stories over the years of people telling different versions of the truth.

Even watching television these days has it's problems. If you watch the 6 o'clock news at night then you have to explain things like erectile disfunction, contraception and periods. Surely those ads can air later on in the evening. Unfortunately advertisers and tv stations are more concerned with profit than looking out for the innocence of children.

I switched to the 11pm news. It was just easier and less annoying. Those ads are just too much. Some things just don't need to be advertised.

Unfortunately the choice of what our children are exposed to, although ultimately ours, is eroded by mainstream media and the government bodies who decide school curriculum. We can fight it by turning the tv off and protecting them as best we can. You are given options at school to opt out of anything you and your family disagree with.

Don't worry when the curly questions come, just take a deep breath and do the best you can. There's no right way to answer, I guess you assess each situation and question as it comes. You know your child best and what they can handle. What's the worst that can happen??? Lets face it, we all need stuff to tell our therapists ☺

Prescription Meds advertising

May 23, 2012

When we first arrived in the US we were absolutely floored by the fact that drug companies were allowed to advertise directly to the public. In the past 7 years this advertising has just gotten crazy. It seems every week a new "disease" appears with a new drug to combat it. The disclaimers at the end of the ads are the worst, "may result in death" is always a good one, it's laughable that this is allowed.

When the ad says tell your doctor you could have… and ask for …. It's beyond ridiculous. Medical training is 8 years for a reason. It takes time to understand the human body and learn how to cure it, who are we to presume that we should

know more than a trained doctor on the uses of prescription drugs. The whole drug company/health insurance industry in America is totally unchecked and out of control. It's actually quite scary how they can get away with what they do. They seem to have a free license from the FDA.

I think I've been to the doctor twice in 7 years and to date have had only a single prescription. I'm not claiming anything special other than I've never rushed to the doctor unnecessarily but it seems to be the first thing people do in so many situations today. Sometimes the doctors can't even do anything, ie for the common cold. They're very quick to prescribe antibiotics but we all know they can't kill a virus.

They're not making any money out of me that's for sure.

An entire generation of home remedies and grandma wisdom has been lost because nobody tries to fix themselves of the simple common ailments. Many things can be fixed easily with home remedies and nature, some things cannot of course. I, by no means, suggest you shouldn't seek medical attention for a serious issue. However, some things people will go to the doctor for are laughable.

I remember one such occasion, Grand Master D got a splinter from a wooden deck. It was quite a large one and although I was able to remove most of it, there was a piece that needed to work it's way out. I went to the local drug store to get some drawing ointment so we could remove the remaining piece. Being unable to locate any on the shelves I asked the pharmacist. To my surprise, I was told that nothing like that was available. I was surprised and asked "so what do you do if you have a splinter?" The answer I received was a resounding "Go to the doctor". This was insane! It wasn't that bad. I promptly called Australia and had mum send me some. As it turned out the splinter worked it's own way to the surface and one evening in the bath when the skin was all soft and wrinkly I was able to just "pop" it out. The human body is equipped to heal itself in so many ways.

On another occasion I managed to get a UTI-yeah, they happen. I immediately went looking for the alkaline effervescence stuff which can re-balance your body's pH level which causes the issue in the first place. There was nothing of this sort of course. Next idea was to ask the friends I had what they did. Again I was confronted with "oh you have to go to the doctor and get antibiotics for that". Now I agree that if left too long the infection might require treatment but once you've had one of those infections you know quickly to act.

Cranberry pills and juice are the only thing available over the counter and while I know they can help prevent it, they have a hard time fixing it. Another call was made and 5 days later a box arrived ☺ The worst part was waiting it out.

Why are there not remedies available that are non invasive and non pharmaceutical? There must be a way to re-educate people on how to look after themselves without running to the doctor to get a prescription for something they think they have because they saw it on tv. I believe we need to learn basic home health practices. We also need to stop the drug companies praying on the vulnerable, filling their heads with imaginary diseases to make money. Sick people equal profit, helping people seems to be secondary.

Teach your children about real nutrition and how to help themselves a little. If we can all do that then I believe the bloated medical industry will go back to a manageable size and people could then afford proper health insurance for the real medical issues. It should be about making a stronger and healthier population, not pure profit.

How Do We Live Without You

May 24, 2012

I have put off writing this post so many times. How do you talk about losing someone. How it has affected everything you are and everything you do? As the first anniversary draws near I'm not sure what to expect. I fear that I'm going to relive the whole awful time surrounding the passing of my Dad. Not wanting to but feeling that I need to as closure, to accept the loss. Death is a fact of life. We all know this. I understand it well and having lived the country life I have seen my share of it with animals and pets.

Losing someone you love is different, so very different. Watching someone die is a very profound thing. It changes you and that moment can never really be erased. I pray not to experience it too many times in my life.

Getting home was traumatic. Unfortunately I missed my connection in LA so I was stuck for 24 hours in a hotel room waiting for the next days flight. There are no hourly commuter flights to Sydney. Being alone and helpless in a hotel room 16,000 miles away from where you want to be is distressing. While I waited there and later on in the gate lounge, it occurred to me that I might not make it. Communicating with mum was showing this to be an increasing chance with every hour I sat and with 15 hours of travel ahead of me. The years rolled by in my head, the lessons, the conversations, the events. What if I didn't make it, would I be forever regretful? How would I handle it? I came to realise that I would be ok. A calmness just came over me like he was there and knew what I was fretting about. There was nothing I needed to rush to his bedside to say, we were good. We were connected. If I didn't make it would be ok.

In the end I made it. Everything happens for a reason and I know now that if I had gotten there a day earlier then my brother would have missed being there. He was driving interstate hours away. My niece got to spend an entire day with him, that wouldn't have happened either. God's timing is always right, even when we think the timing is so wrong and we're so worried, afraid or upset.

It's how Dad wanted it. He waited until we were all there with him, an extra two days in fact. He died 3 hours after I landed.

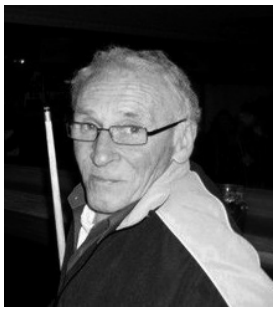
It was so sudden, nobody was prepared for it. He was well, had a week in hospital, then he was gone. I know it was the best way for him. No prolonged illness, just time to go. For us left behind though it was a shock and very difficult to process. I wonder if it is any easier when you have time to prepare and realise that the person is better off going, rather than clinging to a life of pain and suffering. In that instance I would imagine you have time to process some of your grief. To accept an inevitable fate. I've not experienced it like that. Of all the people I've lost in my life it has been suddenly.

It was a tough week for my mum. She was at the hospital from 6am to midnight everyday. Very worried about what was happening, distressed I was stuck, frightened and facing it all alone. The extended family rallied of course but I believe that with those situations you really do face it alone. No one else is going through it with you. We can only be there to support.

As hard as this last year has been for me, it is 100 times worse for mum. She has lost her partner, she is all alone in the world. No one to share her burden. She has to make a new life now. It's terrible to be so far away. I find it very difficult when all I have is the telephone. Calling twice a day is all I can do. She has moved ahead but

it's a two steps forward , one step back process. There's no timeline with grief. It hits anytime, anywhere. Sometime all at once.

For me, being removed by distance has it's difficulties. I haven't had the time to grieve. I know my trip back will be tough. It will all be so fresh, like it just happened, whereas everyone there has had time to go through the motions of it all. They've visited the grave and gotten used to Dad not being in his chair. That is all yet to come for my family.



The anniversary will have passed by the time we travel home in August, maybe that's a good thing. I don't think it ever gets better, just different. The pain will always be there. There's a gaping hole in our lives. Forever gone. Some days the loss is just too great.

Hopefully with each passing day we'll all learn how to cope a little better without you here.

Gone but with us always and forever.

Bruce Maxwell Smith 18 August 1938-8 July 2011

I'm No Coffee Addict!

May 25, 2012

What constitutes a coffee addiction? Is it the need for the dark rich liquid everyday? Does the smell tickle your nose? Do you get cranky if you don't have it? Headaches perhaps? I can go without, really I can. What does it mean when you're on a first name basis with your baristas (yes plural) and they make your coffee before you even get to the counter? I say it means you're a great customer and a cheery face in the morning ☺ Even other people can get my coffee and they know it's for me.

Matt and Noel are the bomb.

The other day I went in and the line was long, I was in a hurry and didn't see either of my boys. So I left. Vowing to come back later when I had more time. Upon my return Matt told me he'd made my coffee :(way to make me feel bad… Oh well, I apologised and explained, he was most gracious.

It's nice to have a local haunt, it feels like community. Somehow it makes you feel good when people know you and seem to care. I recommend being friendly and getting to know the people you interact with on a daily basis. They sure get my customer service vote.

Ok I'm off to get another coffee. Happy Friday.

The Highs and Lows

May 26, 2012

After my weekend away last week I came home feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. It's amazing what 5 days can do! I'm dragging my butt around today, can't get enough coffee. It's been a busy week. Every night something, to bed after midnight and it's taken it's toll. I didn't recognise the person in the mirror this morning. It was a bit of a shock actually. I had to look twice.

I'm very ready for it to be the weekend again so I can sleep in. As luck would have it we have an extra day due to Memorial Day observance on Monday. I need to try and bottle some energy and spread it throughout the week because by friday I'm usually dead on my feet. I might have to find some slow release energy supplement.

I suspect some of the reason I'm feeling so tired is that I've been eating things that are not paleo. I have been having carbs, cheating so to speak. Since I haven't been eating them, when I do eat them I notice how sluggish I feel and how low my energy gets. The article below seems to prove I'm not making it up. ☺

It is difficult to find a healthy balance when life is so hectic. I will get back on track this weekend, get some rest and try again next week.

Naturalnews.com/ carbohydrates

The Black Chick, The White Chick, The Aussie and The Muslim

May 27, 2012

Yes it's an odd title but let me tell you it's an odd group! These ladies are some of my friends from the school. We hang out at school, trying to improve the place, we go for liquid lunches (most of us). We drink tons of coffee ☺ We txt constantly and kick each others kids butts when required. It's really nice to have close friends with whom you can share your problems and your joys. I believe it's very important to have friends and I'm so pleased to have these ones. I can only imagine the sight we make walking down the street, we could be the United Colours of Benetton poster for multiculturalism. There's no racism here. It has been a great thing for me being able to immerse in cultures I have never experienced. Living in Harlem has it's challenges but these ladies have watched out for me, included me and I like to think I've made their lives more interesting too. Even if only for my dry Aussie wit ☺

We've been known to cut a little loose in the 'hood in the wee hours of the morning. Our adventures are always fun to recount the next day. We've damaged others in the process and bars have closed down after we've visited. It could have been the bad Michael Jackson dancing.

We're on a first name basis with bar tenders and baristas alike and even the supermarket managers know who we are! It's safe to say we've made our mark on the 'hood.

We watch out for each other. We have all had our trials and I think we support each other pretty well. We know each others crap and still hang out. We don't let the crap stop us having fun.

It's important for women to have friends they can rely on and open up to. Men don't understand that stuff. They don't get that we just need to talk about it and have someone listen. They're geared to fix our problems but women know that we don't always need it fixed, we just need to talk it out and we can often fix it ourselves once we've processed it. Of course, sometimes they ARE our problems…

I know these ladies have helped to keep me sane. Well mostly sane ☺ I have many, many friends and I'm so lucky for that… but these chicks just get me.

Are You a Short Order Cook?

May 28, 2012

Lately I have gotten very tough in the kitchen, I'm no longer cooking separate meals. Not that I really did it too much but with the kids older now, their palettes are changing anyway and they are enjoying more varieties of foods.

Whatever I serve is what they eat. If they don't eat it then they will be hungry. My new saying is "This is what's for dinner, dinner time is now". If they don't eat it and say they're hungry at bedtime, I tell them breakfast is at 7.

Miss Gremlin is the one that this is affecting the most but she's getting there. This might sound mean and you might think "But they need to eat something". My theory is no child will deliberately starve themselves and if you continue to serve healthy foods they will just eat it, eventually. There are plenty of tactics kids use to get out of eating something they don't want to. They'll say they're full after 2 bites or they'll fill up on drink. They might even fein exhaustion.I say that's fine, I'll save it for later if you're hungry. That way they know that this is what they'll be eating so they might as well just eat it. Of course if your child is used to getting what they want and eating very little in the way of variety then you have a bit of work to do but it can be done, slowly change the way you do things and keep offering everything. I have a friend who used to use lots of small bowls for her kids meals, so it didn't look so overwhelming on the plate. This worked great and I did it with my kids for a long time as I transitioned them. You can then also make sure they're getting a little of everything to eat. The best part is that the kids think they are getting a "special courses" meal!

An example might be a small bowl of soup, some salad or fruit, then a small amount of protein and veges. It can actually be a really fun dinner time when they eat like that. It's a great way to transition from toddler to preschooler, where their culinary experiences often consist of mac and cheese and chicken nuggets.

If you think the fight is all too hard then try hiding the veges in things like mac and cheese (add pureed sweet potato or cauliflower) and in pasta sauce (hide pureed carrot and zucchini) There are many books on the market to show you how this can be achieved. I like Deceptively Delicious and The No Cry Picky Eater Solution: Gentle Ways to Encourage your Child to Eat-and Eat Well.

I've tried all these different ways and now that they're 11 and 8 I have just gone the hard line… I try to plan food that would be yummy to them anyway but always with nutritious content and balanced carb, protein and veges.

Rather than making chicken nuggets, stuff a chicken breast with pepperoni, cheese and sun dried tomatoes, crumb it and put in the oven. Try sweet potato fries or oven wedges rather than conventional fries. Make mini quiches with diced ham/bacon and cheese. Small changes can be easily achieved to get them to eat better while still enjoying "their kind of food".

Grand Master D

May 28, 2012

Grand Master D has just headed off out the door to the movies with his friends. He'll be out for hours, unsupervised with his friends. I'm not worried at all, nope not me.

(quietly freaking out in the corner) What can possibly go wrong! He has a phone, knows his address and is very sensible. I really am pretty comfortable, his friends are good kids.

I have to trust that we're doing a good job and he knows how to handle himself. That's something I do have confidence in. ☺

A Little Bit of Conspiracy

May 29, 2012

Do you ever read material that freaks you out? I have been reading a lot of material about, food, cancer, vaccines, government strong arm tactics etc and the things I am finding are scaring the crap out of me. So much so I have to stop for a little while because I'm feeling myself becoming paranoid and I want to just run into the woods, build a house and go off the grid. ☺

There are so many things that are wrong in our society and it's all driven by big companies and profit with little to no regard for human cost or welfare.The more you look, the more you find. An example is an article I read about a texas family whose child was diagnosed with lymphoma and they wanted to seek alternative medicine. They believed, as I do, that conventional treatment of cancer is actually more damaging that the disease itself. Well this family have gone through hell because the doctors charged the family with medical neglect and child protective services took all their children away, forced chemotherapy onto the girl and refused the parents access to their child during treatment. Now if that doesn't freak you out what does? How do we even fight something like that? Does this mean our rights mean nothing? It's illegal to refuse to have your child poisoned?

Vaccinations are being forced on an unsuspecting public. It's been proven time and again that some vaccines are in fact worse than the disease they are guarding against, not to mention that they contain mercury and other harmful chemicals. You have a right not to vaccinate, you also have a right to free education, however if you refuse to vaccinate your children you are told you cannot send your children to school. This is actually not the case but it is not publicised and most people don't know so they just toe the line. This concerns me because they are talking about making gardasil (HPV vaccination) compulsory for 11-12 yo girls, even though there have been increased instances of bad side effects and related deaths. They even want boys to have it. Now that is just ludicrous. Boys don't even have a cervix so how can they get cervical cancer? DUH.

I will not be vaccinating Miss Gremlin with the drug. I will be teaching her how to avoid contracting it instead. The vaccination doesn't even cover all of the strains of HPV so why bother. My fear is that by the time she's 11 there will be little choice.There are currently bills in the NY senate trying to make it compulsory. Although I will fight hard because I don't believe it's necessary. HPV is treatable and takes a long time to develop into cervical cancer.

When Grand Master D had to have his DTap booster this year it was terrible. He had 10 days off school with fever and headaches. He was given the adult dose because that is what is scheduled. He's not even close to adult size. I was furious this happened. I have since read articles of other children having similar reactions.

It's the second time I've been strong armed here in the US into unnecessary

vaccinations. When Grand Master D was 5 he had to have extra vaccinations because his 1 yr old shots were given 6 days before his first birthday and they couldn't be entered into the computer. How insane, he was covered but bureaucracy overruled it. In fact it could have been more dangerous because he was effectively having extra doses.When Miss Gremlin was required to have a second varicella shot, I refused saying she'd had one AND got chicken pox from it, so insisted on a blood test for immunity instead. She had a high level of immunity of course.With each instance I'm getting wiser and from now on I will fight everything because I now know there are options.Being informed is so important.

We are being over immunised for little gain. Half the diseases have died out to an extend anyway and therefore all the vaccination is doing is making billions for the drug companies and affecting countless thousands of individuals.

Free speech is being eroded, our food is full of pesticides, hormones and fillers. Traditional farmers are being arrested at gunpoint and their live stock slaughtered. Producers of raw milk are treated like criminals. None of these actions are for the benefit of the people and better health. It's all about big profit. GMO's are going to be our normal. Natural food will be gone, natural ways to grow food and produce animals for consumption will be outlawed. All of this is going on now and the mainstream media is not reporting any of it.

Do you know it took almost a month before the New York local media even covered the Occupy Wall St protests? It wasn't until international sources started reporting about it that it even got any airtime.

Here's a kicker, we all know about thalidomide and the terrible birth defects it caused in the 50's and 60's. Well I read an article that has it back on the market for treatment of leprosy and AIDS among other conditions. Did we not learn our lesson?

Maybe this all sounds like conspiracy hogwash, why would we be made guinea pigs, why would the government play with our health? Do your own research, be informed. Question everything. I will no longer be led blindly because it's what we're expected to do. Government power is getting too big and our rights are being eroded before our very eyes.

Ok that's my conspiracy rant … I feel better now. Watch out for those aliens hiding among us though ☺

Resourced articles:

naturalnews.com/medicalbullying
naturalnews.com/gardasildeaths
http://www.nvic.org/vaccines-and-diseases
www.disaboom.com/thalidamide
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/occupy-wall-street-raid-journalists-arrested

Everything is exercise.

May 29, 2012

Today's tall order task was to wash the dog. The King and Miss Gremlin went for a 2 1/2 hour walk in central park yesterday. It was hot, over 100F. Poor TD was exhausted, although really enjoyed swimming in any and every water source available to him, including the boat basin! When they got home they were all covered in



stinky grey mud but being that it was 6pm I knew washing him was not a great idea. Wet dog is not a desirable thing at night. So I slated it for today…I set up with the hose, the shampoo and lots of energy. TD is a Leonberger and has a double coat, so every wash is quite an extravaganza. I am pleased the weather was warm and sunny. I was able to get my vitamin D allocation while washing the dog. Bonus! Anyway it's quite the workout and takes about an hour including all the brushing involved…I burned 200 calories!

He's now clean but we're both exhausted and laying down to recover. Workout done, check…dog passed out , check…naptime anyone? I'll get back to ya.

House Guests

May 30, 2012

Living in a different country affords you the dubious privilege of all manner of house guests. Anyone and everyone you've ever known wants to come to stay with you and visit the new country. Of course there are certain people who are welcome anytime, any place, best friends and family.

Sometimes you find yourself in a position where you have guests you didn't expect. I don't mind at all, I enjoy all manner of company but The King does not enjoy sharing his space. He doesn't like to stay at other people's homes either.

When I know people are coming I always send an extensive list of needs so as to get some tastes of the homeland. I just tell the impending guest it's "rent". So far it's worked a treat, my timtams, vegemite and nurofen plus supply is ferried in by all manner of "mules" ☺ Consider yourself warned.

We went through a stage where we had so many house guests that the kids would get up in the morning and there'd be a person sleeping in the pull out bed and they wouldn't know who it was. I always try to let them know now so they don't get worried, although they are used to it anyway.

It's all part of the "rent" at Planet-Mills, having the kids check you out while you sleep and TD the dog getting on you in the mornings. Let's not mention the feel up at the airport ☺ Yep it's still a darn sight cheaper than a New York hotel. Seems reasonable to me!

Paleo dinner

May 30, 2012

Last friday night I made the yummiest dinner. Roasted root vegetables (parsnips,sweet potatoes and carrots) cut into sticks tossed in olive oil and fresh herbs. Sauteed peppers

and onions, stirfried brussel sprouts with onion, craisins and walnuts, drizzled with balsamic vinegar and honey. The King grilled the steak. Total paleo meal, reasonably quick and easy to make. I forgot to take pictures. DOH… next time.

But here's what you need:

2 carrots
2 parsnips
2 sweet potatoes teaspoon fresh chopped herbs (whatever you have avail) olive oil

Cut vegetables into sticks half inch thick, toss in oil and herbs, roast in oven approx 40 mins, turn occasionally to cook evenly.

10 Brussel sprouts
small onion
olive oil
1/2 cup walnuts
1/3 cup craisins
balsamic vinegar
honey

Cut brussels into thick slices, finely chop onion, saute both in olive oil until browned, crush walnuts, toss in with craisins. Mix balsamic vinegar and honey together and drizzle into pan. Stir to coat, serve. Season with sea salt and ground black pepper.

Peppers and onions are self explanatory ☺

Breakfast 5/27
May 31, 2012

This morning I made the most devine omelette. I used:

1 scallion
1 mushroom
Some finely chopped red pepper
Half a sweet Italian sausage with the skin removed
Half an avocado
4 cherry tomatoes
2 eggs

Method Chop up all ingredients and sautй in small pan with oil until sausage is cooked. Push ingredients to one side, add egg mixture. Roll around pan until covered, creating a very thin layer of egg. When egg is mostly done flip thin layer over ingredients. Top with avocado and cherry tomatoes season with salt and pepper.



The Empty Box

June 1, 2012

The King went to Spain the other week. Great trip, excellent business, much Tapas and wine was consumed. Upon his return he brought with him some interesting Spanish concepts and phrases.

First thing he did when he walked in the door was to turn on the tv so he could hear some English, he was clearly fretting for the language. Then he distributed the gifts he bought at the airport in Madrid. Yes he's a last minute airport gift shopper and we love every one of them :P but I digress, back to the concepts. One of the concepts he brought back was the Empty Box. Now this took some explaining but basically this is it. Life is compartmentalised. The work box, the party box, the sporting box. You get the idea. When you need a break you go in the empty box, it's empty, there's nothing there, nothing to do.

No one can join you in the empty box. It's your empty box. You get to relax, rejuvenate and do nothing. It's really just a state of mind, not a physical place but a description of how you feel. You go there to clear your mind and get yourself ready for the next onslaught of life.

Last night I went to the empty box. Things have been really hectic lately and I was feeling quite harried, physically and emotionally. You know that feeling when you have nothing left to give? When you've been working too hard and just need a break, that's when you go to the Empty box ☺

A silly concept but in fact I felt much better this morning, so maybe the empty box has merit. I think I'll adopt it. Thanks Jorge ☺

Canadians Ey?

June 2, 2012

During the trip to Ottawa, Canada to get our O1 visas (Aliens of extraordinary ability, that's important), we had some problems. First job was to drive 10 hours with an 18 month old and a 5 year old. This was a little easier than previous road trips because Santa brought a dvd player ☺ We hit the road 2 days after Christmas 2005, leaving everything we'd accumulated in our 100 year old stone cottage by the lake, to go get legal. Now when you leave the country, there's no guarantees you'll get those sort after visas, so we went on faith.

The road trip, thankfully, was mostly uneventful. I say that because I really don't remember too much about it. Although I do remember seeing the Northern Lights in the sky just before we crossed the border. They were very beautiful.

We arrived in Ottawa, mid winter, it was freezing. It's one of those bilingual cities. All the traffic signs were in French and English, which we found strange. Being travel worn we found a hotel close to the embassy and settled in. Our appointment was at 8am the next morning. When I say appointment, everyone has an 8am appointment and it's first come first served like most Government departments. The next morning we were up early to get ourselves organised and planned to walk the 200 metres down the road. We got down to the lobby with everything and The King decided we should get the camera and sight see after our appointment. I sat in the lobby with the kids

while The King went back up to the room to retrieve it. Now at the time I was still rather distressed about the whole move and I thought that I should get the kids up and ready and wait outside to get moving quicker. (That's the people pleaser coming out). What I didn't realise was that The King had left his briefcase with me beside the chair I was sitting in. He didn't say anything about it. I got up and bundled the kids out the door and waited…

The King came and questioned my decision. I said I was trying to be helpful, then he said where's my briefcase???? My heart sank, the next 20 minutes were a disaster. All our documents, passports and $1000 cash to pay for our visas were in the brief case. We went immediately back into reception but of course no one saw anything. They were very unhelpful, actually quite rude. So there we were, late for our appointment, with no papers, no money and possibly stuck in Canada until we could get new passports!

I was totally freaked out, The King was really angry and it was a mess. Eventually the concierge came back from his break and we were able to ask if anyone had handed in a brief case. Of course 9/11 was still very fresh in people's minds and anything sitting around for even a second unattended was swooped on and that's what had happened. The concierge after a lengthy search found our briefcase. It was still locked and everything was still inside.

That's when I fell apart. I suppose the relief set me off. I was a mess walking to our appointment. I apologised, when really it wasn't my fault. It was a miscommunication however there was a lot of over compensating on my part of making sure everyone else was happy and taken care of that I forgot to take care of me. It's how I handled bad situations. I know now that I was still suffering from post partum depression, I was also very upset about moving to the US. It was a tough time but I've learned how to look after me better since then ☺

We got ourselves to the Embassy and thanks to a very noisy 18 mth old Miss Gremlin, got our visas reasonably quickly and left ….but the story doesn't end there. Miss Gremlin's visa was missing her middle name, now that doesn't see like a big deal but we weren't taking any chances with future bureaucracy, so The King went back in and we had to return the next day to retrieve the amended visa.

Pleased to be legally able to return to the US we relaxed a little and had a bit of a look around Ottawa.The extra day enabled us to find a vegemite supply and chat with some Aussies, so all was not lost. It is a really beautiful place albeit really freaking cold. The following day we began the trek back to our little cottage by the lake and all our worldly posessions. We didn't hurry, we took a couple of days, stopping in Montreal and Boston along the way.

Each step along this relocation journey has given us unusual situations to deal with. Getting our visas was just the beginning. The red tape is astounding. It's a wonder anything gets done but it does so I guess it works.

School's Almost Out

June 3, 2012

It's been a hectic year, school has had the better part of me since September. I became the PTA treasurer, yeah I know , what was I thinking? Well clearly Iwasn't. It's a bigger job than you think. Yesterday saw the culmination of 6 months of work. Our biggest

fund raiser of the year, the Spring Carnival. This year it was a circus theme. All last week we had terrible weather reports. We thought on thursday we might have to cancel it all. Some of us were secretly hoping this would happen… Don't judge us , it's been tough ☺. Being in the school for 13 hours a day is a little intense.

However the weather God's prevailed and we had an extremely successful carnival, making lots of money for the school and everyone seemed to have a great time. Oh there's always someone complaining and there's always someone saying you should have done this or that. Ultimately though, we rocked and all of us are very glad it's over! Come Monday I will be back to mummy and that's it. There will be clean laundry every day, there will be food in the house and prepared meals at the right times.I could even make cupcakes ☺ …My family have been very supportive and understanding at my absence but the comment was made this morning by the King, "So you don't think you could cope working full time?" I answered with a very firm "NO WAY!" I have great admiration for the career/working mum but I am forever grateful and thankful that I am able to be a stay at home mum and that I can commit time to help at my children's school.

Today however I hurt all over and I need to just relax. Cocktails and bubble baths for me……. once I go grocery shopping, do the laundry for the uniforms and go to the 2 o'clock kids party! Yep I'm relaxing today. Can't you tell?

The Political Machine

June 4, 2012

I don't pretend for even a minute that I understand US politics. It's so different from the Westminster system I learned in school and understand from England and Australia. There is so much to know, so many factions that it's difficult to even know who to support. The lines are so blurred it makes your head spin. Unfortunately from what I can see the Presidential race is based on the most popular person, with the most money, wins. It really has nothing to do with what they can achieve because they all promise the earth and mostly fail miserably once they obtain office. Why can't the party decide who their leader will be, who can do the best job.

We have been here for 2 presidential campaigns now and it just takes so long that I believe the public tunes out! I know I'm totally bored with it all and the election isn't even until November.We don't even have the candidates yet. The money it takes for their campaigns could do so much good for so many people. I know it's private money but it still seems so wasteful.

It's quite disheartening that politics really boils down to the lobbyists and how much money they give to get things done. Someone said to me recently politicians should have to wear their sponsors on their clothes like race car drivers. That way people know who is giving them money to supposedly make decisions for the good of the people. I think it's a great idea. Either way they'll never go hungry or have to bargain with a pharmacist for their medications. They are set up for life, while their constituents can't feed, clothe or house themselves. The homeless rate is climbing, as is the unemployment rate and the poverty rate. I've heard it said that the state of a nation is measured by way they treat their elderly, children and sick. This country has largely turned it's back on those groups for the almighty dollar. It makes me sad to see so many people unable to make ends meet.

Big Pharma/Health insurance companies, The Gun Lobby and Cigarette companies pay obscene amounts of money to get what they want. Imagine if that money was actually used for the good of the people, to cure cancer, to make a free health service for all, a well funded, successful free education system and healthy school lunches. It's a utopia to dream of.

Somewhere along the way the honestly and integrity was smothered in money and we have scandals so regularly that we don't even care anymore. Corruption is rife. Meanwhile the country is getting into more debt than it'll ever get out of and our rank in the world is slipping.

I don't know what the answer is and I don't know if it will ever change but I do know the system in it's current form really doesn't work very well.

I pray the right people get in with for the right reasons and can turn this great country around for the future of our children and grand children but I don't expect to see it in my lifetime. It no longer seems to be for the people by the people but for the few who have the most.

I am a lucky one because I have the ability to leave, many don't and they get stuck in a rut, sometimes for generations. It must feel so hopeless to be stuck and no matter how hard you try you can't get out.

So come November whoever becomes "Leader of the Free World" I hope they can make this country great again for everyone.

Manners, free to give away … barely used.

June 5, 2012

Where have our manners gone? Are they not being taught anymore? People are so rude, so ignorant and quick to push in front. What's the deal? Have we become so busy and so stressed that we don't have the time to say please and thank you? It's quite disgusting. I stand in take-out stores here in Harlem all the time and people push in front of you and then say to the cashier… "Gimme…" whatever they're ordering. It's so rude. They treat the server like dirt. I often say please when they finish, mostly if it's kids cos I don't wanna get bashed or shot but it's really bad. ☺

People will cut in front of you walking down the street, in queues, just about anywhere. They bump into you and push you out of the way in some instances. Just look at the black friday sales to see the bad behaviour.

The other day I was going into the bank, it was Sunday so the doors were locked and you have to swipe your card for them to open. It had just started raining and 3 people were trying to get in out of the rain. They were clearly not bank customers but were going to use the vestibule as shelter. Firstly I had to say excuse me so I, a bank customer, could gain access. When I swiped my card they pulled the door open and pushed infront of me! So rude. No thank you or holding the door or anything. Now I don't expect any special treatment but that was downright unacceptable. Then upon my exit, these riffraff were again blocking the door. So I very loudly said excuse me and they again walked out infront of me. While they were in the bank they were cursing up a storm, there were others in there using the machines and myself , with Miss Gremlin. I'm no prude, I say rude words too but do try not to infront of children.

These people couldn't have cared less.Very disappointing people.

Now please tell me, what's with the spitting? It drives me crazy! People just spit right on the ground infront of you all the time. Even well dressed women walking in their heels and beautiful dresses. It's the most perplexing thing. It's so gross, yet so common. I don't know if it's a cultural thing or not but I find extremely offensive. It all just makes me glad to escape for the summers.

I will continue to be thoughtful and caring and polite and well mannered and teach my children the same. Perhaps, perhaps it may even rub off. One can only hope.

Heartwarming food

June 6, 2012

The weather has turned and it's time to cook a yummy heartwarming stew. There's nothing better than the house smelling like slow cooked food.

Tonight we'll be having our favourite irish beef stew. Old family recipe but I'm willing to share.

2lbs stewing beef 1 sweet potato chopped in inch squares 4 carrots sliced 2 parsnips sliced 2 onions roughly chopped 1 can tomatoes (840ml) basil 1 can baked beans 1 red or green pepper garlic 2 cans champignons jalepeno or chilli to taste 1/4 cup tomato ketchup tbsp HP sauce tbsp Worcestershire sauce salt and ground pepper

There's no real method , brown the meat first then just throw it all in the pot, add some water to cover it then bubble the crap out of it for about 2-3 hours. Stirring occasionally to make sure it doesn't stick. Serve with crusty bread or not if you're eating paleo.



The Grammar Police

June 7, 2012

OMG! Working in a school with children is so interesting and frustrating at the same time. I work with kindergarten and 2nd grade each week and the way some of them speak is atrocious. "I don't got no milk". How do you even begin to work with that? And I hear things like that all the time. Last week I corrected a 6th graded who said "My pen don't work". Really, 6th grade? I feel like the grammar police but it is very important to speak correctly. You sound uneducated when you don't. Unfortunately the art of grammar is losing it's grip. The skills of the past, manners and grammar

among others are just being left behind and we're becoming or should I say have become people only concerned about the here and now and ourselves. It's a sad world in that regard.

I'm gonna do what I can to make sure my children always use their manners and speak properly.

The Chaperone Experience

June 8, 2012

Today was one of the many field trips for the kids winding down to the end of the year. I went along as a chaperone, as I have many times before. This trip was to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge and have ice cream from the Brooklyn Ice Cream Factory. Let me tell you that walking across the Brooklyn Bridge is like taking your life in your own hands!

The bicyclists don't play, they are quite aggressive and get agitated if you get in their way. It's a walk of chaos. You can imagine how it might look, wandering second graders, white lines, speeding bicyclists. This time there were no injuries but I can see how injuries could quite easily happen. Let's just saying walking with school kids anywhere is like herding cats. Extremely frustrating and not very rewarding. We had spectacular weather and beautiful views, however like all trips they feel rushed and you really don't get time to soak it all in. I know the trip was wasted on many of the kids today, by the time we were half way across they were whining about being tired and hungry.



I enjoyed the walk, it was great exercise. I enjoyed the ice cream, it was a lovely treat and I enjoyed the view. The day was well spent and I am totally exhausted but all in all pleased I went ☺



Camping? The Beach? I don't think so

June 9, 2012

We are not a camping family. We like our creature comforts, we're never far from internet and enormous televisions. The kids just love to go to 5 star hotels. Since Grand Master D was little he was always the room checker, we'd let him go in first to see if it was acceptable. Now I know what you're thinking.. we were training a hotel snob but it was very cute when he was 2. Now both Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D check out the rooms and bounce on the beds, just to make sure ☺ Is that wrong? Nah it's expected and what you pay those crazy prices for.

We recently went on a trip to Atlantic City with the family. It was spring break and we needed some time out of New York. We went during the week because the rates were cheaper for the same $300 a night room. We don't gamble, so it really works for us because the gamblers subsidize our stay. We enjoyed mini golf, go carts and paintball shooting.

The King has trouble with laying on the beach. He's really not an outdoors kinda guy. No camping, no beach etc. He's not afraid of working in the yard at all but for his leisure time he doesn't want to be on a sandy, windy, sticky beach. Unless of course there's bikini girls but that's another story ☺ However we might have found the perfect beach. We went wandering in the pier shopping centre and upstairs in the restaurant section found this little gem. Now just outside the windows to the right is the real thing but this is air conditioned and close to a bar and there's no flies or noisy kids running around kicking balls and sand in your face. It's the best of both worlds. And of course as you all know I never use it… no sunscreen required!



Secret Women's Business

June 10, 2012

Don't you just love it when you're sitting down with the family enjoying a lovely evening of television viewing and then all of a sudden the ads start. You know the ones I'm talking about. The ones that make you squirm. Yes I'm talking about feminine products. Ok we all use them but seriously do we really need to be marketed to? We have our brands, we use what works for us and I'm fairly sure none of those stupid ads make you want to switch. Some things just don't require advertising.

Not so very long ago I went on a crazy buying spree because my particular favourite product had been discontinued. Yes it was a little irrational but when you start using a product at 13 then you have a connection ☺ I went all over the city buying whatever I could find. It turns out my buying spree was totally unnecessary because although there was a shortage for some inexplicable reason, shelves have been restocked and the world is back in the right order. During that time though,

I never once used advertising to pick another product. I just went to the store and bought a different box.

Once upon a time these products were only advertised after a certain time of evening after the children were long in bed. There were no questions about what they were about.

We shouldn't have to explain to our young children what vagisil is at 3pm watching a movie. Although I have no problem explaining it, I personally would rather not have to sit through any type of feminine product commercials at any time of day or night.

But now of course, we are bombarded by products like vagisil, nuvaring, many and varied tampons and sanitary pad ads. Even KY products. These ads are just weird. Let's be honest they're totally bogus! Nobody feels like swimming, surfing and playing tennis at 'that' time of the month. All you wanna do is curl up in bed with lots of pills and junk food.

I'm sure men don't really want to be subjected to these ads either. Grand Master D tries to tune out and Miss Gremlin always has a weird look on her face. It's secret women's business right? When you need your husband/boyfriend/partner to shop for you, I'm sure you're extremely specific as to which brand you want.It's almost apart of your identity. They don't need to recall ads to buy your tampons. That'd just be weird. (yeah I went there) I make sure I am always stocked up so such an occasion need never arrive ☺

I don't know the answer. I don't know how else the companies can make their sales margins and frankly I don't care. Every woman between 12-50+ yrs use these products so they really have a captive market. Until something completely different arrives on the market all the products are pretty much the same, like diapers (nappies). Maybe some work better than others but that's up to you to work out. You can't find the best product by watching a tv ad of a woman in a white lab coat pouring blue liquid on a pad. Dah! Some things are just trial and error, no way around it.

Check out Summer's Eve Hail to the V campaign. It's the most ludicrous thing I've seen on tv. They can't be serious. I haven't seen it in a while, so maybe they pulled it. It's a bit degrading actually. Not to mention using products like that aren't even very good for you according to OB/GYN's. Anyway you judge for yourself.

The proposed RV Trip

June 11, 2012

For some time now the King has been saying we should go on a road trip in an RV,(recreational vehicle) not unlike the Robin Williams movie RV. The Princess lives in trembling fear of this and we use it against her all the time. ☺ Bad parents. Of course I think it would be totally crazy driving across the country couped up in a large bus type vehicle with The King, The Princess (cos she's not getting out of it) Grand Master D, Miss Gremlin and Sir Lickalot the dog! Can you imagine it? I shudder… I suppose it would be a great way to see the countryside however I think it would be a hard way to live. Cooking, and doing laundry being the most difficult, then of course there's the close quarters sleeping arrangement. It certainly would be one way to get the kids used to the nocturnal symphony of the King ☺

The latest incarnation of this idea is to go for an extended period of time, say 6 mths and home school the children. Yes you read right, long time, home school… Can

you picture my reaction? I know he's just stirring me. I said straight out have a nice time I'll stay here and look after the apartment. But now when he mentions it I just smile and wave ☺

I'm not really sure how it would actually go with the King, seeing he has such an aversion to camping. Imagine if we drove into a no internet zone! HA

The movie was on yesterday and it makes me laugh every time we watch it. I can see the similarities with our family and can totally relate, knowing that if we ever end up on the road across the country in an RV it will be like the sequel.

Breakfast 6/11

June 11, 2012

This morning I thought scrambled eggs might be nice, now of course they're simple to do and anything can go into them so recipes are not really required.

What you need:

Eggs and whatever you want to add.

In today's fare I added bacon, scallions, roasted red pepper.

To make sure it's paleo omit milk.

I scrambled 5 eggs together with sea salt and coarse ground pepper. I was cooking for The King as well.









A Paleo breakfast of champions… top it off with coffee (black of course) and you have the quintessential protein start to the day.

Tweens

June 12, 2012

Moving into the tween almost teen years is really testing my resolve. I am going to have to hit the books to solve these problems. I've got the sleeping, tantrum little kid thing down but this age is all new to me and it's hard.

I battled for an hour this morning with Grand Master D who insisted he was sick but I didn't really feel he was sick enough to stay home. He's had way too much time off school and his grades are suffering. So this morning I had the tough love going on big time. I made him walk to school, he cried all the way saying he felt like he wanted to vomit, which of course he didn't. I made him sit in the office and have a drink of water to calm himself (by this point he'd worked himself up to hyperventilating). I thought that if he was seen by many he might suck it up and get on with the day. My plan wasn't working so I took him upstairs and we sat in the assistant principal's office for almost an hour. I was trying to get him to calm down, which he did until someone came in and then he'd start again. He has a clear grasp on the dramatic that's for sure. In the end unfortunately he won out, only because I had commitments elsewhere and I had to get on with my day.

I know there's something affecting him and it's manifesting itself in the physical but he won't spill it. He is never sick on the weekends, naturally. I am thinking the transition from elementary school to middle school is a little more than he can cope with but I don't know how to fix it for him. I really can't anyway. He has to do it. After I took him home, I came back and saw his teacher and got all the work he needs to catch up on and he will be catching up. I made him complete tasks today.

Next year is only going to be tougher and I know he needs to be pushed. I am discovering he has a tendency to not finish things, he starts many projects and never finishes. This is a habit I need to guide him out of and quickly because I know that it will affect his life if he doesn't have the capacity to follow through with things.

I welcome any advise from any parent who's been through these years and survived it because right now I'm lost. I don't know if punishing is the answer or maybe it's sitting with him and helping him learn better study techniques, either way something has to give. I feel like a mean mummy but this can't go on, my sanity is on the line ☺

It certainly has been a hard year all round.

Paleo Breakfast 6/13

June 13, 2012



This morning I felt like an egg change. I haven't had poached eggs for a long time, so I set about making those. You know, water in pan, then eggs let them bubble until the yolk goes opaque. Some people put vinegar in the water, I've never done that. It doesn't seem necessary. Though I could be wrong ☺

Now eating poached eggs without toast is tough but of course toast is not paleo so I decided to top it with an avocado, tomato, onion salsa. This is a simple breakfast, quick

and easy to make and very yummy. The avocado I chose was a little brown in spots but still tasted good and the result is the same.

Coffee was definitely required this morning. I'm feeling every second of hump day today.

I Beat the Black Dog… for Now.

June 13, 2012

I have been feeling really low and moody and angry for the last few days. The black dog sure has been chasing me down.

I have been struggling with my duties at the school, I have been struggling to get Grand Master D to commit to a full week of school each week. I have been struggling with the kids fighting all the time and just dealing with day to day issues. I'm tired, frustrated and can't sleep. Even cooking, shopping and cleaning seemed too difficult. I have been stepping away and avoiding it all. And I couldn't work out why. Hmmmm……

It hit me this morning like a hammer. I have been forgetting to take my fish oil pills! Aha moment. Ok, so no wonder I'm feeling overwhelmed, tired, sleepless and generally frazzled. Silly girl. The fish oil which has been holding my depression at bay, keeping me sane and on even ground can't do it's job from the kitchen drawer. How dumb am I? But things *have* been busy, hectic and out of control. Can you blame me for forgetting. We've had people staying, lots of business entertaining, school activities have been busy for the end of year. Now I am suffering the consequences. You can only hold on for so long.

I took the fish oil this morning and with continued use, in a few days I should start to feel better. I'm going to go out on a limb and call this absolute proof that pharmaceutical grade fish oil helps fight depression. I know it works because I had been doing really well and feeling quite normal for a long time while I was taking them.

I'm very pleased I've saved the day ☺ ……and found my sanity in the drawer.

So that's it, I've solved it… give up your happy pills with all the side effects, you don't need them. You just need to remember the fish oil.

Every Cloud has a silver… OH BAH!

June 14, 2012

Are you a positive person or a negative person? Do you see the bright side of everything, the silver lining or do you tend to be pessimistic and negative about everything? I have to admit I tend to go to the pessimistic side. Always have. I try very hard to be positive and look for the good in everything and everyone but I think my nature is to see what can happen when it goes bad.



How does a relationship blend when you have a positive and a negative, now we know the science, the yin and yang but do you live with a positive, upbeat everything is awesome Tigger type person or do you live with an Eeyore?



The King is certainly in the Tigger category. Always happy, positive and upbeat. To the point of distraction some days… you just want to shake him and say, stop being so damn positive! He tops this off by saying he has no choice because he has the B positive blood group… (groan).

How can I possibly wallow in my Eeyore misery with all that positiveness. It's positively distracting.. hehe.

Our relationship works although we are polar opposites because I am very good at grounding the King whenever he gets carried off with his marvelous ideas, which is often and he is great at kicking me out of my wallowing pity party even if I would rather stay right there in it. Over the many years we've been together we've worked out how to help each other cope with the issues we face. I don't even fight the wild crazy ideas anymore. I let them all flow because nine time out of ten they just run their course and we continue on. Sometimes, however I have to fight against the seemingly marvelous idea because I can see the catastrophic downfall ahead. Sometimes, I fail, like in the instance of the moving to New York idea, and we end up in New York. Not that it's been as bad as I had believed it would be. I quite like it here. Other times we dodge the bullet due to my cautiousness and overall mistrust of people. That takes me mildly off point but just go with it…

I have a very keen bulls**t meter. In our business life together I have never been wrong when I have negative feelings about someone. Often I can't explain what it is at the time, it's just a feeling. It can take some time for the true nature of the person to appear but when I say it in the beginning, it *always* come to fruition. Even now although I'm not so involved in the business, I go to dinners just to check out the person, sometimes The King will bring them home for the test. ☺ The King calls me his secret weapon. I see through it, even when they're really good at hiding it. There is just something about someone who is dishonest or untrustworthy. They ooze something I pick up on. Even though they may appear to be wonderful people outwardly.

The King has recently taken a body language course which has helped him enormously in weeding out the liars and cheats much quicker. As they say time is money, don't waste time on cultivating a relationship which won't work out, it's better to cut your losses and get the hell out before they take you for everything. And we've been there before!

Whichever way you move through life, optimistically or pessimistically, there'll be someone out there to counteract your effect. It's just how things are and were meant to be. (I always wanted to use that line)

Not So Paleo breakfast 6/14…Oh No, The King's in the Kitchen

June 14, 2012

The King has taken over the kitchen. The man needs food, he's on a mission. I stay as far away as I can… it's not safe ☺

Paleo has gone right out the window today but when you're hungry sometime ya just need some toast and beans. Now the man can get the job done, don't let anyone tell you any different. The presentation leaves a little, ok a lot to be desired but yes, he gets the job done. He isn't starving that's for sure.







Today's culinary feast consists of:

eggs
hot italian sausages
baked bean (maple syrup and bacon of course) and toast…
All in one pan cos dishes suck.

Proud Mummy

June 15, 2012

This time of year here in the US is end of school, things are winding down. It's all about field trips and fun days like pyjama day, silly shoe day, crazy hat day, sprinkler day, at least in 2nd grade. Today was the Award Ceremony. Miss Gremlin sat patiently as everyone received their individual awards.







I was in charge of getting pictures for a friend who was unable to attend for her 2 children as well as Miss Gremlin. So I'm busily clicking away wondering when my child is coming up…science went by, spelling and math too, when the teacher came around to tell me she saw me videoing everything and that Miss Gremlin was featured at the end for academic excellence in everything and she didn't want me to waste my time videoing the whole ceremony. That was so thoughtful, however I wasn't videoing, just clicking for 3 children ☺ and txting the pics to the absent mum. Her turn finally arrives and she cleans up, mind you today was silly shoe day so she accepted her awards and stood on stage with one sneaker and one school shoe, one knee sock and one ped sock. That's my girl! Music, Academic Excellence and Certificate of Achievement in All Subjects were her categories. Not bad, not bad.

Grand Master D, as I've previously discussed has had some troubles attending school due to one illness or another and his grades over this last marking period have reflected that. So with a mammoth task of catching up and submitting missing work, yesterday and today, he has raised 4 separate subject grades by three levels. He is currently pulling an 11 year old all-nighter (11pm) to finish off the last thing required. Come tomorrow morning the grades can be submitted to administration and he'll do well. Nothing like leaving things until the last minute, although he's proven he can do the work, now we just have to work on his organisation and health… Oh, he also received an Excellence in Reading Award. Awesome!

Yep I'm proud tonight. My kids are doing well. You can't ask for more than that.

Intro to…Hump Day Humour

June 15, 2012

Hump Day, a term I really hadn't heard until recently but have really adopted as my own. Hump Day for those not aware is Wednesday, Miercoles, Mercredi, Mercurii, Среда, Onsdag… anyway you get the picture. The middle of the week, the tough day, still so far from Friday.

For me Wednesday has always been hard, you've had to get up early for 2 days already and there's at least 2 more to go before you can stay in bed and sleep.

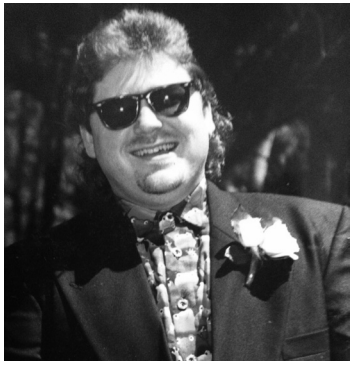
Hump Day Humour is a new spot dedicated to everyone who feels the pain of Hump Day. Each week I will post something to lift your spirits, make you laugh and help you make it to drink o'clock on Friday.

SO enjoy, share, if you have funnies send them in, I'll post them and let's make Hump Day something to look forward to.

See ya Wednesday!

10 Things Husbands Don't Get

June 16, 2012



As husbands go I think I've got a good one ☺ I have to say that of course cos he's the only one I've got. On a serious note though, he's a good man, he loves me and shows it by providing for the kids and I to the best of his ability.. and so far his ability is pretty damn awesome. He cares about our well being and our future. He does all the important man stuff required to keep a family happy, healthy and comfortable… And he's pretty damn sexy. Back off he's mine ☺

HOWEVER…and you knew that was coming right?!

Here are 10 things that husbands should know but no matter how many times we tell them, they're not retaining it. These are not specifically related to the King, Lord knows he's the perfect man ☺ but women talk you know and we listen to each other's complaints. Often commiserating together. It's purely a generalisaton with years of research…. phew, did I dodge that ok?

1. We love you more than anything, would do anything for you… except clean the toilet *every* day. There's a brush just right there. It's doesn't bite… use it.
2. You're so big and strong and handsome, why can't you open the dishwasher? It doesn't have a secret combination lock and the dishes go there without a fight. Same goes for the laundry in the laundry basket.
3. Your manly whiskers show us how sexy you are……except when they're *all* over the sink, stuck down with shaving cream. Eewww.
4. No matter what you think about science and experimentation… the towel will never dry on the bathroom floor, especially when it's covering wet, dirty underwear.
5. Why do you need to prove your multi-tasking ability with the remote? We love the ads, that's how we find out new products to buy for ourselves and exotic

holidays to go on and movies to watch to escape the monotony. We like that part in the movie that we've seen 15 times. Step away from the remote, stop channel surfing, we *hate* it.

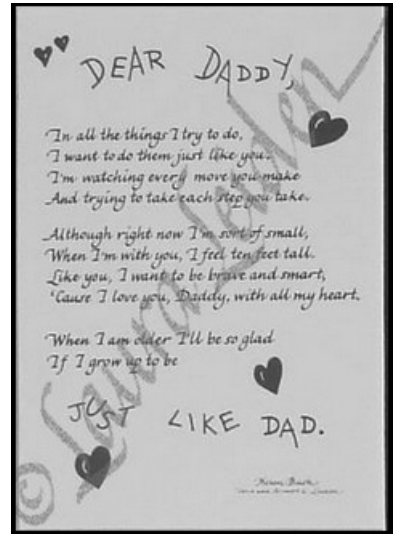
6. No we don't want to just make *you* feel good when we're crampy and cranky and generally off limits, no matter how 'quick' you promise to be, it's never quick enough! The native tribes had the right idea… send the women to the forest when it's their moon-time. LEAVE US ALONE.
7. Please remember to give us advance warning when you're bringing people over for drinks. If for no other reason than we'll wear something nicer than sweat pants and we'll skull something quick to 'get in the mood to be fabulous'. We can't all be Coretta Scott King you know.
8. Sleep is not for the weak, it's for the exhausted, frustrated, overworked, cranky, dribbling woman in the corner… let us have a sleep in occasionally. Not everyday but sometimes. The kids aren't that scary, we promise.
9. We *like* talking for hours on the phone to our mothers and friends, come on… we need to talk to someone ☺ and …
10. When we say we have a headache, we really DON'T want sex, even though you keep trying, we love you, don't be offended but we just need to sleep tonight.
11. (cos cool things go up to 11.) No you can't put *THAT* THERE, we're not that type of girl, even when we think we are cos we're shitfaced drunk a little tipsy. Sheesh.

Daddys are so Important

June 17, 2012

With USA Father's Day this weekend it reminds me how important Dad's are in their kids lives. A Dad is more than just the other half of the conception. Father's teach their children many things about life. Everything we do as parents affects our kids.

Some fathers spend lots of time teaching their children skills, playing with them and just being there. Some father's teach their children by the bad choices they make. Kids learn how to handle money, how to treat women and other people, how to behave in society from their fathers regardless of whether it's done well or not. The example you set won't necessarily be followed but it will be remembered.



If you save hard and work hard and love your children's mother, your children will likely follow suit because they see a father who cared about his family and strove to give them the best life he could. Who wouldn't want to emulate that. Of course if you are a drunk, beat your children's mother, refuse to provide for them, then children learn that too. Does that mean the next generation will behave the same? Unfortunately, sometimes. How can a child decipher good and bad behaviour from a father whom they love. They don't see it as

wrong, although deep down they may know it. A role model models a role. So if you play a bad role, maybe you're modelling that for you kids.

The King works very hard, well into the early morning hours many nights but he has the luxury of working from home, so when the kids get home from school, he's here. He can stop and have a chat, discuss the days events and be present in their lives. They don't need him to be there for very long… 15 minutes and everyone is good but that 15 minutes could just what is required that day to boost the kids up and let them know dad cares. I think it's a shame some father's only see their children on the weekends because they leave before the kids get up and return home after the kids have gone to bed during the week. Tough all round but I like to hope those dads do their best to make it up the best they can spending quality weekend time with the kids.

It's a tough job, I think dad's get a bum wrap. They are expected to be the family provider but also have time to spend with the children. Today where many households have both parents working the dad is often expected to help with household chores too. How does it look to your children? Does Dad help with the housework? cook dinner sometime? Even shop? It's a different world to navigate than our parents had where traditionally dad worked and mum stayed at home, tended house and did those things. I'm not saying it was the best way but a simpler way perhaps. Life has become so complicated.

Kids want time, oh they'll take the latest and greatest gadget as a guilt bribe, who wouldn't but what they really want is to do stuff with their dads. It's those special things I remember about my dad. Not what he provided or bought for me but the hours we spent at the back table talking about thing. The things he told me and shared. Things from his childhood and how his father behaved and how it shaped him as a man and father. It's where I learned to form opinions, he did a good job with that one right?!

There's another bum wrap… the divorced dad. How does that affect relations with kids? How hard it must be for dads to connect with their children when they only see them every other weekend or however the arrangement is set up. Not to mention not all divorces are amicable and let's face we women can be vindictive bitches… sometimes poisoning our children against their father. It's a modern world with many broken families, blended families, single parent families today.

I really feel it's important to have a strong positive male role model in your children's lives, especially if you have boys. How else can they learn to be a man and a dad. Society has changed and values have changed but our core instinct and fundamental behaviours, I think, remain the same and it's our jobs to provide positive role models for our children as best we can. If dad is not in the picture, maybe an uncle or close friend can step in and help teach those kids how a man behaves in the world. I think as a society we have a responsibility to help our children grow in a positive way. I yearn for the day that good adult role models come into my kids lives to support the work we as parents have done to teach and encourage our children to be good, happy, well adjusted, responsible adults. For some kids those role models are the only hope they have.

So don't forget Dads, although we may not always say it, we think you rock! Happy Father's Day to all those Dads out their doing the best they can for the little people they love. And to those Father's gone too soon we thank you for all you gave to us and the sacrifices you made.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY AMERICA

USA vs OZ

June 18, 2012



I've had a request to make some comparisons between living in the US and living in Australia. There are many and they are varied so I will pick the most obvious and crazy.

First of all let me clarify that New York isn't really the US, it's has a whole other set of rules. However in saying that it is still nothing like Australia.

Then I shall point out the obvious by saying you get in the other side of the car and drive it on the other side of the road… but if you're like me you just flip the whole experience in your brain. This caused no end of trouble when navigating. In Oz our left hand turns are a quick turn around the corner from the side of the road your driving on. In the US that's a right turn. The centre *(center)* turn to go right in OZ is to go left in the states…SOOOOO, when I said turn left, what I meant was turn right because my brain said the turn I will be making is just a slip around the corner turn and not a move to the centre *(center)* of the road turn. I was directionally challenged for about 6 months. I had to just point the way because I would mess it up every time. It was pretty funny but also quite frustrating for the King. We all had to relearn walking down the footpath *(sidewalk)* too because it works the same as driving. People tend to walk on the right and if someone is coming toward you then you move right when our natural instinct is to go left. There were a lot of excuse me's and sorry's in the early days walking down the street.

Driving in carparks (parking lots) is also a little odd because there's no traffic to remind you where you are and so you revert back to learned behaviour (*behavior)* which for me was driving on the left, lucky it was only a carpark and we were going slow. There have been some horrific accidents that I've heard of involving foreign drivers forgetting where they were and having head on collisions and it's really so easy to do.

You can't ask someone "How are you going?" because they take it literally and answer with the type of transportation they're using, what you need to say is "How are you doing?"and "Do you have sugar?" when asking about coffee needs to be "do you take sugar?" Have and take don't seem to be interchangeable here…have sugar, take sugar. 'Yes I have sugar but I don't take it in my coffee.' have a bath, take a bath. 'Yes I have a bath, would you like to use it to take a bath?'

Those are just funny little things that can make a conversation entirely strange to the other person. There are other examples but I can't quite bring them to mind.

Then of course you have to learn an entirely new measuring system by going back to the dark ages, where they use miles, feet, inches, fahrenheit, ounces, pints, gallons etc. I heard they tried to convert to metric in the 60's but it was all just too much to

handle. Leader of the free world? Ha, Sure as long as it's not measuring anything other than money!

Don't even get me started on the bastardisation of the Queen's English, p*ae*diatrician, gyn*ae*cologist, encyclop*ae*dia, behavi*ou*r, harb*ou*r, lab*ou*r, theat*re*, cent*re*, lit*re*, reali*s*ed, organi*s*e, recogni*s*e defen*c*e, pretence, licen*c*e the list is endless. I use what I grew up with and always show the children there's another way to spell some words. Throughout the article I have put both spellings and different names, where relevant, just as a comparison.

You can buy both cilantro and coriander over here. Cilantro is the fresh herb and coriander is the powdered ground seeds in the spice rack. It's the same thing, from the same plant, it's so confusing. It took me about 2 weeks to find out that chilli flakes are crushed red peppers. I asked people and nobody could help me. The thing that confused me most about that one was capsicums are peppers and not spicy chilli (chili) at all. Butternut pumpkins are squash here, so are zucchinis. So you eat butternut squash soup, not pumpkin.

Don't even try asking for cordial for the kids.. I did that in a supermarket in Indianapolis and the poor mum couldn't get away fast enough. Cordial in the US is liqueur, an alcoholic mixer for cocktails… oops! She must have thought I was crazy. Especially as I had Miss Gremlin *18mths* in the trolley *(shopping cart)* and Grand Master D *5* in tow.

There are some pretty cool things though. The cost of living is way cheaper in regard to food, clothing and appliances. Larger consumer base I guess. We are in the land that invented Walmart (which I love). Costco and other big box stores like Sam's Club and BJ's sell you more stuff and bigger than you can possibly imagine. *They're a little like Campbell's Cash n Carry.* Have you ever seen a 5kg *(10lb)* can of baked beans? I sure hadn't. Unfortunately it's always expensive because there's so much to buy! Who doesn't need 3 x 2litre bottles of tomato sauce *(ketchup)* in their groceries? We used to call it the $1000 shop because every time we went it would be $1000. We had to learn to curb that, now it's about $300-$400. One particular trip, The King came home with enough groceries to feed 20 people for a month, 3 bicycles and a 50" plasma tv. He forgot the lemonade and iron though. There is actually not much you can't get at Costco, food, clothing, paper goods, plastic goods, outdoor furniture, indoor furniture, electronics, jewellery *(jewelry)* office supplies, car tyres *(tires)*, enough ice cream to make you obese in one sitting ☺. We plan our trips and go less often just because there is so much to buy and honestly, not everything is better in bulk. The other problem is where to store it all. No problem for those with country houses or those who live in the suburbs but living in a New York apartment is not conducive to purchasing regularly in bulk stores. Just sayin'

If fashion is your passion, there are great stores like Marshall's, TJ Maxx and Burlington Coat Factory among others which sell designer clothing, shoes and handbags at *very* discounted rates. I love going there.There's great deals to be had. Even the Goodwill (second hand store chain) has all sorts of really cool stuff in it. If you pick the right area in the City, like Lower East Side, you can get real Prada for $5 if you're lucky. I have become a total convert to Goodwill shopping. You often find things brand new still with tags on.

I've touched on the prescription medication advertising in previous posts but when we arrived here The King was a bit anxious, to be expected, and the Lunesta butterfly ads were all over the tv. I guess Lunesta was a new sleep aid on the market. I'd also run out of phenergan for the kids. Lord knows you need that when you travel

across the other side of the world with little people. Jetlag so exists. So I walked into the rite-aid pharmacy which is more like a supermarket for personal product that also sells food, than a chemist. I looked around and not finding what I wanted I went to the counter and asked for lunesta and phenergan, well, let's just say I walked out empty handed. I was very strongly informed that those items were prescription only and I should go and see my doctor. I had no idea. It seemed so odd to us that companies could advertise those products directly to consumers but a doctor needed to write you a prescription to buy it. It made no sense, still doesn't and the advertising is out of control. Phenergan is an over the counter sedative/motion sickness preparation for children in Australia.

Everywhere we go people love Australians, they all wanna go there some day. Awesome, there's a plane leaving everyday ☺ Oh but it's so far! Well sure but it's not like you have to flap your arms, they feed you, give you beer and movies to watch. Then you sleep and wake up in Australia. Duh. Some can't distinguish where we're from, I've been called, British , New Zealand even South African… Huh? I'm not Sewth Efrekun, sheesh. People just want you to talk cos they love the accent. It's quite strange. I have learned in my interactions to always say something like "Hi, how are you?" before I ask for what I want in stores because otherwise people concentrate on how you sound rather than what you say and they'll say 'what?' or 'pardon' or 'sorry?' and I hate repeating myself. Because we look like the average white American, people aren't expecting us to sound different and it throws them off. It's little things like that you learn along that way which help to make life a little easier.

It's a different place, the pace is faster, the people are different but just as nice, although there seems to be a lot more sharks circling these waters, especially in business. The adjustment took time but we figured out things along the way and when we couldn't we asked. I don't import many things anymore, I can find a similar product here, except painkillers and vegemite. Those, I still have to import. You can't buy any product with codeine in it over the counter, so I'm still bringing in nurofen plus. You can even buy timtams in target these days,



Pepperidge Farm has licensed them, repackaged in their own packaging and selling them as Australia's favorite *(favourite)* cookie *(biscuit)*… Yes I cringed but hey I can buy them for $1.99 and that eases the pain.

referenced material:

English vs American English

Are We Bad Neighbours?

June 19, 2012

Over the years we've lived in some places where we've had *interesting* neighbours, and I suppose we've been interesting to live next door to as well, always having musicians coming and going and loud music pumping from the house. I remember when I lived on my own in Lavington,(BTK before the king) I was surrounded by people, let's just

say of lower socio-economic circumstances. These particular people would let their 18mth old twins out their door to play at 6am every day. Their door just happened to be right next to my bedroom window. They'd yell and scream, fight and cry, then the father would yell. Not very conducive to getting sleep after arriving home drunk at 3am, that's for sure. I was a little intimidated by him and so I complained to my management company rather than confront him … A few weeks later they were gone ☺ Yeah I get stuff done.

Later on I lived in another part of town, next to a very elderly lady, who's elderly son was a bit weird, he moved in after she died and was downright pervy…His mother used to feed my german shepherd over the fence, which I had to stop. He used to watch me from his back yard but I ignored him and he got the message after I extended the fence height.(to keep the dog in of course) Not sure what his motive was there but I think it could have been sinister.

Once we moved to Queensland, we lived in a few places before finally purchasing our home in Kingsway Dve. Now that street was an acreage street and although not rural, certainly not suburbia and many people didn't have fences although they had dogs. We luckily did have fences and were able to keep our 2 german shepherds safely behind them. However the dogs across the street used to come over very early, before anyone was up and harass our dogs through the fence. I'd have to get up and chase them home and it went on every morning for quite some time. Finally one morning, unbeknownst to us, one of our dogs escaped through the gate and attacked the little jack russell terrier that had taunted her for months. Good on her, I say… Well a couple of days later the doorbell rings and it's the neighbour from across the road, saying our dog got out and attacked their dog and the vet bill was 200 bucks and they wanted us to pay. I argued that their dogs had been taunting ours for months, since we moved in and we were always chasing them away early in the morning. She wasn't having that and I said sorry but I'll have to speak to my husband. Now the King was mightily pissed about it as we had put up with their dogs for a long time. He marched himself over in all his largeness and had a conversation with Mr. Neighbour, pointing out some home truths and that they should just pay for their own dog and we'll make sure ours don't get out again.The King came home and not another word was said about it ☺ Guess he was pretty persuasive.

Later on we moved to Harlem and had made friends with our neighbours across the hall, it's always good to be friendly to the people who live close enough to damage you ☺ or hear intimate details of your life.We had children the same age and the top floor became one big open play area for said children every day. We had keys to each others apartments so if needed, we could do things for each other.

One evening there was a party in an apartment below, to which we were invited and enjoyed their margaritas immensely. Upon leaving, many, many margaritas later, to commute back upstairs we absconded with their 6' lifelike cardboard cut out Elvis with motion sensor, who said ' Thank you very much' and 'uhuh uhhuh' when it detected movement… Well we had it in our front room for a day or two then as our across the hall neighbours were away for the weekend we planted him in the back of their en suite and 'lay in wait' for their return. Of course the commotion of coming home from a trip with little people is all consuming but we knew eventually they'd need a bathroom break and we were anticipating the surprise. The surprise for them came at some ungodly hour after midnight and we all laughed at the recounting of their reaction over coffee the next day! Who even does that to people? …Clearly we do. Be warned. ☺

Some months later on, I had just painted our hallway a dark grey and as it turns out they had painted their bedroom grey too, although their grey wasn't what they'd hoped for and there was some grey painted wall envy going on..Mr Neighbour and I had a lengthy conversation one afternoon playtime about how he loved our colour and how disappointed he was about how their project turned out. He showed me what he really wanted and innocently went on his way, little did he know. That weekend, they went out of town… yeah they do that a bit. I had some leftover paint and I snuck over there and spent 3 hours on a Saturday painting their bedroom the desired grey. Sunday evening around 5 we heard them bustle out of the elevator in the usual fashion, tired and travel weary. We must have looked pretty stupid sitting in our apartment grinning like children waiting for the inevitable knock. 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours tick by … and we've lost our grins and wondered to each other, how could they have missed it? Finally at 10pm we hear their door open and they yelled 'You're crazy!' we opened our door and all 4 of us had the best laugh and enjoyed the moment. We do stuff like that. It breaks the monotony and it's funny. To this day, their bedroom walls are grey and I'm sure they're waiting for the next trick… Clearly they're not too worried though because they didn't confiscate our keys.

We may be bad neighbours but we sure are fun.

Paleo Breakfast 6/19

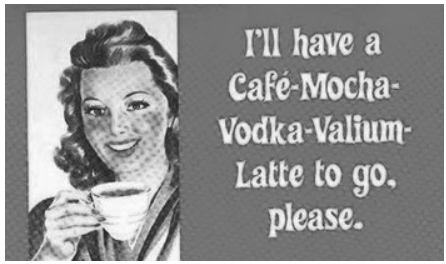
June 19, 2012

Waking at 5am and not getting back to sleep this morning really kinda sucked. So after I hustled the kids off to school I decided to take TD for an early walk so I could spend the day writing. As I got down the block I realised how hungry I was. The rest of the walk was spent daydreaming of what I would make when I got back. Here's the result. I just chopped some bacon, a scallion(shallot) and some red pepper and sauteed in a pan then threw the beaten eggs in. Once served I sliced half an avocado and topped the eggs, added some salt and fresh ground pepper and voila… breakfast in about 10 minutes. Coffee too of course.



Hump Day Humour #1

June 20, 2012



It's a World Gone Mad…

June 20, 2012

Oh wait the kids just swapped beds.

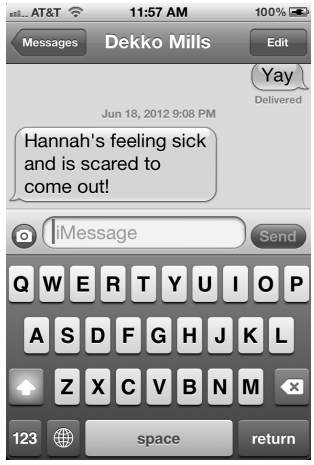


In my total, wasted haze of befuddledness that was monday, I generously allowed the children to swap beds. Yeah I know it was a school night and being in new digs is not going to help them settle down and leave me the hell alone but they caught me at a weak moment.

The goodnight train heads out… we hug and kiss it out and they go to bed. Now from my position in the living room I can hear the muffled sounds of not sleeping chatter which I desperately try to ignore because I really don't wanna see them anymore. It's mummy's time, stop stealing it, damn it! Time ticks by a little longer and then from my same position I see two pyjama clad figures having a powwow at the fridge, breathe in, breathe out… very calmly I ask 'why are you out of bed? Is there an emergency?'…'No we're just getting drinks.' Drinks, really? Are we clubbing together at bedtime now? sheesh. They never come out together, it's always one, followed by the other but not this night. They've had a little chat, they're hanging out in each others beds.They're thirsty, let's get drinks. At this point the King sees my frustration and steps in. The chosen method is not part of best parenting weekly but it sure got them back in their beds. I don't like yelling but it worked. Ahhhhh settle down, relax, it's over for the night.

bzzzzzzz, rattle, shake, flash ….oooh a txt, fun… let's chat, who is it?

OMG and WTF! and all the other unused letters. Grand Master D is txting me from his sister's bed. There it is in black and white, staring me in the face. The bad parent alert. Not the words of a late night friend to chat about the day but a child sending a txt for another child too scared to leave her bed, oops, her brother's bed. (sigh)



This is the third night this week that the tummy has had trouble, last week Grand Master D's tummy was having trouble. It's starting to make me concerned about the meals I'm making? Nope they're great, I'm a super chef, awesome cooker. Right!?

In I go to check the poor sick little cherub, not muttering under my breath ☺ I'm not like that. "What's up missy? You got altitude sickness? " Giggles all round, yep I'm funny, I can admit that. I administer the required amount of drugs to help me feel better, I mean, take the tummy pains away and eventually they drift off to sleep.

Just in time for me to lay down and immediately start drooling, asleep on my couch pillow. So much for the nice evening, relaxing with the King, enjoying some tv.

Luckily, we get to try all over again tonight. YAWN.

Life's Twists and Turns…

June 21, 2012

With the news this week of the death of Rodney King, the man whose beating by police sparked the LA riots in 1991 and the total exoneration of Lindy and Michael Chamberlain in the death of their daughter Azaria at Ayers Rock in 1980, it makes me think how these lives changed in an instant and they were innocent people, well Rodney was driving drunk but he didn't deserve that beating.

The Chamberlain's lives changed the night a dingo took their nine week old baby out of the tent. Meryl Streep was right " A dingo took my babee". They endured decades of what could only be described as a witch hunt by the media. She was tried and sentenced by public opinion before she even reached the court house. People were suspicious about the religion they practiced, they thought that the way they handled their grief wasn't right but I remember thinking that it's wasn't right what they had to go through. I was 12 at the time. This story dominated the news in Australia for a very long time.

How do you live through that? Going to jail for something you know you didn't do. Spending 5 years of your life there.Having a child while being incarcerated.Then the pressure of the situation causing so many problems including the marriage breakdown and some serious behaviour problems from the older boys.

I couldn't even imagine having to endure such a thing on top of losing a new baby in such heartbreaking circumstances. The story had such an impact on me as a young person that I can bring back the feelings I had all those years ago. 32 years is long time to have to endure something like this. I bought Lindy's book tonight. It's not much but I would like to hear it in her words and maybe she'll make more money as well. Not from just my purchase of course but now she's front page news again and cleared of all charges, people may want to read what she has to say. I do. Here's a link to Lindy's Book on kindle or in print.

The media has a lot to answer for, the way they sensationalise things just to get a story. They do it every day to countless people, destroying their worlds from that day on. Assuming without knowing anything. Human nature is like that. We're so busy looking for the story, we forget to think of the people involved. The family, their grief. The world needs a great big helping of empathy. Just sayin'

Paleo Dinner

June 22, 2012

We cooked brussel sprouts, sweet potato fries and steak with slow cooked onions last night for some company. It was bedlam in the kitchen, the King even pushed me out of the way, *pushed*. How rude.He said it was to save me from his path but… Anyway I digress. He cooked the steak, set off the smoke detector… (standard) and we ate a lovely meal. They drank too much but it was hump day after all.

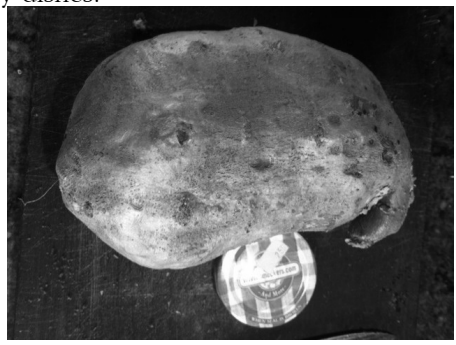
Oh, and the desserts our company brought were devine and oh so NOT paleo but I just had a sliver.

Here's what *I* did.

Cut up the biggest sweet potato ever grown into fry like pieces, coated with olive oil, put in oven at 380f.

Chopped brussel sprouts into 4's and sauteed them in a little oil, when they were almost done I added a handful of craisins and half a cup of chopped walnuts. Then I drizzled honey on them and a big splash of balsamic. I stirred until heated through and served.

I didn't photograph the steak, didn't want to be pushed again :P but here's my dishes.







Stress, it's a killer.

June 23, 2012

In today's society we are over stressed. There never seems to be an off switch. Stress hormones are released from the adrenal glands for our bodies to cope, however they were designed for minimal use, to give you the fight or flight instinct. If there is imminent danger the body releases hormones so we can react. These days we are under attack all day long, stress over money, stress over relationships, body image, over working, lack

of exercise, the list is endless. We eat bad food which fuels our bodies inadequately and therefore causes more stress. No wonder we have more strokes, heart attacks and on going depressions common among the population.

So how do we combat this? How do we turn off our bodies normal reaction to stress? It's important to be able to relax without toxins like alcohol and drugs.

I struggle with this problem a lot. I feel like I'm always on. The day is long with pressure the whole time. I usually can't wait for the kids to go to bed so I can relax. I know that sounds strange because they're getting to an age where they're very self sufficient but I still feel that way. Then of course you think the night is done and there are husbands to take care of. The stress builds up. I have never been able to handle stress well. Some people thrive. I'm not one of those. I find it difficult to work under pressure.

These days I do my best to avoid it. It does nothing good for me. It give me rashes and itchy skin. It changes my demeanour. I want to be happy and carefree. Not weighed down by stress. I am honing my fight or flight skills. I'm getting good at flight. If you stress me I run but I'm also learning to fight.

The summer is here and that means no more school and hopefully no more stress. The king has taken the kids out and I have a free moment. I plan to use it well. Happy Summer y'all ☺ Stay sane …

It's Good to be Appreciated

June 24, 2012

The other day the school hosted a Parent Appreciation Breakfast. It was fun.. I got this.


CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

This certificate is awarded to

Molley Mills

in recognition of your ongoing volunteer contributions to

Hugo Newman College Preparatory School PS/IS 180M 2011-2012 School Year

Carmen Reyes, PTA President — Date — Deanna Hall, PTA Vice President — Date

Dr. Peter McFarlane Ed. D. Principal — Date

It's been a super busy year, at times too busy but all efforts are worth it when you are appreciated. It's important. I don't do it for the recognition but it sure does make you feel all warm and fuzzy. It's the summer break now. No more early mornings and time to relax and rejuvenate. September is time enough to think about volunteering again.

Never Say Never

June 24, 2012



The King spent many years convincing me that we were never going to get married or have children. He had been married before and after that ended, he felt that he'd done that and didn't want to do it again. I resisted of course, wanting to have children, wanting to be married, arguing for my side, on many occasions until the early hours of the morning.

We had a great life together, the business was taking off, we lived in a great place. Things were going great for us. There was always that underlying thing though. I was disappointed but started to accept that we didn't need a piece of paper to prove our love and commitment. I even began spewing the rhetoric I'd been fed whenever we were asked if we were getting married. The King must have been so proud :P He'd convinced me, his job was done.

Then something changed in him. I really did want kids but I could live without the wedding. So I convinced the King it would be great but due to some previous complications it would be difficult and take a long time to achieve this goal and we should just try and see what happened. I went a chinese herbalist to help in the process. He gave me the most revolting concoction to make into a tea to drink. I did it, I was on a mission. Along with drinking this I had to 'put circles on the chart' and plot my temperature each day to predict ovulation and all that crap that you do when you're convinced you need children desperately. The King didn't complain about the 'circles on the chart' however ☺

I did this each day for a few months, going back to both the chinese dude and the gynaecologist to check progress several times. There was disappointment but I kept trying. I'd count days, do pregnancy tests, nothing. … Then one day, something!

I remember being excited but also worried how I would break the news… so like all good technologically savvy people, I emailed… 6 little words 'I did the test, don't yell'. The reply came 'Well you're going to be busy then aren't you'. I guess that meant he wasn't changing diapers?

Things moved along in the usual fashion until one crazy day, 25th September,1999. We had been working with a couple who had connections with an Asian company

and we were very close to a huge deal with an Asian internet tv channel. Things were pretty frantic and moving at a fast pace.

I was out this day, doing the banking, grocery shopping and whatever else was required in town (we lived 12mls/20kms out). When I arrived home, the King said he had to go into town for a meeting and he'd call later on and let me know the outcome etc. I was happy not to go, I had begun to feel very tired anyway.

The call came, the deal was done, we were going to Brisbane with these people for dinner, 'Get dressed up, I'll be there in an hour to pick you up.' So I got dressed up and waited for the car to come up the driveway. Then I get another call, 'Put the dogs inside, Bev is scared of them.' Huh, she's been here before, I don't remember her being scared but ok.

The next thing I know a helicopter is landing in our back yard, well when I say back yard, we were on 10 acres but most of it was bush so there was not a whole lot of open space for it. I wasn't really fazed because we were moving in some pretty interesting circles at the time and limos, private planes and helicopters happened quite a bit. Now I understood why I really needed to put the dogs away ☺ lest they be squashed by a Bell Long Range Helicopter.







I hopped in, put the headphones on, asked some questions like where were the others, where were we going etc. The King said they were meeting us there. Then he handed me a contract saying I should read this to get up to speed for the dinner. I started reading but it wasn't making sense. I think I reread the first page 3 times… just as it dawned on me what the contract was saying the opened box came out. It was a marriage proposal and the box contained a ring! Wow… I didn't see that coming. Of course I cried, I put the ring on but forgot to say 'yes!' The pilot actually said 'Well?'

Then I asked the questions again. Where were we really going and what were we really doing. After the helicopter landed we took a few minutes to go somewhere for a quick drink and make some phone calls, this is when he broke the news that he

had arranged for us to get married on 9th October, in 3 weeks time. This date held significance because it was right in the middle of our birthdays, so it was always a good way to remember the anniversary. Such a schemer.

Then he told me we were going out for dinner but we had to call in to see someone first, again I believed it… so dumb ☺ We walked into a room full of our friends who also had no idea why they were there. As we arrived the King announced we just got engaged. Surprises all around and this was our engagement party, we weren't going out to dinner at all. We had an awesome night.

I had been convinced it would never happen, yet there we were right in the middle of it all. It was a crazy 3 weeks organising everything but we managed it and had a great wedding and honeymoon. We even had to go before a judge to explain why we needed to get married without giving the standard 1 month notice. The King wrote a convincing argument which included, Brides don't like to look fat in their dresses, Oh yes he did! During the interview the judge asked us how long we'd been together, we answered 9 years, his reply was 'What, are ya shy mate?' It was pretty funny.









A couple of weeks after we came home I wasn't feeling right and unfortunately that little soul didn't make it. These things happen, nature knows when something's not right. Luckily for us a year later, to the day, Grand Master D was born. Later, another soul followed the first one but then Miss Gremlin arrived in a similar fashion almost a year to the day…

Sometimes it takes a couple of goes to get the good ones.





I think the King just saw it as a challenge to see if he could convince me that we were never getting married or having children. Once he had, the conquest was over and he was happy to do both. These days I just agree with most things, that way there's no sport in it for him and we don't do super crazy things……..Ha, yeah right! It's a theory, ok, it's not perfect.

Just remember you can NEVER SAY NEVER ☺

One of My Favourite Poems

June 26, 2012

Sometimes I get a little homesick. When I do I read this poem. The second verse is the most famous but the whole thing explains Australia so well and the love of her by her people. It makes my heart sing. Enjoy.

MY COUNTRY-Dorothea Mackellar written 1904



The love of field and coppice, Of green and shaded lanes. Of ordered woods and gardens Is running in your veins, Strong love of grey-blue distance Brown streams and soft dim skies I know but cannot share it, My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,



A land of sweeping plains, Of ragged mountain ranges, Of droughts and flooding rains. I love her far horizons, I love her jewel-sea, Her beauty and her terror – The wide brown land for me!

A stark white ring-barked forest



All tragic to the moon, The sapphire-misted mountains, The hot gold hush of noon. Green tangle of the brushes, Where lithe lianas coil, And orchids deck the tree-tops And ferns the warm dark soil. Core of my heart, my country! Her pitiless blue sky,



When sick at heart, around us, We see the cattle die - But then the grey clouds gather, And we can bless again The drumming of an army, The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!



Land of the Rainbow Gold, For flood and fire and famine, She pays us back threefold - Over the thirsty paddocks, Watch, after many days, The filmy veil of greenness That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country, A wilful, lavish land - All you who have not loved her,



You will not understand - Though earth holds many splendours, Wherever I may die, I know to what brown country My homing thoughts will fly.

Hump Day Humour #2

June 27, 2012



Paleo Vegetable Stirfry

June 27, 2012

All this writing and researching is making me hungry. I'm at home, yay, by myself, double yay, doing my thing… YAY! But where's the maid and the chef and the bar tender? Oh that's right day off. *I wish.*

I guess it's to the kitchen with me. I could go to the halal truck across the street for my chicken and rice without the rice (they always laugh at me) but that would mean leaving the house and putting shoes on.

Fridge browsing is not finding anything quick or microwavable so I'll go for the next best thing. Stir fry.









Today's stir fry is sponsored by… the vegies that are left in the bottom of the crisper.

Half a red pepper

1 onion

1 lonely mushroom

red and green cabbage (yeah we had coleslaw with steak last week)

the last of the carrots some sesame oil (unless that's not paleo, then I used olive) ☺ crushed ginger

Do you really need a method here? OK fine.. Chop, stir fry, serve.

Turned out pretty good. It'll keep me until I imagine up something awesome for dinner ☺

A Glimpse into the Future… ?

June 28, 2012

I may or may not have just experienced my first pre-teen tantrum. It was messy, there were tears. He was pretty upset too ☺ .

I'm not sure I handled it well to begin with, the frustration went straight to 11. I think it was shock but in the end I just let it go. He had to collect himself, there was nothing I could do. It took some time but we got through it.

I think he was embarrassed afterwards and couldn't even explain why it happened.

I'm not looking forward to the next one, I hope it's not too soon. I truly wasn't expecting it to be honest. I had no idea. I thought it was a toddler thing.

Oh well, some days are for learning new stuff.

Things 'Good' Parents Never Say to their Kids…but secretly wish they could.

June 29, 2012

As we become parents, our lives are no longer our own. Our days of carefree, suiting yourself, doing whatever you want are *over*. Don't kid yourself, it's *GONE*. Once we have children, we have for at least 20 years, someone to think of and consider and provide for every moment. As children grow they become more self sufficient of course but we are still the main providers of their well being, food and shelter. Sometimes this becomes overwhelming. We, and when I say we, I really mean me ☺, long for time out. Peace in the bathroom is a priviledge not a right, get used to it. How did that happen? It makes me crazy sometimes.

It's difficult to have a balance. Sometimes I feel I have lost me, I'm someone's wife, someone's mother, someone's step monster and very rarely just me. Even the dog won't leave me alone! OY!!!

I've adopted a saying from a close friend of mine, which I use sometimes… It's just a joke and the kids think it's funny but sometimes I mean it ☺ When my name is called for the umpteen time the reply comes 'Mum's not here please leave a message'. Doesn't work much but it makes me feel better and often breaks the intensity of the mood.

We all do the very best we can for our children, we build them up, we nurture them, we hold our tongues when we're frustrated, we walk away rather than say something we know will hurt them deeply BUT sometimes, because we're human and nobody's perfect, we make mistakes. We say things we can't take back. We think things that we shouldn't, we secretly laugh to ourselves. Then we collect ourselves and continue on as good parents.

Here's some things we sometimes wish we could say and why:

Go away, you're annoying me. Kids have a knack of finding the best way to annoy us. They know how to push our buttons just to get a reaction, It's an evil plot, they're really aliens out to get us.

Leave me alone. We're always there with a bright smiling face (yeah right but we try) when all you really want to say is leave me the hell alone. I'm tired and frustrated and can't deal with you right now. Wait, make me a drink, then go away.

What the hell is this thing anyway? Admit it , who hasn't thought this when looking at a picture or sculpture our little one has made. All the books say never ask what it is… blah blah, always say 'tell me about your art'. Bugger that, just tell me what it is so I can understand your brain. You weird little creature who I don't get at all.

I'd really much rather be out shopping than attend your recital. Sitting in school assemblies, concerts, performances, award ceremonies etc are like torture, right!? Of course we want to see *our* babies do well but who cares about the others. Is that wrong?… It's cute and funny but who wouldn't rather be out having a cocktail or shopping? Just sayin' … but just so you know I'm at every single one, sometimes for the encore performance too.

Sorry, I ate your easter eggs. Oh come on! It's *chocolate*, I bought it, not the Easter Bunny, you have tonnes, nobody left me any. I needed it, I had a hard day, there was a tornaaaahdo.

There's more but then you'd think I was a bad mother, parent, person and I couldn't cope if you didn't like me.

P.S. The needy insecure me wrote this… hehe ☺

The Independence Bug

June 30, 2012

Grand Master D and little Miss Gremlin have taken themselves off to the movies this morning. They didn't need me. Just my money ☺ It's funny how one minute they can be at each others throats, like yesterday, then today they are a united front against the world… Or Harlem or the 10 blocks between the cinema and home.

It's an odd feeling although I think I kinda like it. Seeing their independence develop is a good thing.

Monday Grand Master D is off to Washington DC on his own for a People to People Leadership Ambassador Forum. 6 days with other children his age from around the country, learning how to be leaders and about our leaders. It will be quite an experience for him. We'll miss him but he'll be back before we know it. A little more grown up and a lot more independent.

Opportunities like that are great for kids, it gives them a chance to prove themselves and grow as people. I'm all for experiences, the more the better. It's a different world to when I was young. Although I wanted to be independent and capable too. I still strive for both ☺ It's ok there's still time.

Here's a link to the program:

People to People Program

I Sent Him to the Vet, oh Yes I Did!

July 1, 2012

Just before Miss Gremlin was ready to arrive, we knew we were probably finished having children. We had a boy and a girl as well as the Princess and we were pretty happy with that. After Miss Gremlin was born we were totally convinced. She was huge, 10lbs born. My poor body said Ok seriously? You can't possibly make me do that again. It was a rough pregnancy from the first. I threw up so much that the King wasn't even fazed anymore. I threw up in the morning, in the evening and late at night. Even on the morning she was born. I could hardly walk in the end. I had to wear a hip brace, I was in constant pain. So deciding we were done in that department was easy. The deal was this, if I needed a caesarian then I would have my tubes tied at the same time. If I didn't, and I didn't, then the King was off to the vet ☺ .



The King and his cigars

We decided to wait until she was born just to make sure everything was ok, it was a close call but that's another story. So I made the appointment for him, thinking that because I would be out of action for a bit, he might as well be too. That way we could heal together and then get on with life.

Of course I gave him the choice of full anaesthetic or local, he opted for local and just went to the family planning clinic for his procedure rather than the hospital cos he's tough like that.

He describes the procedure as follows:

The most intimate experience I've ever had with a man. We talked wine and musicwhile we both stared at my testicles. Then, without due warning he whipped out the little tube, which was a bit of a surprise because my nuts were numb from the anaesthetic and itwas all moving very fast. He then handed me the surgical scissors and let me cut it. An experience similar to having the pilot let you fly the plane except this was more like cuttingmy own testicles with scissors. We thought this was better than him chewing through it though.That would have just been weird. I then went home and mowed 2 acres of lawn on the ride on mower.A mistake in hindsight. But all in all it was a memorable interlude, as all interludes that find you without pants, should be . … The King When it was time to take the stitches out, not being a family to rush for medical attention short of dire emergency, my skills with small scissors came in handy. A snip here, a tug there… all fixed.

For those of you who've had this procedure, you know what's next. To those who haven't let's just say tests must be done to make sure it worked. Yes the King asked the question and no saliva doesn't affect the specimen ☺ but you must keep it warm. One small suggestion… don't speed, explaining that to highway patrol would just be weird.

True Romance

July 2, 2012

After a particularly refreshing kid free weekend, I'm feeling all gushy but in about an hour my boy is going away for a week on his Leadership Ambassador program and it'll be lonely without him. In the meantime please enjoy this while I finish getting him ready and have coffee……



As photos go I'm a terrible photographer. Oh I can get the job done and grab the memory on film but I really don't have an eye for such things. There's definite skill in the set up of a good shot. People go to Higher Education facilities for such knowledge. Somehow I captured this, it's such an artistic shot. (well I think so) I just had to share. These flowers were given to me on my birthday last year. Red Roses are my favourite, in case you ever needed to know that ☺

It wasn't set up, it was a random photo.. Sometimes they're the best kind. I think it truly captures our love though. Don't you?

To Cook or Not to Cook the Pet…

July 3, 2012

My brother has a kangaroo, well my brother, his wife and their 5 kids and dog and puppies, have a kangaroo. They live in the country, luckily, because keeping a kangaroo in the city is frowned upon even in Australia. And before you ask, no they don't jump down the main streets in Sydney and not everyone has one as a pet. It's quite uncommon.

How did they come by this baby kangaroo you might ask? Well my brother likes to go shooting (hunting) and regularly shoots kangaroos, which are as pesky as deer are here in the US, to feed his dogs. On one particular outing recently he shot a roo and unfortunately she had a joey in her pouch, so of course there's no option other than to bring him home and bottle feed him and have him as a pet. It's just what you do. A kangaroo joey in your house is just cool.





This afternoon, while I was reading facebook , my sister in law posts this…

Outside fire, kangaroo roast in the camp oven, a few drinks and good company is on the menu for today with ...sister…. and our families (and adopted kids).

This piqued my interest as some of the comments were asking what I was thinking, did they cook the baby? It was a tense few minutes because it's not beyond the realms of possibility my brother might cook up the pet. Just sayin' Luv ya bro ☺

The reply came in a resounding negative but the activity in the comments was running rampant with the same question…

Now before you go all greenie on my arse… kangaroos in certain areas are pests, they eat the grass the livestock need, they get on the roads at dusk and dawn and cause havoc, wrecking cars and endangering lives. It's part of country life to cull over populated species. We still love them and pet them at the petting zoos and a mob lives on my mum's farm (they're off limits to my brother by order of mum) but kangaroos are hunted and that's ok with me.

Hump Day Humour #3

July 4, 2012



Happy 4th July…

July 4, 2012

May your campfires be bright and your smores be light…. in your stomach ☺ hehehe



…but seriously Happy 'We refuse to be a British Colony anymore and therefore we're going to war for our Independence' Day.

And on a personal note, we Australians are so grateful you did, otherwise we might never have existed, and we're totally awesome fun to drink with.

Freedom Pops and Fizzes Around Here

July 4, 2012

As I write this through my bleary eyes I am reminded why 4th July celebrations really exist. It was a rough night… but I had the FREEDOM to lie awake at 4am listening to what can only be described as heavy shelling and mortar fire throughout the streets of Harlem. I also had the FREEDOM to get out of bed and go downstairs so as to not disturb the King as he has the FREEDOM to sleep through said bombing.





From my vantage point on the couch with my pillow at 4.15am I had the FREEDOM to watch out the window and see the pretty show which the locals had the FREEDOM to display until daybreak when it would be a total waste of their RIGHTS to FREELY let off ILLEGAL fireworks as we would no longer see it. After which time I guess they enjoyed their FREEDOM to go into their homes and sleep, as did I…

I wonder, do they have the FREEDOM to terrorise the neighbourhood? Children all over are woken from their slumber screaming in fear… the dogs who have no idea what is happening but know the sound of danger when they hear it. I had the FREEDOM to call 911 and the police had the FREEDOM not to come or even bother to check.

No doubt tonight we'll get to do it all again, as this has been the pattern over the last 3 nights. I admire their determination to celebrate, really I do, what I miss is my FREEDOM to sleep through the night undisturbed. I hope they have saved enough for the actual night of celebration because it would be disappointing if they were premature celebrators, although with the suspected age group of the culprits I would imagine not.

Congratulations America, we live in a place where Freedom rings…(and pops and fizzes) and we can say and do as we please. I'm not sure today's use of what the forefathers fought for is what they had in mind with the current state of societal degradation but that's another matter.

Happy Birthday Lady Liberty standing in the sun at the entrance of New York Harbour. The symbol of freedom for so many coming from other lands, being welcomed to this land of Freedom with open arms.

The Land of the free and the home of the brave…..and tired and sleepless and over it.

Happy 4th July 2012… where's the damn coffee.

Cool Paleo Breakfast Idea.

July 5, 2012

I didn't invent this but it's a great idea.





It adds colour to the plate and an extra ingredient to a nice breakfast.

I sliced the pepper and put it in the pan first for a few minutes to cook a little, then turned it before adding the egg. The eggs take a little longer to cook but that gives the bacon time to get nice and crispy. I added some avocado to the plate and naturally there was coffee involved.

And Then There Was One.

July 6, 2012

Grand Master D is away, I know I've mentioned this. It's quiet here without him-I miss him. He is having an experience of a lifetime. We spoke with him last night at 10pm and he told us he had a 5am start today for a 6am breakfast then a full day of touring in Philadelphia. I've heard from him a couple of times throughout the day but I think he's been too busy for much more. He's gonna spend a very long time sleeping when he gets home ☺

I think Miss Gremlin is missing him too, she had a nightmare last night and played musical beds, she's not felt well all day today with a 'funny tummy' and is quite emotional. Tomorrow we will do some fun family stuff with her so she can feel special too.

It's amazing how much the family dynamic changes when a member is missing.

I can't wait for the stories and pics of his trip…In the meantime I'll have to be satisfied with occasional txts ☺

Little Miss Gremlin's Business Trip

July 7, 2012



Little Miss Gremlin has been feeling left out this week with her brother away. I thought she would revel in the alone time but she has been moody, teary and lethargic. She missed him way more than I ever thought she would. They get on very well and love each other but they also push each others buttons in a huge way.

Thinking that today, I really needed to get this girl moving, do some fabulously awesome kid activity which I'd totally hate, The King swooped in and told her he was taking her to Philadelphia on the train for a business lunch and meeting. SAVED!



She was so excited, she started planning her business outfit in her head. We tweaked it a bit this morning but she basically wore what she planned. I packed her a snack bag, knowing that my little girl needs sustenance and also knowing The King is not bothered by trivial things like eating, so I wanted her to have a little control over her environment. At least she has some snacks for the trip there and back without having to whine about being hungry ☺. Yeah mother's just know stuff.

She has her book, her ipod and food, what more could she need? She'll be doted on at the meeting, people always think it's cute when kids go to business meetings ☺ And she gets a fun train ride with her hero, daddy the King.

I get to stay home in my pj's all day watching tv and not look after anyone!!! Even the dog can suck it up today…… I'm doing me. (No pj pics to insert… that would just be weird)

It's a win,win,win situation.

Occasionally, I need a win.





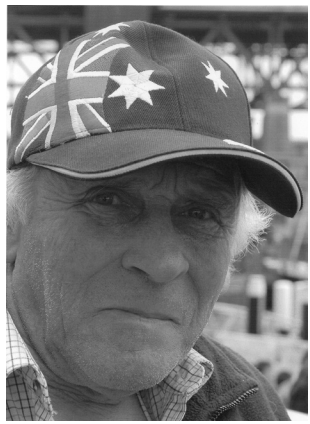






A Year Goes So Fast….

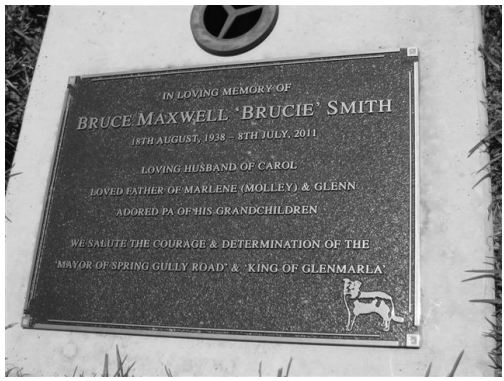
July 8, 2012



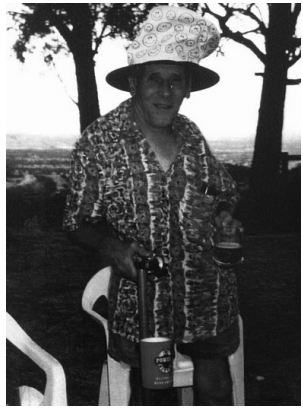
Today, July 8th, marks the 1st Anniversary of the passing of my Dad. It still feels like yesterday I was rushing across the world to be with him. So much has changed, I'm not going to dwell on the sadness. Lord knows it's there but today is just a date, it will come and go year upon year and the pain I'm told will ease. There is a huge hole in our lives but Dad resides in our hearts now, for whenever we want to think of him, dream of him, remember a moment. We don't need a date in time for that, we can have that anytime. He would not want us to be sad, he would want us to go on and live full and happy lives the way he lived every moment of his. SO today I will press the easy button* and grab a beer and think about the good times, I might even have 2. I have shared the movie I made for his 70th birthday, I know he wouldn't mind. He said it was one of the best presents he'd received. It felt good to be able to do something nice for him.

We were a total surprise at his party… We flew over and hid until after the movie.. It was awesome. Here are some other pics to enjoy.

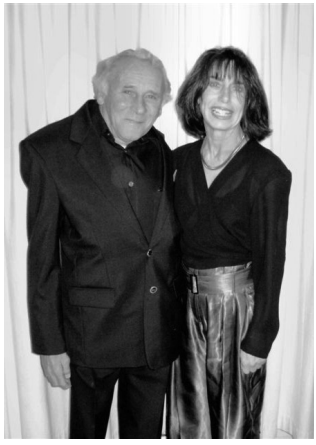
A celebration of Bruce.

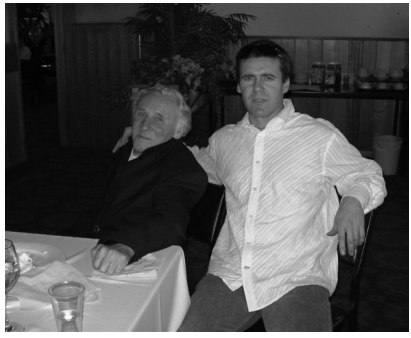

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
BRUCE MAXWELL 'BRUCIE' SMITH
18TH AUGUST, 1938 – 8TH JULY, 2011
LOVING HUSBAND OF CAROL
LOVED FATHER OF MARLENE (MOLLEY) & GLENN
ADORED PA OF HIS GRANDCHILDREN
WE SALUTE THE COURAGE & DETERMINATION OF THE
'MAYOR OF SPRING GULLY ROAD' & 'KING OF GLENMARLA'

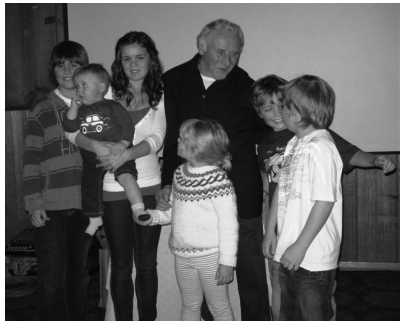


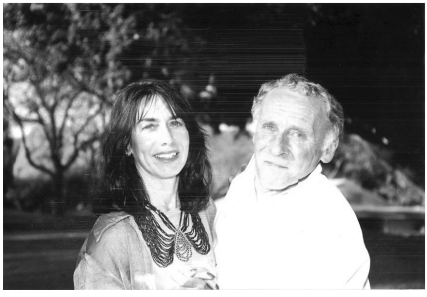













*the easy button sits on top of the beer fridge and every time you get one out, you press it. The button is the big red one from staples that says 'That was easy'. I sent it to him many years ago in a Christmas parcel. It was a bit of fun and Dad decided it was easy to get a beer and he was gonna let everyone know it! ☺

Big Pharma Caught Bribing Physicians

July 9, 2012

It was a news item the other day that finally a Big Pharma company, GlaxoSmithKline, has been called to task and more importantly CHARGED for defrauding patients and bribing doctors. Of course the amount they were fined was minimal in comparison to their profits, $3b, but I believe it's an important step towards changing the way Big Pharma and Health Insurance companies have a strangle hold on the American way of life in regards to health care.

We have a long way to go to fix the issue in this country but it's nice to know people are working on a solution so *everyone* can be healthy and afford treatment when they're not.

You can read the following articles to get the whole picture.

http://www.bostonherald.com

http://www.naturalnews.com

Paleo Frittata Thingy for Brunch

July 10, 2012

I was so busy revelling in my aloneness the other day that I forgot to eat. By 11.30am my stomach was really protesting so I made a frittata. It was going to be an omelette but because I was so hungry, I chopped up too much filling stuff and I couldn't flip it in the pan.







I used:

3 strips of bacon
1 scallion
1 red pepper butt *(yeah I just chopped off a piece at the bottom. The King will be annoyed when he goes to make peppers and onions but thems the breaks right?!)* 2 eggs beaten

Topping:

2 campari tomatoes (my very favourite)
1 medium roasted beet(root) …*for the Aussies*
1/2 ripe avocado salt and ground black pepper

I put all ingredients except eggs in the pan to cook, then I poured the egg in. I cooked it on med-low so the bottom wouldn't burn, while this was cooking I sliced up some roasted beets which I had left over from last night, half an avocado and 2 campari tomatoes, tossed them together with salt and pepper and placed it on top. I washed it down with a belated morning coffee and didn't require lunch ☺

Dog Washing Day

July 10, 2012

A post in which I discover who gets wetter …

This is mostly a pictorial post, Sir Lickalot hates the idea of a bath until he's getting one, then he's all in. He loves the running around at the end part the most though

In the winter he has the luxury of a hottub with warm water, however in the summertime it's a hose and the shampoo bottle on the terrace…

He's a dog, he'll live ☺















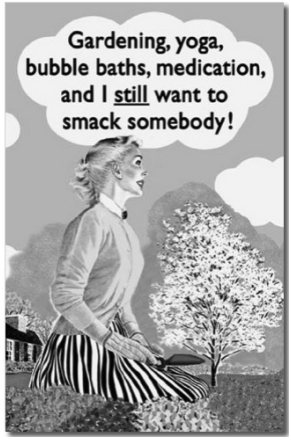


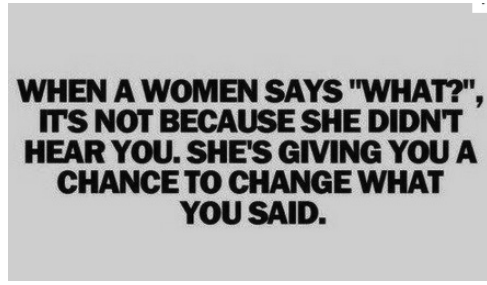


Sir Lickalot got wetter than I did but only just. I totally got fluffier. Perhaps black wasn't the smartest clothing choice.

Hump Day Humour #5

July 11, 2012





How To Collect a Kid from the Airport, City Style…..

July 11, 2012

When collecting an unaccompanied minor from the airport, you'll need to take along a lot of patience. You would think that having Grand Master D fly home on his own would be less hassle all round and I suppose it probably is, but it was rather a long frustrating process.

I left home before he even boarded the plane to get to the airport in our own city. There's something fundamentally wrong with that. I check online while arriving at the airport and discover his flight is 40 minutes early, now that is almost unheard of… an airline being so organised they're early??? Crazy right… So I start the process in a mild panic. He's already here and I have many hoops to jump through.

There is no special services desk, you have to line up with all the passengers checking in. I did this and spent the next 20 minutes of my life in this line. Finally I get to the desk and the check in personnel has no idea what to do, surely I'm not the first person to ever have an unaccompanied minor to collect. I'm not in the computer as the hand off person and we're in limbo, don't panic…breathe…Luckily there was a supervisor near by to handle the situation so as not to have an Australian woman go psycho in the airport, that would just be awkward… 10 mins at the desk to get a pass to line up and go through security, easy.

Security was the next fun part of the process. At least the lady let me go to the front of the line rather than to the end. I was whisked through just in time to wait to be x-rayed with my shoes off and all my personal effects through the standard security procedure.

While this was taking place I had a call from an airline rep to say he had my child and how far away was I? I explained my progress and he told me the new gate to collect him from. This gate being the furthest from where I was, of course. By this point he's been landed for 45 minutes.

Security behind me, I dash to gate #24. Upon arrival I find him just wandering unattended near a cafe. It takes me another 10 minutes to locate someone to sign him off… I could have just left with him without anyone checking. Not very safe. Unaccompanied indeed!

I wonder exactly what the $100 UM fee is for, not ease of collection or supervision that's for sure.

Child collected 55 minutes after landing, off to find baggage which is surely missing by now. You know that feeling when you have an instinct but don't follow it??? Yeah that happened. I saw the first baggage collection point and headed there but asked if this was for terminal 3. My first mistake, somehow I'd come into T3 but collected child in T2. So diligently I headed back to T3 because that's where the flight was supposed to be landing… It's a bit of a hike, enough for us to need sustenance at a nearby kiosk. Coke and chocolate in hand we continue our trek.

Baggage claim in T3 is located and knowing the bag will be held in guest services we head there, where we are very politely informed that the flight came in at T2 and we'd have to collect the baggage from there.

The problem with this is we've passed the point of no return, you know those airport doors which say exit but no reentry???? Yeah we were beyond those, so our only option was an outside trek back to T2. Walking shoes required. Vague instructions were given and we headed out in search of the other building…. 45 minutes later we arrived, after several wrong turns and more vague directions, at T2 where we located the baggage claim office. The bag was there and we were good to go.

By this point we felt more refreshments were required as we still had an 1.5 hour airtrain and subway ride.

Now I've been on the airtrain many times, I've made the mistake before of getting on the terminal loop train rather than the train to the subway… so I was pretty sorted with getting on the right train. What I didn't know was that there were 2. (Clearly I've been lucky until now).One going to my sort after destination and one to a completely

different area I've never been. Well you know where we ended up don't you, yep, the wrong one… But no stress, it's a subway I'm somewhat familiar with (I've heard of the letter) and know that it will get us into a place I can navigate home from.

Then the stations don't line up with the map… oh now what? I'm beyond worrying, we'll make it. We finally get to a station to change to our home line and we wait and wait and wait… damn weekend trains!

We elect to take the express to a further stop and transfer one stop back for home, finally arriving back 3.5 hours after the plane landed… nobody said navigating this city was easy or quick. It was a little trying at times and it could have been much easier but I managed to keep my cool…Today of all days I wasn't going to be ruffled.

As a perspective, if you were to drive to JFK airport, without traffic problems, it would take approximately 45min-1hr.

Most importantly, my boy's home and it was still easier that driving down to Washington DC to get him.

Update: Grandmaster D is still passed out in bed at 10am, I believe we got our moneys worth on this trip. He really did have a great time.

Summertime Blues

July 12, 2012



Summer vacation is a time of freedom, of spending time in the great outdoors, swimming, running, bike riding, discovering nature and just playing wild and free……right?!

eeeeeehhhhhhhhh (lame buzzer sound)

This household has a hard time moving ☺ the kids don't even surface until after 9am, hey I'm only just up myself, don't judge me. Then we gnaw on whatever we can prepare ourselves for breakfast. It *is* holidays… don't be thinking I'm running any kind of breakfast buffet. If you can't make it yourself, you ain't eating it.

Sometime around 10:30 we'll get ourselves washed and dressed and I'll fight Miss Gremlin to brush her teeth. Everyday I tell her, everyday she complains… (sigh)

If it's nice outside I will feel a large measure of guilt and be determined to go out into it… but all I really want to do is be on the couch and write blog post for you guys.



If you even mention the word 'walk' , you're doomed and TD will pace until it happens, lucky he can't spell yet. Actually I only have to put pants on and his anticipation button is pushed. Oh the pressure!

Today I feel less guilt because the King is out at meeting so we're not disturbing him by being here.

The kids are more than happy sitting in front of computers, playing on ipods or

watching tv… yes that's wrong and they should be outside but I'm just tired, weary, lacking in enthusiasm and just don't want to go out… These are the times I long for a backyard, where I can send them out guilt free while I stay inside away from them.

Soon enough we will go out, because I know we have to… but I'd rather just stay here.

No Wonder I'm Nuts

July 13, 2012

Last night after a busy day for us but a stay inside work day for the King this is what transpired when a suggestion to go outside was made. Nobody was very enthusiastic. We lost …….. ☺

King: Let's go out for a hit of tennis after dinner kids
kids both falling asleep in their dinner plates: nah bit tired
King: You'll be right once you get out there
GMD: I'm pretty tired
little Miss Gremlin is almost crying at this point…
King: yeah you'll be right
me: he has had a big trip dad, he's pretty tired
king: he's on holidays
me: that wasn't a holiday it was a pretty intense trip
king: did they go to school?
me: no
king: … holidays
me: (sigh)
me: ok fine, TD can stay here, he's been out already
king: but he loves going out, he's good over there
me: he's a pain…(sigh)…ok fine
king: go downstairs kids and pump your soccer ball up, we'll meet you in the lobby
kids: ok (sigh)
waiting an extraordinary amount of time for the king, there's the chatting to the princess in OZ, there's a bathroom break and whatever else he had to do. (seriously worse than a chick) oh yeah shoes…
20 mins later… in lobby, the king starts leaving the building.
me: we have to wait for the kids
king: where are they?
me: in basement pumping up the ball, where you sent them
king: still?
me: well they certainly wouldn't have left the building without us, maybe they need help, …no the elevator is coming down
king: why are they up there?
me: I don't know, we did take a very long time
king: well surely it doesn't take this long for them to go inside and see we're not there
me: the door's locked
king: oh
elevator arrives in lobby

king: where've you been?
GMD: in the basement pumping up the ball
king: all this time?
GMD: yep
king: oh *(very confused look)*
We walked, played tennis against the wall, I was annihilated, TD hung out at the court, the kids kicked soccer balls against the wall, we came home at dark.
The King always gets what he wants…… sigh

Glory Be to the King

July 14, 2012

We attended a party recently which had a dress code of summer chique, now I have things that work for that dress code but the King, not being a slave to fashion, did not. He was however determined to impress and went shopping on the friday before to procure said garments…

This in itself is an anomaly… he came home with not one but 3 entire outfits and they were impressive!





We were on a kid free weekend… kids and dog were left in the city to have the best time they could have. We were free….The drive out was pretty good fun, the King had managed to get a ride with the band he had booked for the party… pretty sneaky ☺

Once the party started, our fabulous attire and weight loss success since the last time we saw everyone made us the hit of the night! That was kinda fun…

The night progressed in the usual fashion, the dinner, the speeches and then the party began…..Don't let anyone ever tell you a 60yo birthday party can't rock.

Don't even get me started on the king's dancing… I'll let you see for yourselves ☺







We had a really great time…….And then it got messy ☺



The recovery lunch was well worth the 3.5 mile walk back to the house…It was a wonderfully refreshing fun weekend for 2.

Going Dry…..Oh My

July 15, 2012

It is becoming increasingly apparent to me that alcohol is not my friend. I am getting more and more adverse reactions whenever I consume it. Now before you say "Well you're drinking too much", this is not the case. Those that know me are fully aware of my capacity and it is no small amount….until now.



The reactions I get range from itchy eyes and stuffed up nose which have been happening spasmodically for some time, to more recently, severe stomach pains and the need to 'release the demon drink' so to speak. Now I'm not against a good chuck after 55,000 beers … in fact it's almost required but when you have that sensation after 2, then you have to ask yourself 'Why is this happening?' and 'Why am I wasting all this good food?'

It seems that anytime I have more than one drink, be it my beloved bourbon or a beer, I find myself in more discomfort than enjoyment. I am putting it down to the large amount of weight I've lost and my increasing age but in all honesty I have no real clue why I can no longer put away half a bottle of bourbon. I don't suppose it matters why, it would be nice to know though.

So from this day forth I have decided to give it up……yep I said it.

you've picked yourself up off the floor? oh good, hope you didn't hurt yourself ☺

I could go on about how much money I'll save and how much clearer I'll think and how much better it will be for me but as we all know, the saving money part never happens and the thinking clearer part is yet to be proven.

I understand my Australian-ness is on the line here too. I will have to put in a special application for permission to go dry due to extenuating circumstances ☺

Of course a new coping mechanism for 'the kids driving me crazy' will have to be found. I am up for suggestions and will consider all submissions that don't require me to wrap my left leg over my right shoulder while mooning the sun! That's just too much effort.

I will keep you updated on my progress and see if things improve.

The Story of Sir Lickalot

July 16, 2012

It has been mentioned in this household, by you know who, that TD's name needs to change, not that TD is bad but it is a truly boring pseudonym in the world of blogs ☺….so having taken the suggestion as good wives do he is getting a name upgrade and from this day forth the dog formally known as TD will become Sir Lickalot. He licks….a lot! Here's his story

We got Sir Lickalot about four years ago, The King had said we were never getting a dog in the city, he was never picking up poop.*(he does when he has to)* We'd had many dogs over the years in Australia and when the last one died of cancer at 12, he saw it as the perfect opportunity to leave the country ☺. I have always believed it is important for children to grow up with animals. You learn so much from them. I was trying to get us a dog. I missed having one but the answer was emphatically NO.

About this time, we met a lady who became a very close friend and she was involved in animal rescue and had her own website and was saving dogs.

http://www.lcarescue.org/

The King was telling me all about this and I decided to take a little look around the website. I felt sad for all those poor abused animals, then I came across this



one … Sir lickalot's bio . The description read '……..walks likes he's drunk', well this was fabulous and I showed the king saying you could go on inebriated walks together, thinking of course nothing would come of it as once again he'd convinced me his way was right. We were never having a dog (like we were never getting married and having kids ☺). For the next few days we had silly chats in dog voices to each other and carried on as if we were dogs. It was silly and funny but nothing more… The next thing I knew the King had his computer set up on the table at dinner and was asking the kids what they thought about getting a dog and did they like this one?

Well you can imagine my surprise! The kids were very excited but I looked across the table at the king with an 'Are you serious?' look. The next thing out of his mouth was …'So shall we go get him tomorrow after school?' They were totally over the moon. Secretly, I was too.

We had to drive 2 hours to South Hampton on Long Island.When we got there it was agreed we would just foster him for now and see how it went. I fell in love immediately and said quietly to his carer that he wasn't coming back. The poor little darling was only 10 months old and had been through so much. We drove home with him in the back of the car.. Grand Master D got to sit in the front so I could sit with Sir Lickalot in the back. It was a long drive home.

We had to be very gently and slow with him because he'd had so much trauma. He refused to go into the elevator, so for the first week I had to drag him in and drag him out but the trust built and he finally did it.

We have open rise stairs going to the lido deck and outside terrace which took more dragging and about 4 days to teach him to use. Up was ok , down was a problem. Over the years he's perfected the ascent and decent .

A lot of love and patience have really helped him to become the best dog ever, yes he's totally brain damaged but he has no idea there's anything wrong with him. He is actually very intelligent. He just has a motor skills issue, hence the walking like a drunk. He gets beaten up by other dogs but he's the happiest boy ever. He's very vocal, always talking to us but never barks. Only three times have we heard his deep voice.

He turned 5 last April and we can't remember life without him.

If you ever get a chance to rescue an animal I highly recommend it. Our lives have been enriched by his presence tenfold.





He loves to play in snow…



He loves to lay around…



He just fits right in here…



He's our special dog, everyone needs a special dog ☺





Our first park outing…



Don't let the kid win, don't let the kid win…



what's with the goggles kid?





yes I have found my forever home…



Did you say WALK?



Electronic Free Zone

July 17, 2012

My kids spent an entire day, until late evening hours, playing outside at a friend's home. Not once did they want for their iphone or ipod or tv or any type of electronic device until the train ride home.

It was wonderful to see, they kicked balls and swam in the cold hottub, ran around with sticks, climbed trees…got really dirty and had a lot of fun.

They didn't come looking for me, they didn't fight or whinge(whine)and they fueled up on lovely healthy bbq'ed foods and salad. Ok they had a few sodas but that's what going to uncle JR's is all about.

At one point Miss Gremlin got whittling lessons from an artist friend there and then they tried to fashion a spear head out of a scrap of slate but the knife was too blunt.

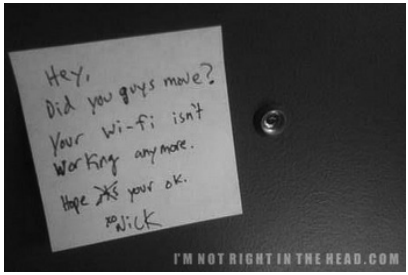
The artist is an Englishman, Malcolm Young, and I spent most of the day back at aged 10 because he reminded me so much of my granddad. The flashback was amazing. It was a superb day, I can't believe I contemplated not going ☺

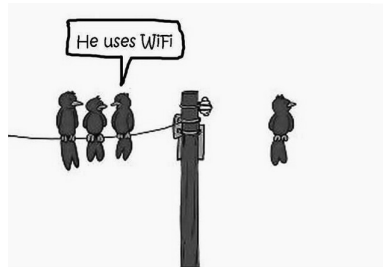
The craziest ending to the day was Miss Gremlin left her backpack in the car riding to the train… so now she's with out her ipod for a day or two.

http://malcolmyoung.co.uk

Hump Day Humour #6

July 18, 2012





A Friend in Need

July 18, 2012



This week I had an interesting thing happen. I txted a friend asking how it was all going with the new baby. He's 4 weeks today. She went straight into telling me he feeds every hour and the doctor told her that she'd just have to put up with it for the first 2 months. I was furious for her. How dare a doctor say that when it's totally untrue.

It's hard enough to be a new mum for the first time, why do doctors give such bad advise? Baby is full term with no health issues. Why would you not try to help instead of setting her up to fail. If it were me, I'd be finding a new doctor.

I asked her a few questions and then asked if I could help. She answered YES in big letters, but she said 'Don't tell me to put him on a schedule'… so I thought about the immediate problem and pretty quickly came to the conclusion he wasn't getting enough of the good hind milk. She was feeding 10 minutes a side and he'd fall asleep. Just snacking really. She wasn't really told about breast milk structure or to feed one side at a time. There was no real lactation consultation in hospital and she was really having difficulty.

I imparted my knowledge as best I could about how it all works and suggested she express off the fore milk and then let baby reattach. As a general rule a newborn should feed for around 20-30 minutes on one breast per feed unless they look for more. This way you can 1) drain the breast to help avoid contracting mastitis and 2) baby will get the hind milk which has more calories and keeps them satisfied longer.

In this instance more calories=good ☺ As they grow they will drain the breast more efficiently and feeds will be much faster but to begin with it takes time.

Having fed 2 babies until beyond 8 months, I have a pretty good handle on breastfeeding and it's issues.

She texted me yesterday morning to say it was going very well and baby was stretched to 2 hours between feeds, still not totally ideal but certainly an improvement and she's enjoying some rest and feeling less cow like. She was excited she was going to able to shower!

This my friends is what helps cause post natal depression in women, in my opinion. How can you feel human when you're stuck feeding a newborn 24 hours a day. More time and energy needs to be put into nurturing these new mums and teaching them how to get good *flexible* schedules going for their babies and their return to normal life. I'm not about hyper-scheduling but I don't believe in full on demand feeding either. I think a combination of both works best all around. You can certainly get baby into a routine that works for everyone fairly easily. (here's a link to another post which goes into more detail on setting up a flexible schedule http://www.amotherlife.com/are-we-sleeping-yet/)

I am totally appalled that with the amount of money the healthcare system charges, that a new, first time mother would be sent home with no instruction on a very important part of motherhood and babycare. Shame on you America. You're too busy turning a profit and rushing these women home. For the amount of money it costs to give birth here you should get a private lactation consultant in your home everyday for a week.

We have really lost the sense of village and community. Sisters helping sisters and older mums helping new mums…women supporting women through this new, overwhelming and scary time of new motherhood. I would love to see that take hold again and grow somehow. I will endeavour to help those I can with the knowledge I have gained. If we all do that then it will be a good start.

You Need a Tray……

July 19, 2012

This doesn't mean anything. I can't make it relate to anything I want to talk about… it's just bloody funny. It's not even Hump Day ☺

You're welcome…

Don't Argue

July 20, 2012

I have talked about this before. I'm talking about it again because it's a pet hate.

I am a grown up, you are a child… I will not argue with you. Period.

I have come into contact with several toddlers this week and have come to see that parents are negotiating too much with their children. I am not judging but I find it tiring. Why would you argue with a child, who:

1. doesn't really know what they want

2. doesn't understand why you're saying no to something you think is not good for them and
3. needs boundaries

Often times a child is just looking for the boundary, that proverbial line in the sand. The point that mummy and daddy will not falter from. Children need security and when they can negotiate they waver in that security.

Little people can not be the boss. They don't know enough. Would you put your 3 year old in charge of your household? Paying the bills? Earning the money? It's ludicrous to think of right?

So why would you not take the lead in their lives? You can use positive reinforcement, being an ogre is not required but control of your child's actions and behaviour is. Nobody wants horrible children. We all want children we can be proud to take place and not cringe at their behaviour….

Here's a clue, they're not born that way, they learn it.

The best thing you can teach your children is respect for self, others and property. This starts with respecting you. Arguing is a form of disrespect and if you let them get away with it they will continue to do it.

It's said that the toddler behaviour is amplified tenfold come the teenage years… do you want to breeze through that stage or go to war?

I know what I choose.

We're Done with Guns

July 20, 2012

I don't like to get political but I am extremely saddened and angry today and I need to say this:

In the wake of the Aurora, Colorado theatre shooting, real questions need to be asked about what America is doing about gun violence. How many mass shootings by psychotic people will it take for the Government to get tough on gun control. Hundreds of innocent people have lost their lives while nothing changes. When you can't go to school, college, shopping in a mall and now to the movies without the possibility of dying, then you have a society in trouble. And make no mistake America is in trouble.

I fail to understand the necessity for people to arm themselves with military assault weapons. We live in a civilised democracy, apparently, however there are huge movements here, NRA and other Gun Lobbyists who believe the most important thing ever is the right to bear arms. They spend millions upon millions fighting for the Right To Bear Arms.What about the right to be safe? In today's society there is no room for this. We don't need guns in every household. We live in a different society to that of the writers of the Constitution. They put those things in the document as security against King George 111 coming to reclaim the country he lost.Those people were fighting for their freedom. There was a cause and life in a frontier America was difficult.

Fast forward 200 years and unfortunately we now live in a society where violence is an entertainment device. Some video games on the market are extremely realistic and

glorify death and killing. Our young people are bored, desensitized to the violence and some misfits decide to act on the feelings they get when they 'blow someone away'.

On any given night in our neighbourhood, some idiot is out shooting hand guns, kids as young as 13 years old are involved in this. A few months ago we had kids shooting in broad daylight down busy streets and outside our kids school. This has to be stopped.

We don't live in Afghanistan or Syria… We live in the United States of America, the supposed leader of the world! How can this be allowed? Every time it happens is more tragic than the last, not because of the loss of life but because nothing has changed. These lives lost should not be in vain.

We are all responsible for this because we don't demand something be done. Something MUST be done. 'Evil will prevail when good men do nothing'. We need a voice. This must change or our society will spiral down into lawless anarchy. I don't want to live in a place where fear is part of every day life, where a simple outing to the movies can end in death at the hand of an armed gunman. No one should have to live like that.

In the days and weeks ahead it will come out that James Holmes was a troubled man. There will be clues that he was planning this for some time, his friends will say he was odd and they're not surprised. There may even be posts on facebook alluding to his plans. But he still managed to carry it out, no one saw the warning signs or maybe they thought he wouldn't really carry it though.

We're sleeping on the job, more vigilance is required. It's time to rethink the gun thing and act upon it, we must insist lawmakers do this before more innocent people lose their lives for naught.

End of Rant ☺

Week One Down on the No Booze Train

July 21, 2012



After a week of The King entertaining business guests and travelling to Montclair on the weekend where we usually get ON IT, I've done remarkably well not having a drink. I haven't even missed it really. I certainly have slept better and had no tummy issues.

I think The King is trying to make up for my lack of consumption.

He's going dry tonight, well if his deal comes off then tomorrow night ☺

I'm getting the mean wife stare out…don't even *go there*!

I Kill More Than I Save

July 22, 2012

UPDATED*….I finally found some Lovey pictures*

I'm a bad animal rescuer, I admit it, I suck. During the course of my life I've rescued lots of wildlife but they all meet their demise in spite of my great effort to save them.

As far back as I can remember we've rescued animals, kept them and when we were at school mum or dad would let them go… nope they died, and mum and dad lied. Only when we were little though, once we got to about 10 they just let us deal with death.

The first rescue I really remember was the magpie in the tree, he was stuck by some twine around his legs, Dad somehow got him down and we kids decided we had to have a pet magpie. All the cool kids had that and we needed him, we put him in a wire cage on the grass and fed him minced meat (ground beef) from the kitchen.We called him Cheeky. We had him for about a week , then one day after school he was gone! Mum said he got out of the cage. This confused me at the time, it didn't seem possible he could knock the cage over and escape but as I believed my parents and had no reason not to trust them, I accepted it and moved on. They fessed up many years later, Cheeky had died.

The next victim was a black kitten, he was really little, weeks old and had been attacked by a dog and one of his hind legs had been, ripped or eaten off. Just a stump was there but animals have that will to live, they don't just curl up and die or feel sorry for themselves like us humans. Anyway we found this kitten in our back shed. At the time we were friends with a young girl who was working for a vet just down the street, so we took the kitten there. The vet was lovely to us and assured us he would look after kitty… He totally euthanised that kitten the second we left, as well he should have, the kitten was in major pain. At least Mum and Dad told us there was probably nothing that could be done for that little pet.

Once we moved to the farm we were saving critters all over the place. We still had cats at the time and the cats would go rabbiting and bring us home rabbit kittens from burrows. Usually by the time we got up all they had left us was the entrails on the back step to say look what a good cat I am bringing this for you. But one time the cat had a live kitten and she was just messing with it as cats do. We decided we were gonna save it from it's fate and have a pet rabbit. We named him fubsy,we put him in a wire cage but it was off the ground. It was actually a ferret hutch which was not being used. We picked fresh grass and gave him lettuce and carrots etc, all the stuff you give to rabbits. I think he lasted about a week, again, I on't remember why he died but I suspect we didn't feed him enough, or he died of shock. Either way fubsy was a short lived pet.

Not long after that, the cats left. We gave them away, one got shot by a farmer, mistaken as a wild cat. Mum didn't want them around anyway because they ate the native birds and native wildlife.

On the farm we collected frog spawn from the dam and kept it in containers until they hatched into tadpoles and then grew into frogs. We kept the frogs for a while but always let them go. We managed to keep them alive. It was really cool watching them transform.

Once when we were getting firewood, Dad felled a dead tree at the front gate, unknowingly trapping a mother possum and her baby. As he cut up the tree into logs he hit the possum and fur came out. Immediately he stopped and we went about saving her. Mum ran to the house, got some needle and cotton and tried to sew her up but I think the shock of it all just killed her. We saved the baby though. He was so cute. Mum put him down her shirt in the dark, like in a pouch and we had him for a little while. At night he would come out and run up the curtains, he was really cute. Unfortunately Dad decided he didn't want the possum in the box in the office because

he'd get out and crap on the desk, so when we were away at work and school etc he had to be in the laundry. Of course Dad was right and he did get out of his box but he got stuck in the large stainless steel laundry sink. He spent all day in the sink, wet, in the winter time and when we got home he was suffering from exposure. We tried to warm him up but we failed and he died.

Much later, when I moved to Queensland, someone found a baby parrot who had fallen out of the next. He was feathered up so he was totally savable. The King decided I would know how to fix him, being a farm girl and all (he clearly knew nothing of my track record) and brought him home from his men's group. Now my uncle raised baby parrots all the time. I had seen him feed them with an eye dropper. I knew he mashed up seed and weetbix. I knew he put them in boxes with a lamp. What I didn't know was that he cooked the seed and weetbix. I just wet it and tried to feed the bird. It didn't work and through my kindness I let him starve to death because I couldn't get him to eat. But he died warm, no consolation really. I called my uncle after he died and asked what I did wrong… Clearly what I did wrong was not call him first… You live and learn.

Here in the city one night, The King came home and a white pigeon/dove was huddled at the front door of our building in the cold winter late one night, so again having every faith in his farm girl, he brought him upstairs. I found something to feed him and gave him a drink and in the warmth of the apartment he perked up. We named him lovey, yes lovey dove, so kitch. He hung around for a few days shitting on everything, driving Sir Lickalot crazy. At night he would sleep in an esky (cooler) with a towel over the top. After a few days we let him out on the terrace where he hung out for a day and then took off. We expected that would be the end of it and were glad we'd helped him on him way. Having a loose pigeon/dove flying around your house is kinda odd.

The next night was like deja vu for the King, there was lovey the dove huddled in the corner of the front door. So we decided that if he wanted to be with us we better get him a cage so we can at least put him in it at night. He loved that cage, we left the door open and he'd fly in, and fly out and was king pin for a while.

But he was messy. He shit on everything. He'd strut along the back of the couch and sit right behind the princess at night watching tv. Then he'd have a fly and come back. Just to taunt Sir Lickalot I'm sure. He was fun but also a little annoying. One sunny spring day we let him out on the terrace and again he flew off. We decide we'd put his cage out there with food and water. He could come and go and have shelter because it was obvious to us he lacked that or he wouldn't have been huddled at our front door……twice.





He came back in the afternoons for about a week. Then he was just gone.

Sometimes we see a white pigeon in the park who's not afraid of Sir Lickalot as we walk by, once he even walked over closer but we don't really know if it was him.

Maybe it' s just wishful thinking or the vain hope I actually saved something. I guess we'll never know.

Last week I saw a white pigeon land on the fire escape of a building close by and tap on the window. A coincidence? Probably, but maybe it was lovey and he's just sharing the love and poop in the neighbourhood.

I'll keep trying to save animals when I come across them. It feels like that's what you're supposed to do.

Sir Lickalot should think himself extremely lucky… cos my track record is crap.

Sweet Coconut Pancakes

July 23, 2012



UPDATED…

I felt like something sweet for breakfast because a girl can only eat so many eggs and came across this recipe from the civilized caveman. I added a little extra coconut milk to wet the batter a little more.

For a sweet pancake type experience you'll need:

1 cup shredded coconut
2 eggs pinch of cinnamon
1 cup almond flour
1/4 cup coconut milk
1 tbs honey vanilla *serves 2*
for the toppings you could use:

sliced banana, strawberries, blueberries, cinnamon syrup or honey or whatever takes your fancy.

I heated the cast iron plate and spooned on the batter, cooked for a couple of minutes then flipped. Just like pancakes ☺

I topped it with sliced strawberries, blueberries and maple syrup. Super quick, easy and soooo yummy. It could also be a dessert if you wanted.

Update-I tried this again today and added some almond flour just to tone down the coconut. They were much better.

Illusive Sleep, I count 855,000 Sheep

July 24, 2012

Sleep is for chumps. I'm convinced of this… it must be true. I know this because I'm the only person in this house not sleeping, so either my family are all lovely, rested chumps or I am :(Maybe *no* sleep is for chumps…

Why has my ability to sleep left me? I can't get to sleep at night and when I finally do, I wake at some ridiculous hour like 5:30 or 6am. I try to go back to sleep but

just can't and lying there is useless, not to mention disruptive for the King, so for the last 2 mornings I have taken my pillow and my book and headed downstairs. It's the weekend, I have nowhere to be … I'm clearly deranged.

I have to say I enjoy the solitude, the stillness of the early morning. It's a peaceful time in the house. No one needs me……for hours, it's pure bliss, except for Sir Lickalot. He paces up and down and he whines. He doesn't know if he wants to be downstairs with me or back in the bedroom with the King but I've shut the door and he can't get back in. If I were smart I'd just throw some sweat pants on and take him out… but of course I'm tired … it's really early and I can't be bothered. I choose to read for a while and drift off to sleep for an hour or two on the couch.

So why is this happening? I don't know but I assume the dreaded menopause are beginning to trouble me. It's not the booze that's for sure. It's not any of the usual problems, late night eating, spicy food, too much coffee.

I'm also dreaming a lot, some good, some really awful. I don't like it when I dream like that.

I wonder if stress is causing it? I know there's been a lot of activity in the house. I've had my dad's anniversary, I'm trying to plan a trip home… Many things could be affecting my state.

It's a problem. The other day to add insult to injury, my eyes have started to get very itchy. I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror and it was pretty tragic.

I've been reading for a long time and subscribe to a monthly newsletter from women to women, which discusses all the joys ahead. There are many things I can do and I will start to sift through the info to see what I can do about it. I can't be walking past mirrors shocking myself.. That's just unfair, I'm still too young for that… ☺

Although I'm totally ready for the 'next ' phase of womanhood, let's face it the childbearing years can be quite tedious, the list of symptoms ahead is rather daunting. I like sleeping and wish to do it more now the kids are old enough to fend for themselves, not less.

I've changed my diet, stopped drinking and now this happens… sheesh. Let's hope the answer presents itself swiftly so I can get my beauty rest again.

Hump Day Humour #7

July 25, 2012





Edgar the Duck

July 25, 2012



Upon reading my I kill more that I save post, the King reminded me of Edgar. Edgar lived, his story should be told.

Many years ago while driving to our mountain studio, our business partner Wazza saved

Edgar crossing the road all alone 'Wazza save me'

a duckling from certain death while it was trying to cross the busy road. It was alone and separated from his mother and siblings. Clearly in need of assistance.

Firstly I have to give you some background on Wazza, He's been in our lives for 25 years, I met him before I met the King… He's a drummer, a very talented one. We've toured the country together, I vetted his 'girlfriends'. We've done things we can never talk about ☺ . We were inseparable, like the 3 musketeers and he's 103. He's been 103 since I met him. He likes being 103.

Now the story goes he called into the local vet along the way with the duckling he had already dubbed Edgar and they told him how to care for it.

Arriving late to work due to his detour, Wazza descended the stairs to the studio and showed off his new found friend to the King and other musicians present, explaining his good samaritan act.



I , however, was already in town that morning and therefore didn't meet Edgar.

Wazza set Edgar up in the laundry tub with some water to swim around, then after a little while decided that, being the *banshee* that I was, I might take exception to this and he promptly removed young, innocent Edgar from the safety of his stainless steel pond and placed him in the conveniently located large white water filled container just outside the door. Feeling Edgar was happy and safe in his new pond he headed back to work.

This is some fine pond

While all this was going on Sheeba was eyeing the new addition, waiting for her chance to pounce as all good opportunistic German Shepherds who like ducks do.

Imagine her delight with the change of pond venue!

Apparently, as I wasn't there, the story goes that while everyone was hard at work downstairs, our nasty, horrible, mean dog saw her chance and gobbled poor innocent, recently saved Edgar, for her mid morning snack.

Disaster had struck at the mountain studio, although not until some time later was the murder discovered. The dog was blamed, however no proof has ever been established.

I arrived home shortly after the murderous scene with the groceries. Totally oblivious to the atrocity which had just occurred. I walked into the house and Wazza

came thundering up the stairs yelling at me. This was not the usual welcome home I expected and I remember thinking 'What the hell?'

He proceeded to say 'Your dog ate Edgar!' Now I'm pretty cluey and catch on quick. I have a sixth sense about things but I was totally stumped. She did what? Who's Edgar?

Yeah I ate Edgar… but you can't prove it.



By this time everyone from downstairs had come up for the action. He took a breath and explained that Edgar was a fluffy little duckling he'd rescued this morning from certain death and as he didn't want me to yell at him, he took him out of the laundry sink and put him happily swimming in that big white bowl right there. To which I said 'Oh the dog's water bowl?' Well that was it. He was furious. The scene was a little crazy, everyone was laughing. I was still having trouble comprehending what was happening, my poor beautiful sleeping dog was being accused of murdering an Edgar, whatever that was and somehow it was all my fault!

This is how I imagine it really went down… the boys being very distracted in their mountain cave making their music, left the duck unattended for probably hours. He could have hopped out and waddled away but Wazza seemed convinced that Sheeba had eaten him. Granted it was the most likely scenario, she was adept at stealing his chicken breasts out of his hand as he walked up the stairs… but who carries them at dog stealing level anyway :P . Did I mention she was an opportunistic german shepherd?

It has become accepted fact that Edgar's fate was death by Sheeba.

He could have been squashed by a car, so he lived longer than he might have, saved that fateful day by Wazza. That counts… right?

That's the story, *my* dog ate *his* duck which was put in *her* water bowl and the circle of life continues…by association, I killed Edgar the duck.

To this day, Wazza gets cranky when we tell that story but it always gets a laugh and it's all about the laugh, right WAZ ?

The 5 Hardest Things About Travelling With Kids

July 25, 2012

As we are about to embark on our bi-annual pilgrimage to the homeland, I hink back on all the long trips we've made with children and how interesting they have been. They've been travelling since they were tiny. Miss Gremlin's first plane ride was at 5 weeks. Grand Master D sat in a car seat for 18 hours at 3 months. But they've never stopped us travelling anywhere.

As the kids get older the trips seem to get easier, they are seasoned travellers now and love it. Grand Master D had his first unaccompanied flight last month. They sleep

on airport gate lounge floors without a fuss, eat what they're given and just know it'll be over soon enough…..

1. ***Travelling on planes with newborns, toddlers and children under*4.** We took a trip to Italy when Miss Gremlin was 5mths old. Grand Master D was 3.5. 30 hrs travel time is no damn joke. Brisbane+Sydney+Kuala Lumpur+Vienna,+Rome= 30hrs. It was really hard and unfortunately the onboard staff were not pleasant. Let's just say we won't fly Lufthansa again. Who won't heat a babies food up? What's that all about? And I stole their blanket ☺ Newborns aren't so bad to travel with, besides the extra crap you carry, they don't do much and as long as you book a bassinet for them you should travel ok. Having kids confined in planes, cars, trains or whatever mode of transport you're travelling in is tough. Little people don't want to be in one place for many,many hours. They get bored and hungry and tired and they whinge. Toddlers are the hardest and until they finally fall asleep you're gonna be in travel hell. Don't be scared to drug them ☺ It helped us immensely over the years.
2. ***Eating Decent Food*** It's difficult to fine good airport food at anytime but try finding suitable baby food for a 5 month old. We all know when you travel you have to put up with crap 'on the road' food. The kids snack on whatever you can find them, survive on nuggets and pizza as staple meals and juice or soda. Meal times are inconsistent. Of course you try to give them healthy when you can find it but even the airlines serve less healthy alternatives for children. Basically you give them what you can find in between flights and whatever you've managed to take on board.
3. ***Keeping Them Entertained*** When the kids reach an age where they'll sit still for tv, then you're golden. With so many movies, shows and interactive entertainment for kids on flights it's easy. However before they can keep headphones on or sit still you have a task to keep them still, quiet and from annoying others around you. I never feel annoyed by kids on flights because I've been there at all stages. The parents are having a hard enough time, they don't need the added pressure of disgruntled passengers nearby. Do you think the mum wants her toddler to scream because his ears hurt during take off and landing? They don't do it to piss you off… trust me they're stressing more than you!
4. ***Extra Crap to Carry*** When you travel with little kids you gotta carry so much extra crap, pack'n plays, car seats, strollers etc.Enough food and diapers (nappies) to care for a whole daycare (just in case) This is harder to check in with, especially now with all the extra baggage fees. It takes longer and I always felt the uncomfortable pressure of the passengers behind.
5. ***Other People's Attitudes (This is the worse one)*** The more I travel the more people suck. People are rude and inconsiderate and treat travelling parents with absolute disdain. Travelling is hard anytime you do it but when little kids have to sit around and wait for hours on end and they're tired or hungry they have a hard time behaving. Give a thought to those parents. They're frazzed. Offer assistance instead of a look of disgust or a frustrated huff. Play with their kid…it might help lighten the mood.

Extra Grace required. Help make a travelling parents' day by being nice… offer to help them. It's always good to be nice.

Kung Pao Awesome

July 26, 2012



I made kung pao chicken for dinner with organic chicken from the butcher. It was so good everyone licked their plates. The King reckoned it's the best thing I've *ever* cooked. I don't know if thats true ☺ but it's totally going in the weekly rotation. I forgot to take pics. Here's the picture from Fast Paleo where I found the recipe. Thanks Guys!

I never knew chicken could taste so yummy. It's the second night in a row we've eaten the butcher's chicken and although it's more pricey than supermarket chicken …. it's so much better. Our local butcher shop, Harlem Shambles are great, the boys, Tim and Rico really look after us. Of course the King got an account which is a little scary but their meat is so wonderful.

If you're in the 'hood do yourself a favour and get some chicken from the boys and cook this dish. If the 'hood is a little far, far away, try the recipe anyway. You'll love it *and* it's paleo… double win.

The Homeland Awaits…

July 27, 2012

The searching is over, the stressing, the co-ordinating, the booking has been done ….. Will everyone be happy? I doubt it, there's always someone looking for more time with us but we only have a few weeks…and we can only be shared so much ☺

Our trip to the homeland is secured.

I always have such trip anxiety. Until I'm in the seat with my seatbelt on I have a fear something will go wrong. I have always been like that when I travel. The King kills me when we fly together because he wants to be last on and I want to be first. I need the comfort of that seat around me to know I haven't missed my flight, my ticket hasn't been revoked, my paperwork isn't suspect.



You'd think I would be over it by now. I've travelled many times. It just makes me anxious, I can't explain it. Nothing bad has ever happened.

I know that it's irrational but we all have our issues.

All the arrangements are finalised. Although I will check and double check because that's part of the anxiety. Next step ……wait…..pack……go!

'Oh what will we wear?'

It's an exciting time. The kids are super excited, they've not been home since 2010 and they truly love going there. This time they're that little bit older, more independent and the farm will be so much fun. They can roam for hours like my brother and I did as kids.

I have it all planned in my head, we're gonna be roaming all over that property… me reliving my childhood on it, them exploring new things and making lifelong memories. There's a lot to do on 130 acres of hill country.

But there'll be a hole, a gap in the experience they will miss terribly.

Pa.

They didn't travel with me last year when we lost him, they have all that emotion to go through when we arrive. I imagine it'll be a rough couple of days until we settle into the new normal.

The chair at the end of the table is empty…the beer fridge turned off.

All we have are memories.

We Had a Date

July 28, 2012

I ordered the kids a pizza and we headed out. The King took me on a date.

First we took a subway to Columbus circle,

The King made some cigar selections……



The King bought Cigars



Shiny Pee pee



No shiny Pee pee

While he did that I went to see the naked people in the atrium… Why is it only the males genitals that are shiny?Perhaps this NY Times article answers the question. Or maybe people just like to touch. There are many stories generated about these statues by Botero who seems to like the larger figured.



Then we went down the escalators to Wholefoods… to buy groceries and chocolate and beer.

Whole foods is a huge organic and whole food supermarket chain. It's a little more expensive but they have pretty good stuff. They also sell lots of ready prepared foods. It's always packed when we go there. I don't go there much anymore.

After that we headed back home on the subway……. Where the King paid the busking trombone player to serenade me with the Godfather theme….New York is cool like that. We missed getting it the first time and it cost us a dollar to get him to do it again to film it.

We see so many strange things on the subway. Last weekend a teenage flash mob got on our subway car and did some hiphop song. A homeless guy with hospital tags still on his wrist joined in, singing Under the Boardwalk with them. Surprisingly it blended right in although I think he was a little inebriated.

Finally after leaving the subway, we selected some wine for the King's consumption… I'm still not drinking, called into the butcher to get our order and arrived home with our spoils…

Then I got to cook ☺ BEST DATE EVER !

Paleo and Me

July 30, 2012

While I started to lose weight just over 12 months ago, I have been on this paleo journey now for about 4 months. In that time I have continued to lose weight, total is now 27 lbs (14kg) to date. For a small framed woman of 5'4" this is quite a bit ☺ It has been slow but I think slow weight loss is better because it's more of a lifestyle change than a diet. Conventional diets really don't work long term from what I can see.

Before I started with the paleo diet, I was using an iphone app called Myfitnesspal. It worked really well as a tracking device and helped me count the calories in food and exercise. I managed to lose the first 18 lbs (9kgs) just using this app, without really changing anything else. I certainly didn't step up in the exercise area. It took 8 months. I turned many friends onto it with mixed success but that's their journey.

While I still use this app it is not my main focus. My eating habits have changed and calories are no longer my focus but putting the right foods in my body is.

Starting on Paleo, I researched as I went and really just googled recipes each day and found things to cook using the paleo guide. I stopped eating rice, bread, pasta, potatoes, dairy and sugar. There are many substitutes for all those things and you still get all the nutrients your body needs without the bloating or the calories. Occasionally now I will have one of those foods just because I'm somewhere and it's easier to just eat what's served but I always regret it afterwards because my body protests. I feel lethargic and bloated every time.

Nomnom Paleo was the first blog I found on the subject and I really liked her style and used many of her recipes. I have also used Civilizedcavemancooking, PaleOMG and Everyday Paleo among others, however these guys all have really great recipes and are fun to read so I keep coming back.

I really like finding new things and testing them out. It's like going on a new discovery each meal. I have some favourites and I've made a few of my own.

I have found that my hair and nails are growing better and faster, my skin is clearer and not dry anymore, even my psoriasis is clearing up, losing weight is like the icing on the cake. My moods have improved as well. I really think this is a good way to eat and I will continue to follow it. It works well for the King and the kids are embracing it too. Mostly ☺

I've read articles where people have cured their diabetes with this diet, as well as lowering blood pressure, tryglicerides and cholesterol. That's all positive and if you can do it without requiring drugs with nasty side effects, that's even better.

As I've been on this journey I have also learned about the politics and big business behind eating lots of carbs and dairy. They actually invented the food pyramid to make more sales! The large companies are heavily invested in you consuming large amounts of wheat and dairy. I won't get political but it has been quite an eye opener. You can search that for yourself. There's plenty of information readily available.

I am convinced this is a great way to eat and I enjoy it totally. I am still learning things all the time and will continue to share what I learn, when I learn them. In the meantime, give it a go, it could help any number of ailments. If nothing else it will get you off bad foods and make you more conscious of you're eating choices and that can only be good right?

Resourced materials:

http://robbwolf.com/what-is-the-paleo-diet/
http://paleofoodlist.com/index.html/
http://www.naturalnews.com/paleo_diet.html
http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com

This is NOT a Travel Blog

July 31, 2012

So we're going away, we're leaving the country, we're heading off into the wild blue yonder, we're travelling Down Under…on QANTAS of course ☺

We're going home, not this home, the other home, for a visit. I can't be the only person who has 2 homes in different countries. It's just how I refer to it all.

When I'm in New York then I refer to Australia as home, when I'm there I refer to New York as home. It's a little odd but I don't care. So don't try to argue. Home is where the heart is and my heart is with my family. My immediate and extended, so what if they are on two different continents.



Now this is not a travel blog. I don't get to do it often enough to even write a travel blog but during the time we're away, I will be writing about our adventures and experiences and I guess by default, until we return this

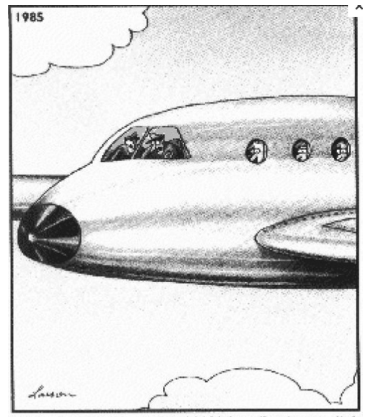
will become a travel blog. I promise to put plenty of pictures of fluffy creatures and some not so fluffy. I'll do my bit to promote tourism in the Wide Brown Land …

I'll be sure to say 'Where the Bloody Hell are Ya?' and show you the richness of the experiences you could have… but mostly I'm going home for an accent refresher and some real beer ☺

Hooroo…

Hump Day Humour #12

August 1, 2012



"The fuel light's on, Frank! We're all going to die! … We're all going to die! … Wait, wait. … Oh, my mistake—that's the intercom light."

Hooroo…See you in the Futcha

August 1, 2012

We're leaving this afternoon, while we're flying here's some fun……

Don't be scared for us. We're not likely to see all of these things on our trip. Probably only half ☺

I'm skipping off to finish the packing. Cop ya later!



Aussie Slang

August 2, 2012

Aussies are a strange breed, we have a wicked sense of humour, a strong mateship with each other and we talk funny.

I found this Aussie Slang dictionary, listing what we say and what we call things, just for fun. It will take you a little while to read but spare a thought for us, STILL flying ☺

A
Aerial pingpong : Australian Rules football
Amber fluid : beer
Ambo : ambulance, ambulance driver
Ankle biter : small child
Apples, she'll be : It'll be all right
Arvo : afternoon
Aussie (pron. Ozzie) : Australian
Aussie salute : brushing away flies with the hand
Avos : avocado
B
B & S : Bachelors' and Spinsters' Ball - a very enjoyable party usually held in rural areas
Back of Bourke : a very long way away
Bail (somebody) up : to corner somebody physically
Bail out : depart, usually angrily
Banana bender : a person from Queensland
Barbie : barbecue (noun)
Barrack : to cheer on (football team etc.)
Bastard : term of endearment
Bathers : swimming costume
Battler : someone working hard and only just making a living
Beaut, beauty : great, fantastic
Big Smoke : a big city, especially Sydney or Melbourne
Big-note oneself : brag, boast
Bikkie : biscuit (***also*** "it cost big bikkies" - it was expensive)
Billabong : an oxbow lake cut off by a change in the watercourse. Billabongs are usually formed when the course of a creek or river changes, leaving the former branch with a dead end.
Billy : teapot. Container for boiling water.
Bingle : motor vehicle accident
Bities : biting insects
Bitzer : mongrel dog (bits of this and bits of that)
Bizzo : business ("mind your own bizzo")
Black Stump, beyond the : a long way away, the back of nowhere
Bloke : man, guy
Bloody : very (bloody hard yakka)
Bloody oath! : that's certainly true
Blow in the bag : have a breathalyser test
Blowie : blow fly

Bludger : lazy person, layabout, somebody who always relies on other people to do things or lend him things
Blue : fight ("he was having a blue with his wife")
Blue, make a : make a mistake
Bluey : pack, equipment, traffic ticket, redhead
Bluey : blue cattle dog (named after its subtle markings) which is an excellent working dog. Everyone's favourite all-Aussie dog.
Bluey : heavy wool or felt jacket worn by mining and construction workers.
Bluey : bluebottle jellyfish
Bodgy : of inferior quality
Bog in : commence eating, to attack food with enthusiasm
Bog standard : basic, unadorned, without accessories (a bog standard car, telephone etc.)
Bogan : person who takes little pride in his appearance, spends his days slacking and drinking beer
Bogged : Stuck in mud, deep sand (a vehicle).
Boil-over : an unexpected (sporting) result
Bondi cigar : see "brown-eyed mullet"
Bonzer : great, ripper
Boogie board : a hybrid, half-sized surf board
Boomer : a large male kangaroo
Booze bus : police vehicle used for catching drunk drivers
Boozer : a pub
Bored shitless : very bored
Bottle shop : liquor shop
Bottle-o : liquor shop (originally a man with hessian bags going around picking up beer bottles in the 50's and 60's)
Bottler : something excellent
Bottling, his blood's worth : he's an excellent, helpful bloke.
Bounce : a bully
Bourke Street, he doesn't know Christmas from : he's a bit slow in the head. (Bourke Street is a brightly lit Melbourne street)
Bowl of rice, not my : not my cup of tea; I don't like it
Brass razoo, he hasn't got a : he's very poor
Brekkie : breakfast
Brick shit house, built like a : big strong bloke
Brickie : bricklayer
Brisvegas : Brisbane, state capital of Queensland
Brizzie : Brisbane, state capital of Queensland
Brown-eyed mullet : a turd in the sea (where you're swimming!)
Brumby : a wild horse
Buck's night : stag party, male gathering the night before the wedding
Buckley's, Buckley's chance : no chance ("New Zealand stands Buckley's of beating Australia at football")
Budgie smugglers : men's bathing costume
Bull bar : stout bar fixed to the front of a vehicle to protect it against hitting kangaroos (also roo bar)
Bundy : short for Bundaberg, Queensland, and the brand of rum that's made there
Bunyip : mythical outback creature
Bush : the hinterland, the Outback, anywhere that isn't in town

Bush bash : long competitive running or motorcar race through the bush
Bush oyster : nasal mucus
Bush telly : campfire
Bushie : someone who lives in the Bush
Bushman's hanky : Emitting nasal mucus by placing one index finger on the outside of the nose (thus blocking one nostril) and blowing.
Bushranger : highwayman, outlaw
Butcher : small glass of beer in South Australia - From the theory that a butcher could take a quick break from his job, have a drink and be back at work

BYO : unlicensed restaurant where you have to **B**ring **Y**our **O**wn grog, also similar party or barbecue

C
Cab Sav : Cabernet Sauvignon (a variety of wine grape)
Cactus : dead, not functioning ("this bloody washing machine is cactus")
Cane toad : a person from Queensland
Captain Cook : look (noun) ("let's have a Captain Cook")
Cark it : to die, cease functioning
Cat burying shit, as busy as a : busy
Cat's piss, as mean as : mean, stingy, uncharitable
Chewie : chewing gum
Chokkie : chocolate
Chook : a chicken
Chrissie : Christmas
Christmas : see *Bourke Street*
Chuck a sickie : take the day off sick from work when you're perfectly healthy
Chunder : vomit
Clacker : anus (from Latin *cloaca* = sewer). Also the single orifice of monotremes (platypus and echidna) used both for reproduction and for the elimination of body wastes.
Clayton's : fake, substitute
Cleanskin : Bottle of wine without a label. Usually bought in bulk by companies who then add their own personalised label and use the wine as e.g. gifts to clients
Cleanskin : cattle that have not been branded, earmarked or castrated.
Click : kilometre - "it's 10 clicks away"
Clucky : feeling broody or maternal
Coathanger : Sydney Harbour bridge
Cobber : friend
Cockie : farmer (Farmers were called cockies in the early days of European settlement because, like the birds of the same name, they made their homes on the edges of permanent waterholes)
Cockie : cockatoo
Cockie : cockroach
Cockroach : a person from New South Wales
Coldie : a beer
Come a gutser : make a bad mistake, have an accident
Compo : Workers' Compensation pay
Conch (adj. conchy) : a conscientious person. Somebody who would rather work or study than go out and enjoy him/herself.

Cooee, not within : figuratively a long way away, far off - England weren't within cooee of beating Australia at cricket
Cooee, within : nearby - I was within cooee of landing a big fish when the line broke. He lives within cooee of Sydney.

Cook (noun) : One's wife **Corker :** something excellent. A good stroke in cricket might be described as a 'corker of a shot'
Corroboree : an aboriginal dance festival
Counter lunch/Country : pub lunch
Cozzie : swimming costume
Crack a fat : get an erection
Crack onto (someone) : to hit on someone, pursue someone romantically
Cranky : in a bad mood, angry
Cream (verb) : defeat by a large margin
Crook : sick, or badly made
Crow eater : a person from South Australia
Cubby house : Small, usually timber, house in the garden used as a children's plaything.
Cut lunch : sandwiches
Cut lunch commando : army reservist
Cut snake, mad as a : very angry

D
Dag : a funny person, nerd, goof
Daks : trousers
Damper : bread made from flour and water
Date : arse[hole] ("get off your fat date")
Dead dingo's donger, as dry as a : dry
Dead horse : Tomato sauce
Deadset : true, the truth
Dero : tramp, hobo, homeless person (from "derelict")
Dickhead : see "whacker"
Digger : a soldier
Dill : an idiot
Dingo's breakfast : a yawn, a leak and a good look round (i.e. no breakfast)
Dinkum, fair dinkum : true, real, genuine ("I'm a dinkum Aussie"; "is he fair dinkum?")
Dinky-di : the real thing, genuine
Dipstick : a loser, idiot
Divvy van : Police vehicle used for transporting criminals. Named after the protective 'division' between the driver and the villains.
Dob (somebody) in : inform on somebody. Hence dobber, a tell-tale
Docket : a bill, receipt
Doco : documentary
Dog : unattractive woman
Dog's balls, stands out like : obvious
Dog's eye : meat pie
Dole bludger : somebody on social assistance when unjustified
Donger : penis
Doodle : penis

Doovalacky : used whenever you can't remember what something is called. Thingummyjig, whatsit.
Down Under : Australia and New Zealand
Drink with the flies : to drink alone
Drongo : a dope, stupid person
Dropkick : see 'dipstick'
Drum : information, tip-off ("I'll give you the drum")
Duchess : sideboard
Duffer, cattle : rustler
Dummy, spit the : get very upset at something
Dunny : outside lavatory
Dunny budgie : blowfly
Dunny rat, cunning as a : very cunning
Durry : tobacco, cigarette
Dux : top of the class (n.); to be top of the class (v.) - "She duxed four of her subjects".

E
Earbashing : nagging, non-stop chatter
Ekka : the Brisbane Exhibition, an annual show
Esky : large insulated food/drink container for picnics, barbecues etc.
Exy : expensive

F
Face, off one's : drunk ("He was off his face by 9pm")
Fair dinkum : true, genuine
Fair go : a chance ("give a bloke a fair go")
Fair suck of the sav! : exclamation of wonder, awe, disbelief (see also "sav")
Fairy floss : candy floss, cotton candy
Feral : V8 ute (q.v.) sporting large heavy bullbar, numerous aerials, large truck mudflaps and stickers almost all over the rear window and tailgate. Sometimes seen with a Mack emblem on the bonnet and always with large (multiple) driving lights
Feral (n.) : a hippie
Figjam : "**F***ck **I**'m **g**ood; **j**ust **a**sk **m**e". Nickname for people who have a high opinion of themselves.
Fisho : fishmonger
Flake : shark's flesh (sold in fish & chips shops)
Flat out like a lizard drinking : flat out, busy
Flick : to give something or somebody the flick is to get rid of it or him/her
Flick it on : to sell something, usually for a quick profit, soon after buying it.
Fly wire : gauze flyscreen covering a window or doorway.
Footy : Australian Rules football
Fossick : search, rummage ("fossicking through the kitchen drawers")
Fossick : to prospect, e.g. for gold
Fossicker : prospector, e.g. for gold
Franger : condom
Freckle : anus
Fremantle Doctor : the cooling afternoon breeze that arrives in Perth from the direction of Freeo

Freo : Fremantle in Western Australia
Frog in a sock, as cross as a : sounding angry - a person or your hard drive!
Fruit loop : fool
Full : drunk **Furphy :** false or unreliable rumour

G
G'Day : hello! **Gabba :** Wooloongabba - the Brisbane cricket ground
GAFA (pron. gaffa) : the big nothingness of the Australian Outback. Great Australian F**k All.
Galah : fool, silly person. Named after the bird of the same name because of its antics and the noise it makes.
Garbo, garbologist : municipal garbage collector
Give it a burl : try it, have a go
Gobful, give a : to abuse, usually justifiably ("The neighbours were having a noisy party so I went and gave them a gobful")
Gobsmacked : surprised, astounded
Going off : used of a night spot or party that is a lot of fun - "the place was really going off"
Good oil : useful information, a good idea, the truth
Good onya : good for you, well done
Goog, as full as a : drunk. "Goog" is a variation of the northern English slangword "goggie" meaning an egg.
Greenie : environmentalist
Grinning like a shot fox : very happy, smugly satisfied
Grog : liquor, beer ("bring your own grog, you bludger")
Grouse (adj.) : great, terrific, very good
Grundies : undies, underwear (from Reg Grundy, a television person)
Gutful of piss : drunk, "he's got a gutful of piss"
Gyno : gynaecologist
H
Handle : beer glass with a handle
Harold Holt, to do the : To bolt. (Also "to do the Harold")
Heaps : a lot, e.g. "thanks heaps", "(s)he earned heaps of money" etc.
Holy dooley! : an exclamation of surprise = "Good heavens!", "My goodness!" "Good grief!" or similar **Hoon :** hooligan **Hooroo :** goodbye **Hotel :** often just a pub
Hottie : hot water bottle

I
Icy pole, ice block : popsicle, lollypop
J
Jackaroo : a male trainee station manager or station hand (a station is a big farm/grazing property)
Jillaroo : a female trainee station manager or station hand
Joey : baby kangaroo
Journo : journalist
Jug : electric kettle
Jumbuck : sheep

K
Kangaroos loose in the top paddock : Intellectually inadequate ("he's got kangaroos loose in the top paddock")

Kelpie : Australian sheepdog originally bred from Scottish collie
Kero : kerosene
Kindie : kindergarten
Knock : to criticise
Knock back : refusal (noun), refuse (transitive verb)
Knocker : somebody who criticises

L
Lair : a flashily dressed young man of brash and vulgar behaviour, to dress up in flashy clothes, to renovate or dress up something in bad taste
Lair it up : to behave in a brash and vulgar manner
Larrikin : a bloke who is always enjoying himself, harmless prankster
Lend of, to have a : to take advantage of somebody's gullibility, to have someone on ("he's having a lend of you")
Lippy : lipstick
Liquid laugh : vomit
Lizard drinking, flat out like a : flat out, busy
Lob, lob in : drop in to see someone ("the rellies have lobbed")
Lollies : sweets, candy
London to a brick : absolute certainty ("it's London to a brick that taxes won't go down")
Long paddock : the side of the road where livestock is grazed during droughts
Longneck : 750ml bottle of beer in South Australia
Lucky Country, The : Australia, where else?
Lunch, who opened their? : OK, who farted?
Lurk : illegal or underhanded racket

M
Maccas (pron. "mackers") : McDonald's (the hamburger place)
Mallee bull, as fit as a : very fit and strong. The Mallee is very arid beef country in Victoria/South Australia.
Manchester : Household linen, eg sheets etc.
Mappa Tassie : map of Tasmania - a woman's pubic area
Mate : buddy, friend
Mate's rate, mate's discount : cheaper than usual for a "friend"
Matilda : swagman's bedding, sleeping roll
Metho : methylated spirits
Mexican : a person from south of the Queensland or New South Wales border
Mickey Mouse : excellent, very good. Beware though - in some parts of Australia it means inconsequential, frivolous or not very good!
Middy : 285 ml beer glass in New South Wales
Milk bar : corner shop that sells takeaway food
Milko : milkman
Mob : group of people, not necessarily troublesome
Mob : family or herd (?) of kangaroos
Mongrel : despicable person
Moolah : money
Mozzie : mosquito
Muddy : mud crab (a great delicacy)
Mug : friendly insult ("have a go, yer mug"), gullible person

Mull : grass (the kind you smoke)
Muster : round up sheep or cattle
Mystery bag : a sausage

N
Nasho : National Service (compulsory military service)
Naughty, have a : have sex
Never Never : the Outback, centre of Australia
Nipper : young surf lifesaver
No drama : same as 'no worries'
No worries! : Expression of forgiveness or reassurance (No problem; forget about it; I can do it; Yes, I'll do it)
No-hoper : somebody who'll never do well
Not the full quid : not bright intellectually
Nuddy, in the : naked **Nun's nasty, as dry as a :** dry
Nut out : hammer out or work out (an agreement, say)

O
O.S. : overseas ("he's gone O.S.")
Ocker : an unsophisticated person
Offsider : an assistant, helper
Old fella : penis
Oldies : parents - "I'll have to ask my oldies"
Op shop : opportunity shop, thrift store, place where second hand goods are sold.
Outback : interior of Australia
Oz : Australia!
P
Paddock : see 'long paddock'
Pash : a long passionate kiss; hence "pashing on"
Pav : Pavlova - a rich, creamy Australian / New Zealand dessert
Perve (noun & verb) : looking lustfully at the opposite sex
Piece of piss : easy task
Pig's arse! : I don't agree with you
Piker : Someone who doesn't want to fit in with others socially, leaves parties early
Pink slip, get the : get the sack (from the colour of the termination form)
Pint : large glass of beer (esp. in South Australia)
Piss : beer. Hence "hit the piss", "sink some piss"
Plate, bring a : Instruction on party or BBQ invitation to bring your own food. It doesn't mean they're short of crockery!
Plonk : cheap wine
Pokies : poker machines, fruit machines, gambling slot machines
Polly : politician
Pom, pommy, pommie : an Englishman
Pommy bastard : an Englishman (see also 'bastard')
Pommy shower : using deodorant instead of taking a shower
Pommy's towel, as dry as a : very dry - based on the *canard* that Poms bathe about once a month
Porky : Lie, untruth (pork pie = lie)
Port : suitcase (portmanteau)

Postie : postman, mailman
Pot : 285 ml beer glass in Queensland and Victoria
Pozzy : position - get a good pozzy at the football stadium
Prezzy : present, gift

Q
Quid, make a : earn a living - "are you making a quid?"
Quid, not the full : of low IQ. [Historical note: 'quid' is slang for a pound. J1 became $2 when Australia converted to decimal currency]

R
Rack off : push off! get lost! get out of here! also "rack off hairy legs!".
Rage : party
Rage on : to continue partying - "we raged on until 3am"
Rapt : pleased, delighted
Ratbag : mild insult
Raw prawn, to come the : to bullshit, to be generally disagreeable
Reckon! : you bet! Absolutely!
Reffo : refugee
Rego : vehicle registration
Rellie or relo : family relative
Ridgy-didge : original, genuine
Right, she's : it'll be all right
Right, that'd be : Accepting bad news as inevitable. ("I went fishing but caught nothing." "Yeah, that'd be right.")
Rip snorter : great, fantastic - "it was a rip snorter of a party"
Ripper : great, fantastic - "it was a ripper party"
Ripper, you little! : Exclamation of delight or as a reaction to good news
Road train : big truck with many trailers
Roadie : a beer you buy to take away with you
Rock up : to turn up, to arrive - "we rocked up at their house at 8pm"
Rollie : a cigarette that you roll yourself
Roo : kangaroo
Roo bar : stout bar fixed to the front of a vehicle to protect it against hitting kangaroos (also bull bar)
Root (verb and noun) : synonym for f*ck in nearly all its senses: "I feel rooted"; "this washing machine is rooted"; "(s)he's a good root". A very useful word in fairly polite company.
Root rat : somebody who is constantly looking for sex.
Ropeable : very angry
Rort *(verb or noun)* : Cheating, fiddling, defrauding (expenses, the system etc.). Usually used of politicians
Rotten : drunk - "I went out last night and got rotten"
Rubbish (verb) : to criticize

S
Salute, Aussie : brushing flies away
Salvos, the : Salvation Army, bless them
Sandgroper : a person from Western Australia
Sanger : a sandwich

Sav : saveloy (see also "fair suck of the sav!")
Schooner : large beer glass in Queensland; medium beer glass in South Australia
Scratchy : instant lottery ticket
Screamer : party lover; "two pot screamer" - somebody who gets drunk on very little alcohol
Seppo : an American
Servo : petrol station
Shag on a rock, stands out like a : very obvious
Shark biscuit : somebody new to surfing
She'll be right : it'll turn out okay
Sheepshagger : A New Zealander
Sheila : a woman
Shit house (adj.) : of poor quality, unenjoyable ("this car is shit house", "the movie was shit house")
Shit house (noun) : toilet, lavatory
Shonky : dubious, underhanded. E.g. a shonky practice, shonky business etc.
Shoot through : to leave
Shout : turn to buy - a round of drinks usually ("it's your shout")
Show pony : someone who tries hard, by his dress or behaviour, to impress those around him.
Sickie : day off sick from work (chuck a sickie = take the day off sick from work when you're perfectly healthy!)
Skite : boast, brag
Skull/Skol (a beer) : to drink a beer in a single draught without taking a breath
Slab : a carton of 24 bottles or cans of beer
Sleepout : house verandah converted to a bedroom
Smoko : smoke or coffee break
Snag : a sausage
Sook : person or animal who is soft, tame, inoffensive. Hence sooky (adj.)
Spag bol : spaghetti bolognese
Spewin' : very angry
Spiffy, pretty spiffy : great, excellent
Spit the dummy : get very upset at something
Spruiker : man who stands outside a nightclub or restaurant trying to persuade people to enter
Sprung : caught doing something wrong
Spunk : a good looking person (of either sex)
Squizz (noun) : look - "take a squizz at this"
Standover man : a large man, usually gang-related, who threatens people with physical violence in order to have his wishes carried out.
Station : a big farm/grazing property
Stickybeak : nosy person
Stoked : very pleased
Stonkered : beaten, defeated, cornered, perplexed
Strewth : exclamation, mild oath ("Strewth, that Chris is a bonzer bloke")
Strides : trousers
Strine : Australian slang and pronunciation
Stubby : a 375ml. beer bottle
Stubby holder : polystyrene insulated holder for a stubby
Stuffed, I feel : I'm tired

Stuffed, I'll be : expression of surprise
Sunbake : sunbathe
Sunnies : sunglasses
Surfies : people who go surfing - usually more often than they go to work!
Swag : rolled up bedding etc. carried by a swagman
Swaggie : swagman **Swagman :** tramp, hobo

T
Tall poppies : successful people
Tall poppy syndrome : the tendency to criticize successful people
Tallie : 750ml bottle of beer
Taswegian : derogatory term for a person from Tasmania
Tea : supper
Technicolor yawn : vomit
Tee-up : to set up (an appointment)
Thingo : Wadjamacallit, thingummy, whatsit
Thongs : cheap rubber backless sandals (flip flops)
Throw-down : small bottle of beer which you can throw down quickly.
Tickets, to have on oneself : to have a high opinion of oneself
Tinny : can of beer
Tinny : small aluminium boat
Tinny, tin-arsed : lucky
Togs : swim suit
Too right! : definitely!
Top End : far north of Australia
Trackie daks/dacks : tracksuit pants
Trackies : track suit
Troppo, gone : to have escaped to a state of tropical madness; to have lost the veneer of civilisation after spending too long in the tropics.
Trough lolly : the solid piece of perfumed disinfectant in a men's urinal
Truckie : truck driver
True blue : patriotic
Tucker : food
Tucker-bag : food bag
Turps : turpentine, alcoholic drink
Turps, hit the : go on a drinking binge
Two up : gambling game played by spinning two coins simultaneously

U
Ugg boots : Australian sheepskin boots worn by surfers since at least the 1960s to keep warm while out of the water. Also worn by airmen during WW1 and WW2 because of the need to maintain warmth in non-pressurized planes at high altitudes.
Ugh : ugly. hence Ugg boots
Uni : university
Unit : flat, apartment
Up oneself : have a high opinion of oneself - "he's really up himself"
Up somebody, get : to rebuke somebody - "the boss got up me for being late"
Useful as an ashtray on a motorbike / tits on a bull : unhelpful or incompetent person or thing - "he, she or it is about as useful as tits on a bull" etc. etc.

Ute : utility vehicle, pickup truck

V
Vegies : vegetables
Vee dub : Volkswagen
Veg out : relax in front of the TV (like a vegetable)
Vejjo : vegetarian
Vinnie's : St. Vincent De Paul's (charity thrift stores and hostels)
W
WACA (pron. whacker) : Western Australian Cricket Association and the Perth cricket ground
Waggin' school : playing truant
Walkabout : a walk in the Outback by Aborigines that lasts for an indefinite amount of time
Walkabout, it's gone : it's lost, can't be found
Weekend warrior : army reservist
Whacker, whacka : Idiot; somebody who talks drivel; somebody with whom you have little patience; a dickhead
Whinge : complain
White pointers : topless (female) sunbathers
Whiteant *(verb)* : to criticise something to deter somebody from buying it. A car dealer might whiteant another dealer's cars or a real estate salesman might whiteant another agent's property
Wobbly : excitable behaviour ("I complained about the food and the waiter threw a wobbly")
Wobbly boot on, he's got the : drunk
Wog : flu or trivial illness
Wog : person of Mediterranean origin. A milder insult than the same word in the UK and perhaps elsewhere.
Wombat : somebody who eats, roots and leaves (see also *root*)
Woop Woop : invented name for any small unimportant town - "he lives in Woop Woop"
Wowser : straight-laced person, prude, puritan, spoilsport
Wuss : coward; nervous person or animal

X
XXXX : pronounced Four X, brand of beer made in Queensland
Y
Yabber : talk (a lot)
Yabby : inland freshwater crayfish found in Australia (*Cherax destructor*)
Yakka : work (noun)
Yewy : u-turn in traffic ("chuck a yewy at the next traffic lights")
Yobbo : an uncouth person

Z
Zack : sixpence (5 cents) - "it isn't worth a zack", "he hasn't got a zack"

referenced material:
http://www.koalanet.com.au/australian-slang.html/

Living on a Farm is Weird and Fun and Grounding and Realistic and Awesome for Kids

August 3, 2012

From the time I was 6 we lived on acreage. The first place was only 10 acres but we had an enormous hay shed and it was the best fun to make hay cubbies with the bales. We had an old horse named Jim, which we got with the place. He was an old turd! He was an ex pacer and so he would only trot. Very hard to ride. He was big and I was little. I would ride him down the stock route (about a mile) to pony club on a Sunday. We'd do the barrels and cavalettis (little jumps for kids) . He would put up with this for about an hour or so and then he decided… screw this I'm going home and he would, with me on his back with nothing to say about it. It must have been funny to watch this old 15 hand flea bitten grey taking this slip of a 7 or 8 yo kid out the gate, across the road and up the stock route home. The first time it happened my mum was at the pony club, having followed me down in the car to make sure I was safe. I reckon she followed me home pretty fast too.

Old Jim used to love bread, the only way you could catch him in the paddock was to corner him and give him a piece of bread. He was very cunning . He would stand on your foot with his front leg and put all his weight on you, especially if you were wearing thongs.(flipflops) We had him for a couple of year but he had arthritis and eventually he couldn't get up so we had to put him down. He had us fooled for a long time though because he refused to do any more than a trot and we thought it was due to the arthritis. Someone needed to agist their horse with us one time and when we went to catch Old Jim, he and the other horse ran away. Now having a running mate made him frisky I guess and we literally had to chase these two horses down with the ute in the paddock. Dad driving, kids in the back. So safe… NOT. I think we must have run them around for an hour. That old horse galloped full pelt until his sides were foamy… but we never, ever got him above a trot when we were on his back.



I'm clearly involved here, checking my nails

After our house burned down in 1978, when I was 10, we bought the land where my mother still lives today. There was nothing there. Just boundary fences. We built everything, the house, the sheds, all the internal fences, big dams. For a long time both my parent still had to work and run the farm. Dad was running south suffolk sheep

(the ones with the black faces). They were good meat sheep. Growing good wool sheep was very time consuming and those sheep weren't so hardy.

When it was lambing time, Mum and Dad would do rounds of the paddock morning and night to check than no ewes were in trouble or there weren't any lambs in trouble. Sometimes there were and they would bring home a lamb who was suffering from exposure and have to liven him back up. It was pretty easy to get mama to follow us up the driveway and we'd lock her in the yards and take the lamb inside. The quick fix remedy to warm them up was always the same. Shot a teaspoon of rum down their gullets and stick them in the oven for 10-20 minutes (door open of course), hold the mint sauce. After that they were usually pretty right and we would return them to their mums. One particularly stormy night, I remember mum and dad coming home with about 8-10 lambs, they had to make several trips and the lambs would be lying on hessian bags on the floor waiting their turn for the oven. Some got to lay on the hearth of the fireplace in the loungeroom. They had no idea how lucky they were. The loungeroom was the only place we had to take our shoes off in the house, so to have a stinky newborn lamb laying around was special indeed. Once everyone was warmed up, there were 8-10 bleating, pooping, raucous lambs in our dining room! Then the job was matching each lamb to mother. Sometimes the ewes would reject them because they smelled like humans, other times the ewe died. At one stage we had about 15 potty lambs which we had to bottle feed.

Before we lived there, while the house was still being built, Dad would have still to make his rounds before and after work, and bring the lambs home into town where we lived. The landlord never knew, thank God, because he was anal about no pets, not even cats. As the lambs grew we would just go up at night to give them their bottles. The funniest thing you'll ever see is half a dozen lambs chasing a ute up a driveway, bleating their heads off waiting for their bottles. Unfortunately we ran over a lamb one time… she survived but was never quite right after that.

With the breeding of the sheep, also came the eating. Dad would sell the lambs at the sales and select one each month which would have the dubious honour of feeding us. He'd kill it himself and butcher it. Something he'd learned as a young man hanging around his uncle's farm. He didn't have a dedicated space for this of course, so the killing and hanging was done over in the big shed and when it was time to butcher the lamb he'd just bring it inside and cut it up on a sheet on the dining room floor. Mum would bag it up as he went and fill the freezer. I guess that's kinda weird but for us it was normal.

As a kid, growing up on the land was awesome. We had all kinds of strange experiences. The first Christmas we were there, I got a horse named Chocolate and my brother got a motorbike. Chocolate was a great horse. I was 12, he was 10. He lived to the ripe old age of 32. I was pregnant with Miss Gremlin when Dad finally had him put down.





I truly loved living on the farm as a kid. I think both my brother and I learned a lot about life, death and country life. I would love for my kids to experience even just 1/10th of what I did. It's such a different way of life. I know this will never be but I can try to give them some of those experiences whenever we visit. It gives you such grounding.

An Adventure in Pictures

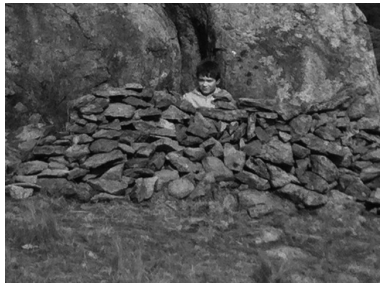
August 4, 2012

Give the kids some freedom and they are good to run wild over the farm…They're at the age now that they can just explore. No supervision required



Checking out the Rocks

This fort was made by us one school holidays about 30 years ago, some resurrection work was done a few weeks ago. The mission is to build a roof now.



This 30 year old Rock Fort is still fun

They saved their toy guns from the last trip 2 years ago, the farm with be safe from pretend varmits.



Little Farm Kids



The toy guns are a hit



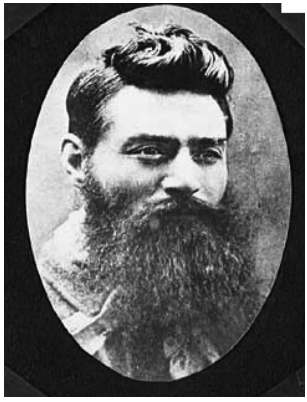
We hardly saw the kids all day, they were running around discovering everything. They got super dirty and loved every minute. They had lots of awesome fun.

There were some injuries that required attention but nothing too serious. Just a part of country kid life.

They passed out around 7. Tomorrow will be another great day of discovery.

In Search of Bushrangers

August 5, 2012

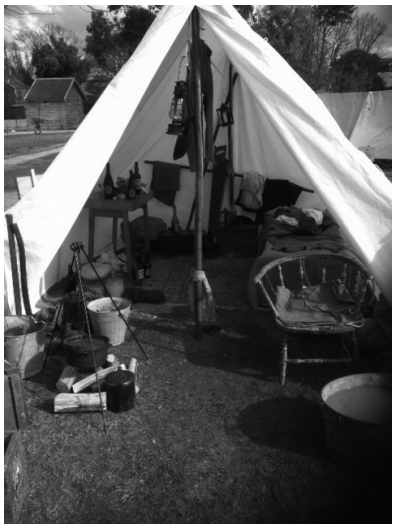


In every country's history there are scoundrels who become famous for their misdeeds. Bonnie and Clyde, Billy the Kid, Jesse James are among the most famous. Australia is no different. In the late 1800's a group of outlaws known as the Kelly Gang terrorized the population in the area of North East Victoria and southern New South Wales. Their final stand and subsequent arrest was at Glenrowan but many towns in the area can claim history attached to the gang. The leader of the gang was Edward (Ned) Kelly. He became famously unique for the armour he used.



Every year, in a town called Beechworth they celebrate the anniversary of the committal hearing by re-enacting the Kelly trial and other events highlighting the Kelly gang. The town has pantomimes and dresses itself up in 1880's style as a living history lesson.

Grand Master D was very interested in Ned Kelly on a previous trip and as luck would have it, we happened to be back in the area for the anniversary this year. The kids went with their grandma, aunt and cousin to check it out.



















The entire town of Beechworth gets into the spirit with different displays of days gone by, things directly related to The Kelly gang and Ned himself, along with general life in that era. It's a well preserved tourist town, heritage listed and carefully maintained. Steeped in rich history and Australian heritage, it's a great place for a family outing.

The kids had such a great time, Grand master D now wants to make a movie about it all. He says he's writing the script. I dare not dash him hopes by reminding him it's been done before ☺

Referenced material:

http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/ned-kelly
http://www.ironoutlaw.com/
http://www.beechworth.com/
http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/ned-kellys-life-and-crimes/

Taekwondo Down Under

August 6, 2012

Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin do Taekwondo at home with Harlem Taekwondo, lead by Master Fall. They've been doing it for about 4 months now, 5 days a week, 2 hours a day. It has improved Miss Gremlin's physique incredibly and Grand Master D has great form.

Well the connection with the sport does not end there. My cousin and her husband run the local South East Australian Taekwondo school here in my home town and I had arranged that the kids could come and do a class with the Aussies.

Last night was the first class and we brought an entourage with us. Two grandma's, an aunt, a cousin and a sister, none of whom had seen them do their stuff, other than on video and facebook.

The class was 1.5 hours, it was adults and kids together but run really well. Our kids did not seem out of place and it was clear that taekwondo is universal.

The Master, Tony Hedrick, when asked how they did commented that he fixed a few little things but didn't know if that's how they did it in Harlem or if they we just doing it wrong ☺ I would suggest the latter. A sport is a sport… right?

Little Miss Gremlin got a free spar at the end with Master Tony and as always wasn't scared of anything.

I think it's wonderful that although they train and live on the other side of the world, the kids can come to Australia and jump into a class and blend right in… well the Harlem Taekwondo lettering on the back of their uniforms could be a give away but they really had fun and want to do it again while we're here.








Taekwondo is a great way to get fit, lose weight or to just enjoy the social aspect of a sport. Not to mention the added ability of defending yourself if you should ever be in that situation. Why not find a local class and check it out. It's great exercise and release for the kids too.

The Way Through Jetlag

August 7, 2012

It was a particularly long trip to Oz this time. We left at 3pm on wednesday afternoon and finally arrived at our destination friday night after midnight. 20 hours flying time and 6 hours driving plus stopovers. By the time we arrived I was delirious from lack of sleep. I didn't really sleep on the plane at all. We had been delayed from the start. Our onward plane was late which always makes the journey longer.

The kids are bigger now and there's less room to spread out. The plane was very full and it just didn't have the space for us to move to other seats.

The travelling to the future bit is fine as long as you get some sleep on the plane while you're doing it.

Monday morning was the first day that I woke up well before I should. It is usually day four that the jetlag will hit you when you travel to OZ from the USA in my experience. Up until then you are getting up and going to bed almost normally although perhaps a little earlier to bed due to exhaustion. By the fourth day your body has pretty well caught up on required rest and wants to wake up when it's used to waking and that can be inconvenient. 4:30am is not a nice start to the day.

However it is still easier to travel with the clock rather than against it. When we go back home to New York after a month I will be walking the boards at 4 am for weeks, probably with both kids ☺ It's just how it works.

The King refuses to accept jetlag, he won't succumb to it, ever, but that's just his stubborn spirit ☺. It is something that exists, you just have to learn how to handle it. Some suffer worse than others and your first time is always the hardest.

There are products that are sold to try and combat it but I have no idea whether they work or not. The real secret is to adjust to local time immediately and the broken sleep and early hours wake up will not last long. Besides that, you're on a holiday and getting up early is really a good idea to see the most you can, right?

Try to eat well and at local meal times, get plenty of water to combat the plane dehydration and relax, sleep will come. Exercise always helps, go for a nice long walk or hit the gym. If you can exert some energy and get the blood pumping your body can handle the stresses much easier.

Most importantly it won't last and you will get back to normal soon enough… Just enjoy your time away.

Resourced materials:

http://www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/jet+lag.html
http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/sleep-topics/jet-lag-and-sleep

Hump Day Humour #9

August 8, 2012



And Then They Built a Fire

August 8, 2012

There comes a time in every kids life that they need to learn to build a fire. For Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin today was that day. Armed with some newspaper and a box of matches, they found a stump requiring burning and set to work. Ma showed them how to set it alight.

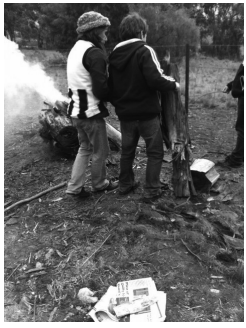


Miss Gremlin is learning how to light fires.



Grand Master D has a turn

Nowthatthefireisgoingit'sgonnaneedfuel. The kids found some logs and brought them to the fire.



This log is pretty heavy Ma, where does it go?



That's going pretty good. Where's those marshmallows?

We spent about 3 hours wandering around the paddocks dragging back wood to burn and make the fire nice and big. They cooked marshmallows and potatoes in foil. They got smoke in their eyes and down their throats…They totally loved every second.



And that's how you make a fire kids.



THAT"S a fire!

…And then it rained. So we took everything back inside and left the fire to fend for itself but not before I wheelbarrowed wood for the inside fire.



Mush, mother, mush

Kangaroos Everywhere

August 9, 2012

Today as we headed down into town we came across a mob of wild kangaroos. They live in the hills around the area and are often seen on the farm. For kids growing up in New York it was quite a treat. We stopped and watched them for a while. The big Buck was standing protectively. If we had gotten out of the car he would have had a go at us. The kids were very excited to see it all.








When we arrived at my brother's we were greeted by the dogs and their pet joey. It was a little weird to see the kangaroo hopping across the driveway with the dogs but it was pretty cool for the kids to be able to pat him, especially just after we'd seen some wild ones.







And to top our day off, on the way home we saw a rainbow.




http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangaroo

Taekwondo Fame

August 10, 2012



Last night the kids went back to my cousin's taekwondo studio. They really enjoyed it on monday night and wanted to do it again. Of course there was a little extra incentive to go out in the bitter cold… The newspaper wanted to do a human interest story about the Harlem kids coming to do taekwondo in an Aussie country town. The photographer said it would be a welcome relief from all the football stories. I guess he's sick of photographing them.

He arrived about 15 minutes after the class started and took the kids off to the side to get their stories, names and take some pics. Their cousins got in on the act because they were the hosts. He was very good at his job and really got the kids into the mood. They sure had a good time pretending to be famous. I just have to wait for the journo to call to do the interview. I'll be sure to update when the article is printed ☺



Give me a tough face



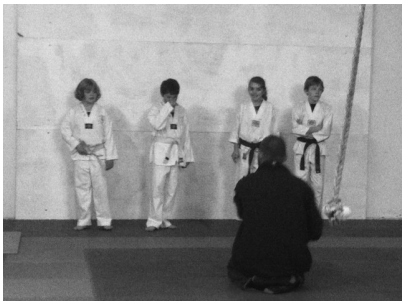
How long do we have to hold this pose exactly?



You want me like this?



It'll be better in print



Setting up the lighting



Just getting comfortable with the idea of fame

It's funny what you can do if you just give it a try. All this took was one email to the local paper. They were onto it straight away. Don't be afraid to try. They can only say 'no thank you'. And you never know, they may say 'yes', then you're in the paper.

A Family Affair

August 11, 2012

This weekend saw us travel to Sydney to honour my Aunt and Uncle who have been married for 50 years. It's quite an achievement to stay together for such a long time and it's fitting to honour it in a special way.

The scene was set with a photo of the bride and groom. As guest arrived they were greeted by the happy couple 50 years on. The bridesmaid, best man and paige boy were all in attendance. It was a really lovely evening. The kids all ran around and drank too much soda, exactly what you would expect at a wedding or anniversary party.



The Bride and Groom in 1962



Bride, Groom and bridesmaid



The best man, brides maid and paige boy

The adult guests were treated to a slide show of a life together and many happy memories on the slide projector. The kids could really care less but in the back of their minds this event will remain to be recalled at a later time. Even if they don't really understand the significance now it will come later and hopefully will serve as something to strive for in the future.

A more fitting celebration you couldn't get.

Letters of congratulations from the Prime Minister, Opposition leader and other officials were a highlight. Unfortunately the Queen doesn't send anything until you've been married for 60 years. Ten more years of wedded bliss required for that honour ☺

What a worthwhile celebration and a testament to a life of striving to stay together. It's a rare event in these days of $200, no fault divorces and one with which we should give much congratulations and praise to.

Moments like this don't come along all that often and it was lovely to be able to coordinate our trip to attend.

Continuing Kids Adventures

August 13, 2012

UPDATED- Back on the farm from the city. The kids had an absolute blast with their cousins. It's this type of thing I miss for them, they don't miss it because they've never had it but I remember my childhood just like that. The huge family gatherings on a pretty regular basis. All the kids running everywhere. It was a lovely way to grow up.





This morning the kids woke up at 8am… They dressed quickly, had a bite to eat and headed out the door for the country life freedom again. I don't expect to see them until I go looking. They took some shovels and are planning to dig trenches to play in. What kid voluntarily wants to do manual labour? Apparently mine. The fresh country air will really do them well and I look forward to going and checking on their progress.

It's so great to have them back here on the farm , they've been so excited to get back and I know they are going to have a time they can really remember.

It's wonderful to see children discover new things, have new experiences that you know they will hold with them for a lifetime. There's something very special about passing that on and sharing your own childhood experiences with them.

Connecting with the family has been really great for them though, they have grown through the experience and not once asked to watch tv or play with ipods. Let's see what craziness they can discover this week before we leave to go north to the beach.

Update:

We found them early and had some jobs for them… They had a taste of mustering sheep.We all had to drove the sheep down the driveway so they could have the nice green grass which was growing under the tree. It was interesting to watch Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin, we had to teach them how to do this stuff, it was a weird feeling as it's just second nature to me because I've been doing it since I was their age.

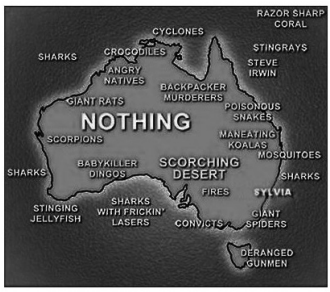
Then the kids got to spend the rest of the morning exercising their pyro tendencies in the paddock. They did a wonderful job of cleaning up the broken branches, sticks and twigs all around near the front gate. The fire got quite hot and high with all the eucalyptus branches with leaves still on them. The oil burns so hot! I explained about bush fires and they couldn't imagine how hot it must be trying to fight one.. They were in total awe of the fire.

There was an emergency supply run to town (We had run out of timtams). Then Grand Master D and I braved the gully… and it didn't disappoint. It's also still as hard as it was the last time I did it probably 20 years ago. The worst part is I forgot the camera so now I have to go do it again to take pictures of the awesome views.

The day was topping off by a cutthroat game of monopoly with the visiting uncle and aunt… I won and everyone hated that ☺

Hump Day Humour… Aussie Style

August 14, 2012





Wildlife Mishap

August 15, 2012

Today we went out to the place where Dad's beloved little dog has made a new home. She was all alone too much here on the farm and with Ma being allergic, circumstances made life hard for both Ma and Whisper. So it was decided that Whisper would go to another place. An ad was answered in the local paper and it was just meant to be.

Whisper has a new home and she's very well looked after and really happy.



A welcome visitor

We went out to visit today, one, because the kids hadn't met her and two, because it was time MA went back to check all was well, just for her own peace of mind. After an hour and a half drive we came to the place set in idyllic countryside in the Tallangatta Valley.

The Snowy River Camp is a lovely place where school kids get to experience country life and where city folk and international tourists can come and have a true Aussie farm experience.

They have many and varied activities, from canoeing on their own lake to using flying foxes, horse riding and obstacle courses to mention onltors Peter and Merry Jeffery, just wandering around and chatting and spending time with Whisper.











We also met Stitch, a young male wombat. The kids had fun with him, never having seen one before, they got pretty close and had some time patting him. As wombats are nocturnal, he was still sleepy so he was a little stroppy and began nibbling the kids shoes. This was funny and cute and not too off putting for the kids. Animals do stuff like that.

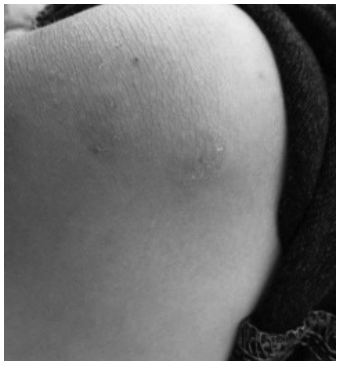








Then events turned ugly……after about 10-15 mins Young Stitch decided he'd had enough. Stitch lunged on Miss Gremlin's knee and chomped down with all his might. I was very close and was able to get in pretty fast and detach Stitch from his crying victim. I sat her on a chair to get a look at the damage when Stitch lunged again and Miss Gremlin, in her haste to pull her legs up to safety, fell backwards on her chair and crashed to the ground. It was quite a comedy of events and we all had a laugh afterwards.





Despite all this adversity Miss Gremlin was a good sport and when it was discovered no major damage was done, she recovered quickly with a new found respect for wombats.

While all the commotion was going on, Stitch, pleased with his efforts turned on his little legs and headed back into his sack to continue his slumber.



Although Peter and Merry said he liked Miss Gremlin and was just being friendly… We think we'd rather not get friendly with wombats again, thanks all the same ☺ Even Whisper has learned to keep her distance.

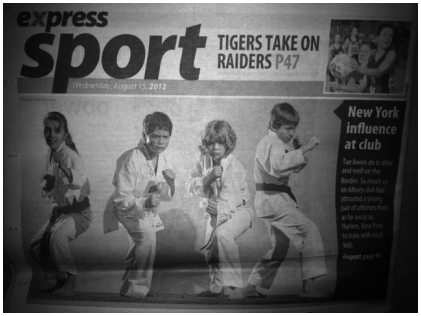
referenced material: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wombat

The Published Article

August 16, 2012

The newspaper article that the kids were photographed for last week was published in today's paper. The photo was half of the back page and the article was a couple of

columns in the sports section. Quite good publicity for my cousin's club, South East Australian Taekwondo, and a fun treat for Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin…



Back page celebrities

Yes we ran around town buying as many copies as we could ☺

Today in Pictures

August 17, 2012

We did so much today but I'm going to use the old saying ….A picture is worth a thousand words and give you a few thousand to peruse.



First there was bringing the firewood down to the house. Grand Master D insisted on pushing the wood ladend barrow, rolling it 3 times on the way from the shed to the house. But the chivalry was not lost on MA.



Then we went to visit my auntie and uncle. He has a panel shop and she runs the little store next door. I did this sign about 25 years ago, it's had a touch up but it's still there.



And this one ☺



The kids found the race car





and proceeded to act out their own Talladega Nights…..

They spent a good hour taking turns. Miss Gremlin is waiting her turn by playing on her ipod ☺



After driving up an appetite, Miss Gremlin helped make the lunch.











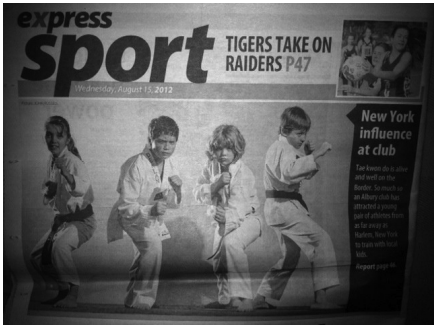
On the move to another visit, we came across a real life AFL footy ground and had to spend quite some time there. They both loved it. The whole ground to themselves, kicking goals and having a blast… It was topped off by the fact it was the local Magpies ground and both Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin being die hard Collingwood Magpies supporters, it was a fitting ground for a kick.



To finish off the day, Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin ditched us and spent the rest of the afternoon at their cousin's house and went off to taekwondo with them.



Someone seems to be on a losing punch here!



Don't mention the article, I mentioned the article once, I think I got away with it ☺

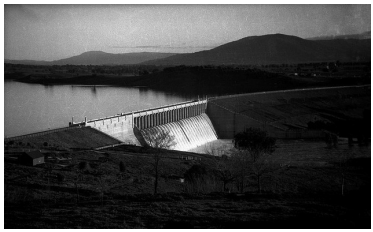
The Lake is Full

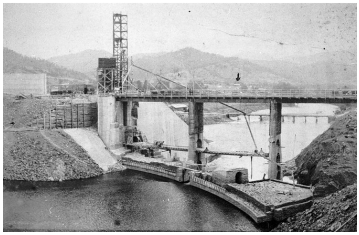
August 18, 2012

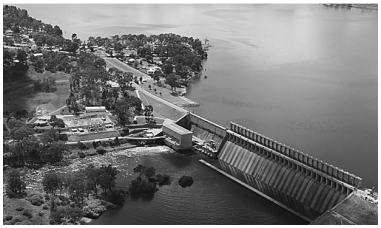
Mum and I took Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin out to Lake Hume or the weir as the locals call it, to show them around. They've never been there and it's full for the first time in many, many years. It's been as low as 10%, so it was exciting for us all to see the spillway blasting water out. There is a hydro electric station that produces power for the local area.

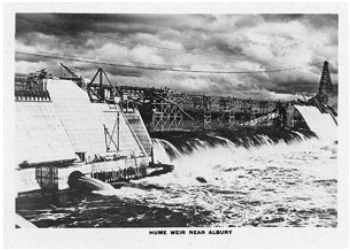
Lake Hume supplies water to Albury and surrounding areas. It also acts as a recreational place for thousands of people with many resorts on the foreshores around the lake. Several towns are on the waters edge. People fish and boat, ski and camp and do all the things that you do around a large body of water.

It began construction in 1919 and took 17 years to complete and claimed a number of lives in the process. In the 1950's it was extended and the whole town of Tallangatta had to be relocated to higher ground to accommodate the extra catchment area.













Not so long ago in the 1990's, there was great concern the wall was shifting and traffic was halted from driving across the wall, which was of major excitement to us as kids and the government spent millions on shoring it all up to avert impending disaster. They built a secondary wall structure to add strength to the original construction. This makes wall area much larger. They haven't really told us the extend of the concern but it's been rumoured that it was a very worrying time and far worse than officials ever let on.











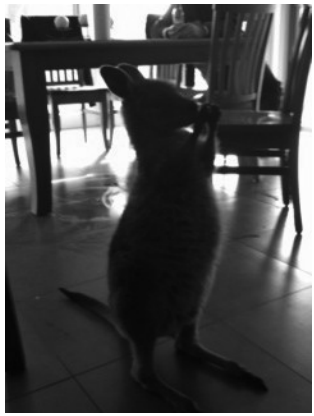

There is no foot traffic across the wall either which was a shame because it would have been fun for the kids to be able to go across. It was a weekday though and there were 'wall walk' signs so I imagine they open the wall up for foot traffic on the weekends. Just to keep it to a minimum, lest we all end up in Adelaide on a giant Murray wave.

The kids enjoyed it anyway and we topped it of with an ice cream from the old store.

Buddy the Kangaroo

August 19, 2012

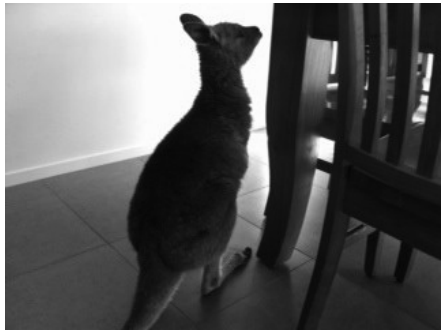
Miss Gremlin has a new best friend…Buddy the baby kangaroo. He's my brother's pet and is very cute. He thinks he's a dog though. We spent an afternoon with my family and buddy entertained the kids for ages.



Even in Australia it's a novelty to have a kangaroo as a pet. Glenn got him while out shooting and killed his mother without knowing she had a joey in the pouch, so he brought him home as a pet.

When he gets big, and he will, they are going to give him to a wildlife sanctuary place that's close by. But in the meantime, all the kids love him and he's quite the talking point.















Uncle Glenn Rocks…

August 19, 2012

Uncle Glenn hasn't really spent much time with the kids over their lives. We've always lived far apart. Today, however, he gained legendary status in the eyes of Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin…

After the BBQ he took them out in the back block and taught them how to drive. They won't forget this trip any time soon ☺

Memories like this remain for a lifetime… Thanks Brother ☺

Shooting the S#!^ out of Stuff is a Bit Fun…

August 20, 2012

The weather cleared enough this morning to spend the day outside. Uncle Glenn arrived with his big boys, the C's and a box of clays. Having had a little taste of shooting on the farm, the kids were keen to have a go. In previous years they were too small to be able to use the guns.

This trip they are big enough and conscientious enough to learn how to handle them properly with care and safety.

Guns are an essential tool in farm life and learning to use them safely is part of that. Even though we don't live here, I wanted the kids to have as many experiences of farm life as I could and with that comes the learning and respect for guns and how to be safe.

The most important thing to know is that you must always handle a gun as if it's loaded. Never wave it around or point it at anyone in jest. Many accidents have

happened with people fooling around with guns they think are empty, only to find it loaded and someone gets shot.

I trust my brother with guns. He learned from Dad, who also taught me. I felt very comfortable with him teaching my children how to handle them in a safe manner.

Of course coming from Harlem, we have other experiences of guns, none of them positive, so it was a great teaching point to show the children how things can be different.

It was a fun afternoon just shooting some clays.



Can I have another go please?



shotguns kick hard



Shooting off the ute



shooting targets



Miss Gremlin shooting targets

Miss Gremlin liked it but thought the shotgun hurt too much even though her shoulder was supported. She enjoyed the rifle much more.



Got it down



shooting clays



Grand Master D shooting



Learning how to shoot the clays



Getting instruction



Shooting targets with Pa's rifle

Grand Master D got instruction and Uncle Glenn supported his shoulder to start with… By the end he was shooting on his own with both barrels and got 5 clays in a row at one stage. He was a natural at it and really loved doing it.



Molley hasn't lost her knack

Even I had a go. I've never shot clays before but I got a few. Two barrels was too much. I like the rifle for target shooting much better.

Finding the Fun in Farmwork

August 21, 2012

Grand Master D especially but Miss Gremlin too, have been pestering me to let them split logs. I have avoided it because it can be dangerous, however at Uncle Glenn's all the boys went out and felled a tree, cut it up and brought it back. Then the kids had the task of splitting all the wood for the fire ☺ With some instruction they were just let at it.. and I was shooed away lest I freak out ☺

No one lost any fingers or limbs and Miss Gremlin actually split most of it after the boys lost interest. She was out there doing it until almost dark. She had a blast.

Some farm work is more fun than other stuff. Splitting wood seems to be up there on that list. I imagine they'll have sore muscles this morning though. Swinging a splitter is no easy feat.







As a kid, this was our only source of heating … wait, here at the farm it still is. We spent many weekends getting firewood as a family activity when I was Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin's age. I have done all these jobs the kids are enjoying as part of life, they get to play at it for fun… and that's a really great thing. They are building very special memories.

There's Gold in Them Thar Hills

August 22, 2012



We went on a Gold mine tour. There's a little town called Yackandandah which was part of the Victorian Gold Rush around 1852. After the initial rush where everyone was finding the gold in the creeks and rivers, they had to start mining it.

13 tin miners from Cornwall in England came over and used their geological knowledge to locate the quartz vein on the ridge and for 17 years worked the mine and pulled 12 tonnes of gold out. All dug by hand. An amazing feat. We spent 3 hours learning all about their adventures and we went down in the mine. The kids thought it was totally awesome and I managed to keep my claustrophobic thoughts and tendencies to myself ☺















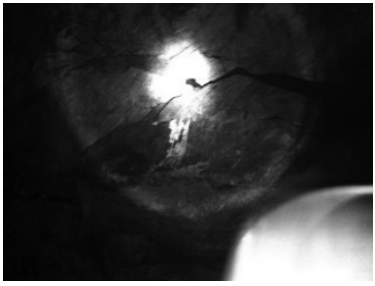




We were 160 metres underground and about 60 metres inside the side of the mountain. The original tracks and little carriages were still inside the mine. There were a few artifacts left there and even the candle pegs were still in the walls.

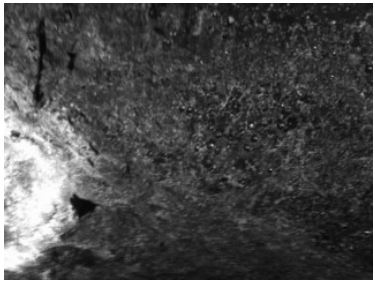


















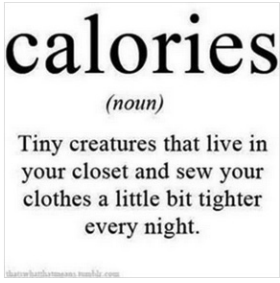


Greg, our tour guide, is obviously very passionate about his mine and he has got it heritage listed. He has the lease for 20 years and he hopes to find someone to pass it onto to keep it for future generations. He does tours on the hour on weekends and by appointment during the week. I can highly recommend the tour to anyone interested in history. It even kept the kids enthralled.

http://www.uniqueyackandandah.com.au/index.php?page_id=81 http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2007/07/13/1978130.htm

Hump Day Humour #11

August 22, 2012



Cook with Ma-If You Dare

August 23, 2012

Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D did some cooking on the last night with Ma. They had a cake mix for a vanilla loaf cake. Ma didn't have a loaf tin so they made cupcakes instead.







They had plenty of fun and made a huge mess. The house smelled wonderful as the cupcakes cooked.

Once they were done, Ma helped the kids ice them…



The test is always in the tasting……



The cupcakes failed miserably ☺ They were awful! But everyone had awesome fun. Who cares if they turned out tragically.

The memory was in the making.

UPDATE: The cupcakes were retested the next morning, just to check if they were as bad as first thought. Miss Gremlin decided they needed to go straight into the bin and promptly put them there, yes she did!

Winter at the Beach

August 24, 2012

An afternoon in pictures…..

We needed to have some beach time as our trip is drawing to a close. The day was sensational for it.






There is a spectacular playground right beside the broadwater, which also has the perfect, safe swimming area. Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin really enjoyed their afternoon in the sun.





On the way home we had ice creams. No trip to the beach is complete without that.

Australian Flora Abound

August 26, 2012

On the final farm walk this trip I took some pics of some of the flora growing on the farm. Over the years it has regenerated all over the property. It wasn't really there when I was a kid. It looks so pretty.

The Wattle:







The Teatree:







The family:








The farm looks beautiful and green, the greenest I've seen it in years. The drought has truly broken….Until next time. It is a country of such contrast.

It's been really wonderful sharing all those experiences with the kids. They won't forget and that's what this trip was really all about. Being able to share something special with your children is really wonderful.

Our Trip comes to an End

August 27, 2012

On Tuesday morning we board the plane for the long trip home. It's been an awesome visit to Australia this time, we've packed *so* much in. We've seen family, friends and done farm stuff and had some exciting new experiences with the kids. They've connected more with their cousins and Aunts and Uncles, who were quite impressed with how they are developing as people . It's a proud moment when you get comments on how lovely your children are.

I'm ready to go home though. It's time to sleep in my own bed and not to live out of a suitcase. I'm not even thinking about the long flight home. All that is left to do

now is buy the supplies…timtams and vegemite etc.

I know the King is ready to see his family again.

Travelling is great but coming home is better.

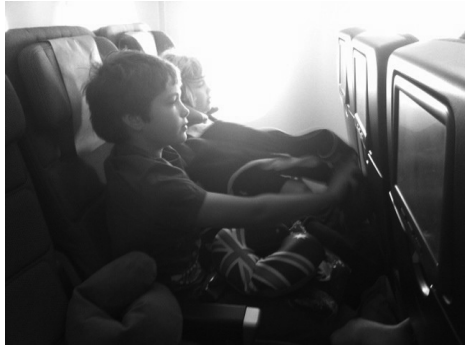
Now to survive the jetlag……again.

Time Travellers….

August 28, 2012



So that was a long trip…leaving Brisbane 8.25pm Monday night Australian time (6.30 am NY time) and overnighting in the fleabag hotel in Sydney. Having breakfast in The Qantas club this morning did start the day off nicely though and erased all thought of the evening's accommodations. We boarded Tuesday morning in Sydney 10am bound for LAX. Our first time on an Airbus A380. They are huge, however there really isn't any more comfort room. They're just for moving *more* people. I don't understand why airlines do that.



Our Plane from Sydney, an Airbus A380

We walked in our door at 8pm Tuesday night New York time (10am Wednesday oz time), 38 hours later.

We've travelled back through several time zones and the kids thought this was pretty cool. We arrived home in time to watch the Back to the Future trilogy…go figure!

Several times I had to ask Grand Master D which city we were in ☺ I just couldn't work it out. All airports look the same.



Miss Gremlin chose not to sleep on the 14 hour flight, so she was a bit tired and cranky through the immigration and customs process in LAX… But that was thwarted and we caught our connection without any delay. Actually in comparison to some of the adults, she did quite well.

Before the wheels were even up she was OUT…

The kids getting settled for the trip from Sydney

nothing was waking that child, not even the promise of food. She woke upon landing in New York 5 hours later. She's quite excited to have stayed awake 21 hours straight. Funny the things that kids find fun.

Grand Master D managed a few hours on the long flight and then he slept half the flight over to New York.

He's a great traveller, no problems there ever. Although he was a little snappy at Miss Gremlin in LAX and JFK but that was due to fatigue and her whinging.

This is how they looked at the end of our travels

I think I managed about 2 hours on the long flight and half of the second flight, so we're all extremely happy to be home and heading for bed …

I had serious trouble keeping them awake on the hour and a half subway ride home. I knew if they fell asleep I wouldn't be able to wake them so I had to keep them up. I hate being mean like that but it will also help with the jetlag adjustment.

By the time we arrived here in New York we'd been through 4 security checks, 3 airports, 2 train stations and a hotel for 1 trip home. It's such a long way but we had a really great time. Miss Gremlin commented that she'll be ready to do that again in 2 years time ☺

After all the fun and travelling we really understand "There's ***absolutely*** no place like home."

Hump Day Humour #8

August 29, 2012



I've Been Bad (Getting Back To Paleo)

August 29, 2012

For the last month, while we've been away I have been pretty easy on myself and have eaten whatever I wanted. How can you go to the land of meat pies and timtams and NOT have some. I was still fairly careful how I ate but I didn't deny myself. Surprisingly I didn't gain any weight but I could certainly tell when I ate any wheat products. I would feel gassy and bloated. Miss Gremlin's nose is causing her trouble again too… that nasty cheese and gluten.

So starting back today I will be eating properly again and really do my best to get all of us onto this way of eating. The King is already convinced. I can really feel the difference when I don't stick to my plan. I never really noticed it before I became more aware of what I was putting into my body.

I'm looking forward to getting into the book I bought while I was away, Wheat Belly by William Davis. It talks about the negative affects of wheat and gluten on the body.

I'm hoping it will help combat the jetlag as well. I'll let you know on that one ☺

I will be posting new recipes and new things I find along the way back to Paleo… Thanks for staying around even when I wasn't really talking food.

Conquering Jetlag

August 30, 2012

How do you get over jetlag quickly? Do you just sleep when your body wants to? Or do you force yourself to adjust to local time immediately? For me it's a combination of both.

I find travelling *with* the clock is easier than travelling *against* it.

Whenever I travel it's usually over several time zones, therefore the adjustment is bigger. They say that it takes a day for every hour to adjust. I don't believe that's the case. At least not for me. Usually I'm pretty well adjusted within about 4 days.

The first day I try to stay up until local bedtime, eating at mealtimes and having plenty of good coffee. After that I am able to stay up but find myself waking in the night. When this happens, instead of fighting it I just go with it. I sleep with the computer very close by and if I wake up, I'll work for a little while, sometimes up to an hour, this usually makes me sleepy again and I'll go back to sleep. Reading does the same thing.

This trip I did this a few times. It works because you can speak to home and get the news then go back to sleep.

I don't nap during the day, ever. I have coffee whenever I think I need it because I know my body will win anyway and I will sleep.

When it comes to kids I'm not as strict. If they need to sleep I let them. But just a nap because otherwise they won't sleep at night. They get so tired with the travelling and this makes them cranky and whiny so I'm happy for a break. If they have a sleep it's really ok.

We have a bit of time before school starts so we'll adjust.

Yesterday was a bit of a write off but we all slept well last night and got up at a more reasonable time this morning, so we're on our way back to normal.



Grand Master D



Miss Gremlin

Taekwondo Article Update

August 31, 2012


express sport TIGERS TAKE ON RAIDERS P47

New York influence at club

Tae kwon do is alive and well on the Border. So much so an Albury club has attracted a young pair of pillivits from as far away as Harlem, New York to train with local kids.

Report page 66.

Technology is a wonderful thing, except when you can't get hold of it.I wasn't able to get near a scanner until I got back home. Now that I am, here is the article that goes with the photo that was in the newspaper.

Article:

Albury based South East Australia Tae Kwon Do Club has been enjoying an international flavour recently with the arrival of two US based competitors. Deklan Mills, 11, and his sister Hannah, 8, live and train in Harlem, New York but arrived on the Border to visit family. The pair have been training with the Albury club and according to head instructor, Tony Hedrick, have been adding flair and variety to training. "It has been good having them here" Hedrick said. "It's always good to see some different styles of tae kwon do." South East Australia Tae Kwon Do Club--the only club in Albury-Wodonga --has been around for 17 years and the sport itself has been on the Border for 30 years. The nearest club to Albury is Corowa. Each year around March and April the Border club hosts an open competiton which draws close to 50 competitors. Hedrick said tae kwon do was a great sport for fitness and socialising."It's good for your fitness, co-ordination and balance and it's social," he said "We train four times a week and have a kids-only class on Saturday mornings." The Border club has about 50 members but Hedrick said it was always looking for more. Anyone interested in joining up and learning the sport can visit the JJ Wright Hall near the Albury Showgrounds between 6pm and 7pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. Or check out the kids class between 9am and 11:30am on Saturday or call Hedrick on 0418 406 053.


US visitors bring flair to tae kwon do

BY JACK BAKER

ALBURY-based South East Australia Tae Kwon Do Club has been enjoying an international flavour recently with the arrival of two US-based competitors.

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Albury-Wodonga's free newspaper

While we were away, our club, Harlem Taekwondo had their belt promotion test. Unfortunately we missed it. Miss Gremlin was a little disappointed because she is really dedicated to her sport. After arriving home, we took a couple of days to adjust to the time difference before we went back to classes. By Thursday, Miss Gremlin was ready. It was exciting to see everyone and all the new belts. Master Fall, during the class, gave Miss Gremlin a test to see if she had retained her forms. Of course she had because she loves it so much. At the end of the class he got out some boards.

And here's what happened next …….

http://www.amotherlife.com/the-published-article/

http://www.amotherlife.com/taekwondo-fame/

Is it Time for School YET? or Please Let School Start Before I go Insane

September 1, 2012

We're on the countdown for school to start. We've been home 4 days and Miss Gremlin has asked me 15 times if we're going supplies shopping yet. I can't even begin to think about facing that. Why is it so hard, why is everyone leaving it to the last minute? WHY do I have to fight 10 aggravated moms for the last 4 0.25c marble books? They never use as many as is on the list anyway? Why do we do it to ourselves?

There must be a better way, the teachers must be able to organise their lists better than they do. Why ask for 3 pump soaps each from 20 kids when they can buy one and ask for large refill bottles instead? Why not buy the markers and crayons in bulk and ask for the cash instead?

In fact, why can't the education department just get their 'ish' together and supply the schools with everything they need? We rush around spending too much money on stuff the kids won't even use all of and then other parents don't provide anything.

Last year Miss Gremlin's teacher confided that only about 5 parents even sent in the supplies. Five out of 20… That's a lot of pressure on those parents that did and the kids who didn't and ultimately the teacher who then has to beg, steal or borrow to get enough stuff to function in the classroom, when their energies should be spent on teaching and lesson plans.

At least all the uniforms are still ok and I don't have to shop for those. I am so pleased we're a uniform school. I would hate to have to go buy trendy clothes for the kids to wear and then have the 'what to wear' fight every day!

It will be a shock for the kids getting up every day at 6:30 and getting out the door by 7:45. But they're ready, they've had an awesome summer vacation. I'm ready. We've fitted so much in and it 's time for them to go. I need a break…… and a holiday ☺ I need to not be needed for several hours. I need to not hear them or see them. Just so I can look forward to seeing them again. That's not wrong, is it?

The summer is an exhausting time. It's too long, for everyone. I've bumped into mother's on the street who have been counting down for a month! We all feel the same. But soon enough life will get back to normal and we'll be longing for our first break.

Until then, Thursday can't come fast enough and I'll just have to get enthused enough to supply shop Monday.

It's a Full House

September 2, 2012

The Princess arrived from OZ this week, just after us. She has business to attend to and friends to see. While she's sorting out her apartment she's bunking in with us.

It's just like the old days. The King and I, The Princess, Grand Master D, Miss Gremlin, Sir Lickalot, who becomes Sir Droolalot, when the fluffbag, Vegas is in the house. They just run all day. He chases her down the hall into the bedroom and she chases him out. It's very funny to see a little maltese fluffbag chasing a huge Leonberger down the



Stacks on Dad!

hall. There are huge puddles of drool on the floor where he is just too excited that she's around. I would love to get into his mind to see what he's thinking.



Sir Lickalot catching a nap



Vegas and Miss Gremlin chillin'

This morning they all went out early and the house was very quiet. They ran with the dogs and did obstacle courses and all manner of other things you do when you're jetlagged and up before the sun.

It gets a little nutty with 5 people and 2 dogs in the place but it's kinda nice too. We miss The Princess since she moved into her apt and then back to OZ. I really like everyone together.

She's here for 2 weeks so we'll just enjoy it while we can… And then we'll skype.

Fundraising Winner…

September 3, 2012

As school begins this week, we'll be inundated with information, curriculum nights, PTA meetings, school lunch forms. The pressure will start for funding raising ideas. Every school goes through it. Budget cuts get deeper every year and the shortfall has to be made up somewhere.

Here's a simple fundraising idea that is easy to implement and everyone can contribute.

Boxtops… you know those little things on lots of brands of packaged food. You probably have a dozen in your pantry and don't even know. You get 10c per logo. If you clip them, save them and send them to school with your child, the school can send them off to Boxtops 4 Education and receive a check for you to do something useful for the school. It's surprising how quickly they add up.

If your school doesn't already take advantage of the program, suggest it at the next PTA meeting and get collecting. For more info go to www.boxtops4education.com and check it out.

5 Things I'm Gonna do When the Kids Go Back to School

September 4, 2012

Let's face it , we're all happy the summer is over. As parents, the long summer break is daunting and oh so painful. Yes at first we're all happy to be done with the school year and the early mornings, lunches and all that goes with it. The novelty of that wears off within a week or 2 and there's still 11 weeks to go, if you don't send your kids to camp then you're doomed to weeks of kid torture!

Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin have been off school since June 28th and return for the new year next week, Sept 6th. Now *THAT'S* a long time. I personally think it's too long but it's how it is, so we have no choice.

But now they're going back I'm looking forward to doing for me… just me! Well the King isn't going anywhere so he'll still be around but I will be able to do so many things between 8-3 or nothing if I want.

*I'm gonna walk the dog in the park without having to watch where the kids are or kick a single football.

*I'm gonna have breakfast in peace, maybe even with a friend, then I'm going to take a leisurely stroll through the stores, knowing I don't have anyone to watch out for.

*I'm NOT going to put cartoons or the Disney channel on tv. I might even watch a morning show uninterrupted.

*I'm going to sit in solitude for 6 hours straight, maybe even twice!

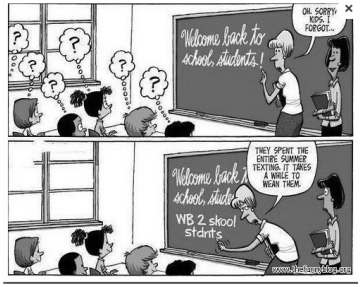
*I'm going to get a mani-pedi and a haircut all by myself.

But mostly I'm going to have time to suit myself, to write, cook , think, nap and not be thinking of the kids all the time and making sure they are having fun… I LOVE school.

But most importantly I will spend more time with the King. Cos he rocks. (Hacked by the King)

Hump Day Humour #10

September 5, 2012





Television=Awesome Dance Moves… At Least In Our House

September 5, 2012

Miss Gremlin is a funny little thing, she loves this ad, even does her own dance. She has a slight tv addiction. No, scrap that, she is totally hooked.

This is a real problem, not only in our house but the world over. Kids are spending too much time on electronics, playing video games or watching tv. We had a conversation with the kids last night and they couldn't believe that tv turned off at 10pm or that we didn't have 100's of channel, only 4 when we were kids. Cartoons only showed on Saturday mornings. They were totally astounded that there weren't any videos or DVD's either.

There are countless statistics and plenty of reasons to turn off but let's face it , we're all guilty of the easy way out in parenting, occasionally. If the kids are getting on your nerves, let them watch tv, even if they're watching for too long, they're quiet and not bothering you right? It's wrong but sometimes we just need our own time-out.

If nothing else Miss Gremlin has learned to cut some mean dance moves!







I blame the M&M's ad… not my lax television parenting skills ☺

Coffee Time, Me Time, I'm Not With The Kids Time.

September 6, 2012

Can you hear that?

Shhhhh…Listen, wait, are you sure?

I can't hear anything. I can't HEAR anything…

I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING… Ahhhhhhhh

That's right friends the kids are gone.. G O N E, gone, to school that is.

So far this morning I've caught up with my peeps, had coffee uninterrupted, eaten a leisurely breakfast and walked the dog…

So nice to relax. Let's see what tomorrow brings.

Sibling Squabbling.

September 7, 2012

Over the last few months the harmony in the household has shifted. Hormones have come into play. Our boy is becoming a young man and feels the instincts to lead and be a protector. This is completely normal and part of the passage to adulthood. The trouble is he's using those new skills on his little sister and she's none too impressed!

Grand Master D wants Miss Gremlin to do things his way, he's a little fastidious but she doesn't want to be told what to do. They just push each others buttons way too much. It's a power struggle everyday.

At the moment, we're right in the middle of a warzone or so it seems. I'm the referee and I'm getting rather tired of it. I've tried several tactics but so far nothing seems to be working. Short of banging their heads together and I've seriously considered it or making them sit together for hours until they are nice to each other, I have to go searching for new ideas.

I'll admit they've spent a lot of time together recently, especially during our trip. You can't spend that much time with each other and not get on one another's nerve. We all know that can cause anyone to become irritated. Taking all that into account, I am struggling to find the way through.

It hasn't helped that I have been depressed either. I don't have the energy to sort it out. I just want them to stop fighting and I guess I haven't really looked at it in a way that I can see a clear path through.

I'm hoping that the separation of school will help the situation and I am actively looking for new ways to teach them to respect each other and know their boundaries. Grand Master D needs to remember that although he's older and a boy, he's not Miss Gremlin's parent and it's not his job to correct her in certain things. It's difficult, he has this innate sense of being protector and she has a stronger personality and knows how to push all his buttons as well. Rough combination.

I have explained to him over and over that he needs to let her make the mistakes. He was able to make them without an older sibling standing over everything he did. She deserves the same. It's hard when they have to share a bedroom but we'll work on a solution so they can have their own space to cool off.

I'm looking for new tactics…It's unchartered waters for us but many have gone before and there will be a solution. I've come back from our trip with some closure and a new attitude. Things are easier to cope with and I know I can solve this somehow, it's just a matter of finding the right tactic.

Dreams of Wheat

September 8, 2012



Last night we had a break out and ordered pizza. It's winding down the holiday time and we decided an easy dinner would be good and a fun treat. We don't really eat it anymore and even when we do, we'll order the thin crust, however last night The King was in control of the Papa John's site and he missed changing the crust type. So the pizzas arrived and they were all thick crust. Oh well, one night of wheat eating won't hurt anything … right? Actually wrong!

Ater the kids went to bed we were both super thirsty and I was still hungry but I resisted having another piece. The King opted for a cashew snack at around 11:30. We headed to bed, watched the usual amount of tv then went to sleep. Everything normal. No change to routine.

But when I woke up this morning I was exhausted. I had toured somewhere with a group of people, to a museum but ended up in a dirty mechanics workshop, then shopped, then got chased by cops and attacked by bad guys. I got out with my life but the car was wrecked. The kids were waiting at the airport and the flight was full of soldiers.

The King was playing in a band and after that some bizarre things went on… He can't remember but he said he had crazy dreams all night. (Maybe there were girls ☺ He's not admitting to.) Not that I'm concerned.

It seems obvious that something in the pizza affected our brains. It's not the first time I've noticed this but it's interesting to note that I wasn't alone in my experience. This also happens with Indian food. Perhaps the large amounts of naan bread we consume is the culprit.

Upon asking the kids if they dreamed Miss Gremlin said she had weird dreams but Grand Master D didn't remember.

I am currently reading 'Wheat Belly' by William Davis, MD, which states, among many other things, that wheat has hallucinogenic properties similar to known hallucinogens. It's a very in depth and fascinating book. *Look for my review shortly.* My study continues on the effects of wheat on the human body but it was quite a tiring night keeping up with the activities.

*Unless, of course Papa John's switched out the 'shrooms. ☺

The 'I Need to Fix This or I'll go Crazy' Projects List

September 9, 2012

I'm compiling a list of projects that I've been putting off for a long, long time. Whether it's because I've not had the energy or the emotional strength, that time has passed and I am on a new path of clearing out my life and making way for new things to happen and dwell.

So profound I know but I think we go through seasons in our lives when this happens. I am moving into a new time in my life and I need to clear the way to experience it fully. A streamlining of my life if you like. I'm sure many of you can relate to this and probably have the same problem areas in your homes.

The plastics cupboard: Who doesn't have too much Tupperware and plastics. How hard is it to keep it organised and neat. Finding lids is like playing a matching game with missing pieces. It almost kills the King and his ADD tendencies. I can see his eye muscle twitch whenever he has to put anything in there from the dishwasher. I just tell him not to look. He NEVER uses any of it. I know it's sheer stubbornness. He would rather put a half can of beans with the metal lid placed back on top in the fridge than get out a plastic container. (I was actually surprised it was still there when I got home from OZ.) We play Polly and Suki with the cereal containers. I hate the cereal boxes in the cupboard, you can never tell when they're empty and it's always sooner than you've shopped for. He hates the 'flip to pour lids' on the tupperware cereal containers. The cereal doesn't come out properly, and then they don't close correctly. So it's a constant battle of me putting the cereal in the container and he putting the empty container away and placing the new cereal box in the cupboard. Someone will have to relent but so far neither of us are.

The Bedroom Bookshelf: I have come to the realisation that, since Miss Gremlin, our youngest is 8, I probably have no further need for books like 'What to expect when you're expecting' and 'Breastfeeding, I can do that'. Or even 'On becoming Childwise, toddler years'. There are several other titles of a similar genre that can be purged cos the baby factory is shut down. And now I eat like a caveman, I don't need all those grain ridden, low fat recipe books either! Here is a project that can be done in an afternoon.

The Living Room Bookshelf: Man, we never even use this one. It's just full of books we put on display to make us look intelligent when people came over and we need to clear it out to a reasonable level. So we can look like intelligent, NON hoarders.

Our Closet: *(Deep Breath)* This one calls for the heavy artillery. I can't do this alone. I need someone with no emotional attachment to anything in my closet, to gut it and be ruthless with anything that I will no longer wear. It's been a long time coming, hey I still have a Garfield t-shirt/nightie that I got for Christmas one year when I was around 14. I think, no I know, I need an intervention. But the biggest reason is I have a closet full of stuff and nothing to wear! With all the weight I've lost nothing fits and as painful as clearing it out with be, I'm looking forward to filling it with new stuff that fits my new size. I have a friend who is willing to spend the time with me and clear it all out, hold my hand and grieve with me. This could be a whole post on it's own. The fashion choices, the things I can't let go of. The enormity of the experience is

something many women go through and I'm ready to do it, for me.

The Linen Closet: Here's one I can tackle on my own. The baby blankets can go and the character doona covers and sheets may also find a new home. Grand Master D is almost 12 and beyond Superman, Spiderman and the like. Even Pirates of the Caribbean have been retired. I've got no room so it all needs to go.

The Kids Room: Although this room gets tackled regularly, shit just keeps on coming in! We have to go really hard and get rid of so much. Books that will never be read, need to go. Even though they are of the appropriate reading age they are of no interest, otherwise they would have been read already ☺ So they must leave to find new homes where someone with love them. Tubs full of toys need to go. Puzzles, games and other kid paraphernalia. I might need to call my friend in for that one too. It will certainly have to take place when the kids are not present.

It can be hard to let things go, I can honestly understand hoarding, well to an extent, I couldn't live in filth. But living in a small area in the City doesn't afford us the luxury of keeping stuff we'll never use. I'm feeling very ready to do it. I think it's part of a healing process. The trip back to Australia has set me on a new path and I'm ready to embrace it. I have seen my mum un-clutter her life of stuff and it's just 'stuff' and I need to do the same. I don't have a timeline but if I plan on a BIG project once a month and a smaller one once a week I could have it all done by Christmas, just in time to fill it all up again ☺ ……*AWESOME*

Do you have problem areas in your home? Do you need someone to hold your hand to clean out your closet? Or are you great at purging unwanted stuff? I guess we're all different and that's ok.

Creepy Crawlies

September 10, 2012

With the start of the school year comes all those dreaded things we loath about school. The mountains of forms to fill out, the homework we know is gonna end in tears, the bully that often rears his or her head early in the term and those nasty little buggers…



Head Lice.

Don't you just hate it when the letter comes home from school that a child in your child's class has head lice. Of course by the time the letter makes it home, if it hasn't been buried in the back pack for a day or two, there's several kids with head lice and your world is turned upside down because your household is included. ARRGGGHHHH.

What's your first reaction, panic, fear, repulsion, shame? You can relax in the knowledge that you have been especially chosen because your child's hair is so clean ☺ You're kid isn't the smelly kid.

Doesn't help does it.

There's no need to panic, it can be fixed and quite cheaply.

As a kid I managed to go unscathed right through school. There were always the kids with NITS but I never got them. It was totally good fortune, not good management so you can imagine my horror to be a 35 year old, 8 month pregnant woman and be told I have head lice! I got them from Grand Master D, who in turn got them from the squeaky clean kid at kindy. This was my first experience and I was mortified. As if I needed that, being so heavily pregnant and treating a 3 year old's head. The King, lucky for him, was travelling at the time, of course.

I was fortunate to have a friend who by default had become very experienced at getting rid of them. Of course the biggest challenge was that my flaming red hair is exactly the same colour as the eggs the little buggers lay. She taught me the most effective way to get rid of them is time and continuous monitoring for 7-10days. NO expensive pharmacy products are required. Any cheap store bought conditioner will stun the live ones enough to get them out of the head. Just slather the head with conditioner for 20 mins to stun them, then comb with a lice comb. Rinse the conditioner out, they will all be dead in the bottom of the tub. Then the hard work begins with the combing and combing and combing for hours with the especially designed head lice comb. Small sections at a time. There are many combs on the market and they range in price. I've used a simple plastic one and a metal set. Both were equally good.

You can usually get rid of the live ones in one sitting, the key then is to continue to check every night to make sure no new ones have hatched and remove all the eggs as you go. I have never needed to boil bedding or treat linens in any special way. Head lice need a host, without one they cannot live for very long, so if they are in the bedding just change it and wash normally.

The most important part is to check each day to avoid any hatching eggs causing re-infestation.

Once you are lice free, you can prevent re-infestation by using teatree oil products. There are shampoos on the market that work well but I have always gone for the simple effective preventative spritz.

Get a small spray bottle and put several drops of pure teatree oil in and fill with water, shake it up then spray the child's head each morning before leaving the house. You can use the same mixture until it's gone. Be sure to treat the nape of neck and behind the ears, as this is a favourite hiding place for lice.

Remind your children not to get too close to others and never share hats or brushes.

We have only ever had 2 infestations, one for each child. Miss Gremlin's was a little more painful because she has such thick hair but we just work vigilantly each night for 10 days and have never had them again.

I was NOT scratching uncontrollably for the entire time while writing this post… Ok, I totally was. Just the thought of them makes me itch.

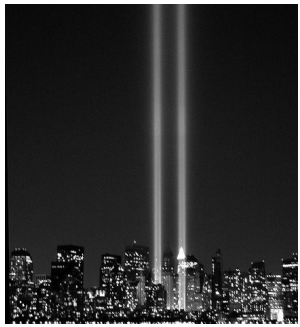
Remembering 9/11

September 11, 2012

Living in New York brings the magnitude of 9/11 to the fore every year. We know so many people who were personally involved and their stories are incredible and tragic.

We were still living in Australia at the time and from there it was all very surreal. It was horrifying and the world changed that day but it was a long way away.

Living here is very, very different. It's personal here and that doesn't ever diminish.



Never Forget, Never Surrender

Today and everyday we remember the victims, their loved ones and all the people affected in every way by this tragedy over the last 11 years.

"Nolite umquam oblivisc, numquam concedite".

HumpDay Humour #15

September 12, 2012



Paleo Pizza

September 12, 2012

I've been looking at different paleo pizza recipes for a while now and wanted to try one. I like pizza but the crust is bad so looking for alternatives has been a challenge.

The other night I cooked one I found on Paleodietlifestyle.com and although it was quite tasty, the coconut in the pastry was a bit too sweet, so next time I'll omit it.

The Princess and I liked it, The King was a little put off by the sweetness but still enjoyed it. The kids didn't really like it but ate the toppings ☺

Try it, see what you think. I'm sure it could be adjusted accordingly. I've actually

eaten the leftovers for lunch 2 days in a row. I think it's pretty yummy.

Crust: 1 cup Almond Meal 1/2 cup of coconut flour 1/2 cup coconut milk 4 eggs 3 tbsp olive oil 1 tsp baking powder

Bake for 15-20 minutes on a very well greased tray with a ridge, because of the consistency it will run off. It's thin like pancake batter.

I used sundried tomato tapinade mixed with tomato paste and and some crushed garlic as the base sauce. The toppings as always are endless. Here's how they came out.



The kid friendly one had Ham Pineapple and Pepperoni. Half and half is fun.



Here's what I did for the grown ups. Olives, Artichoke hearts, peppers, onions, mushrooms and spicy salami. I pre cooked the onions, peppers and mushrooms in a skillet.

I drizzled olive oil on them before returning to oven for 20 minutes.

resourced recipe:

http://paleodietlifestyle.com/paleo-pizza/

It's Easier to Pull Teeth with Barbed Wire than get my 8yr old to Wash.

September 13, 2012

My kid must be allergic to water or soap or maybe both. I can't think of any other reason. She has the fun products to use in the bathroom. The bubbles for the bath or the shower gel when she's feeling in a more grown up mood. Nothing is helping.

I coax, I bribe, I yell, I barge in and do it myself. I send her back 10 times. It's exhausting AND not working.

Why is this so hard? What is it that causes her to so much angst that she does not want to wash? She's reached the age of getting quite smelly but she doesn't even care. She would never remember to brush her teeth or hair if I didn't tell her. She looks like a ferrel and I am at a loss. I'm tired of the reminders. By 8 she should have this down. It drives me crazy.

Here's the hard part though, teaching her to think about it herself rather than telling her to do it everyday. We've tried charts before. They don't work. I'm looking for the right incentive that's not bribing. Punishment probably won't work but that doesn't mean I won't give it another good hard go ☺

Perhaps someone she really respects telling her she smells, might do something. A bit of shame therapy. I'm not against that in the right context.

The Stinky Crew It's not a unique problem but it's gross. I hear many stories about other kids but this is my kid and I need her not to stink. I've explained the need for personal hygiene and she has the girl 'Growing UP' books which will reinforce it. 'They' say kids grow out of it but in the meantime we have to deal with it. I've talked to her about the effects on others and how kids won't want to be around her, being the stinky kid but she doesn't seem to care!

An Action Plan? I have got to figure out the right incentive. There will be one, she wants to please us. She has a sweet heart. It's just finding it. It will of course be the last thing I try… because that's how discovery works. At some point I know things will click over and we won't be able to get her OUT of the bathroom. That'll be a whole other problem ☺



However, we have had a hair breakthrough. She's at least putting the detangling product in and combing each day so she doesn't look like this. She's been consistent since we got home.

Supervision is still required because she's just dobbing it on the top of her head but baby steps, right. Encouragement seems to be the key. Positive reinforcement… isn't that what all the books say?

Where's the book that just tells you how to make it happen without the hard work? Where's *that* MAGIC book. Wouldn't life raising kids just be awesome with that book. We would all be perfect parents and sipping cocktails by the beach.

Oh, for that day to come… but then we would miss the rigours of child-wrangling. Wouldn't we?

Lighten Up People and Smile

September 14, 2012

There is so much angst in the world right now. It's like the planet is collectively pissed off! What's the deal? Mercury isn't in retrograde, there's no full moon, no major disaster.

Sure, European economies are floundering like a beached whale without rescuers. I know it's been a long hot summer in the northern hemisphere and the south is a bit

chilly but really? That's just weather and it will change. The kids have all gone back to school. Routines are back to normal or finding a new normal. It's all good.

We all need to take a chill pill.

Yes, there's an election coming (just get it over with, *pleeeaassse*) and people are passionate about that, which is very important. There's high unemployment and homeless people and Lord knows there's other issues I've not even thought of or just won't mention.

There are plenty of problems everywhere I agree but getting pissed off won't help. Taking sides and pointing fingers doesn't help. What does help is working together. All sides coming together for the collective good. Whatever the issue. Putting aside your opinions and prejudices and just getting it done can be very satisfying.

There's always room for civility, manners and being nice. Smiling at someone just because you can is so much better than scowling at them or being pissed off because they got in the supermarket line first. Someone had to be in front. Sometimes it'll be your time, sometimes it won't.

Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D tried a social experiment on the weekend, with the help of the Princess. They bought some flowers from the street vendor and started giving them to random people in the street. The reactions were quite fascinating. Some people were pissed off, how you get pissed off at a kid wanting to GIVE you a flower is beyond me but that was a reaction. Some just said 'no' politely and some thought is was lovely and were genuinely surprised and flattered to receive a gift for nothing and THAT is what I'm talking about. Giving something for nothing, smiling at the person in line, helping people for no reason, volunteering. It's all positive and good and we need to start changing our grumpy ass attitudes and start being nice to each other.

When you're pissed off with everything you get that back. Have you ever noticed the attitude you put out is often the attitude you get back? Strange, huh! No matter how badly off you feel or how hard it all is, someone out there is way worse. We need to remember that.



Things are pretty good really when you analyse it, we all woke up today. Hopefully we managed to have food to eat and coffee to drink. If we're having a good day, someone kissed us and told us they loved us and to 'have a good day'. We're on the internet so it can't be all bad right?

Things will get better, they always do. The universe is cyclic, opposites attract, what goes up must come down, every cloud has a silver lining… blah, blah, blah but honestly if we all just make a conscious effort to be happy, friendly and smile our little corner of the planet will feel better to live in and things will improve.

Or they'll just fall in a big, screaming heap……. either way, the chill pills have kicked in by now and nobody cares ☺

UM…

September 15, 2012



I was drying my hair the other morning and for those of you who know me, this is quite an event in itself. (I don't do it much). So there I am merrily working way in the bathroom, making noise, getting every strand smooth. You know the drill.

I've had this dryer now for a few years and it works fine. Occasionally when you plug it in it doesn't go……instant panic stations, I've finally washed my hair and the flipping dryer's stuffed? Oh wait, so you have to push the reset button thingy. Oh good…



So I was 'gettin' er dun' when I noticed the warning labels, I'll admit I've never really noticed them before, all very official looking, with the normal warnings, don't use in bathtub… der, don't leave unattended near a sink… der. Don't let children play with dryer near water…der.

Then I flipped the tag over. WTF?

There it was printed in **BIG RED LETTERS**.

UMPLUG IT, they can't be serious? **UMPLUG IT**?

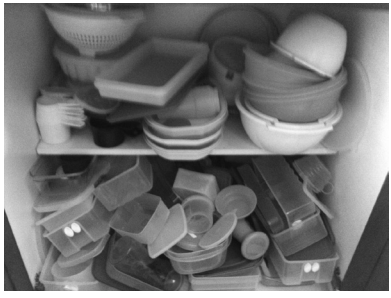
My poor little grammatical heart was beating so fast. How could they let a product go out to consumers like this? How was this possible. Don't they know they spelled it wrong? Who was the tester? What was his number? Where's the little sticker. I need to know. He's not doing his job. **UMPLUG IT**, umplug it, really?

And then I UMPLUGGED it and went on my way.

The Big Jobs

September 16, 2012

There are certain kitchen cupboards which are hard to organise. Who doesn't have a plastics cupboard that looks like mine? I can't be the only one. If you don't, then I hate you and envy you all at the same time and you have an OCD issue. There I said it. ☺



But really, HOW do you do it?

Whatever I do, my plastics cupboard ends up like this. Things falling out, lids inaccessible. I know there are products for organising such messes and I might just have to look into something. Yep, I really think I will this time.

Something ALWAYS falls out!
I use all of this. I can't survive without it.
Actually I think I have a problem ☺



This cupboard has been a problem for a long time. There are things in there that I got from my grandma and although that's cool to have, I've never used them and so to be realistic they just have to go. Besides Grandma has been gone 8 years. That's a long time to not use something.



The purged pile

My purge pile is tiny but I'm trying hard ☺



The finished product. It's so much better.

See it's better. I can organise the hell out of my plastics, yes I can……

It *might* last a week.

I need a plastics intervention. My name is Molley and I have a plastics problem.

If I could just bring myself to step inside an IKEA all my problems would be solved, wouldn't they? -This is what I hear on the street.

But I can't, I won't be herded like a sheep. I'm the herder, not the sheep.

And so my plastics cupboard will forever try to kill me,

one
falling
container
at a
time.

I Will Absolutely, Positively, NOT Talk About Sex……EVER

September 17, 2012



photo credit: imagerymajestic

This is not a sex blog, I'm not talking about my sex life, we're not discussing sex, ok?

I have no tips. That would just be weird.

Sex is, or should be, a private act between 2 or more consenting people of whatever variety they subscribe to.

We all get that. But it's private and personal and not up for discussion.

Now that we've got that straight. Phew

Okay, good. So the other night. ☺……

We've been together 22 years, we've been through many things and know each other very, very well and have seen each other from *every* angle, flattering and not so much. There's NOTHING flattering about childbirth but I digress.

Sex is still awesome and pretty regular but we kinda know how it's gonna go.. (NO specifics that'd just be eeewww) Okay, we're efficient…..

We've tried lots of things to keep it spicy over the years. Ah yes, don't eat chilli pizza and then eat… UM…ANYWAY …

So you can imagine that after 22 years there are no tricks left, however if new tricks arrive, one must say to oneself… hmm where did this come from?

Well …..ON this particular occasion I had been giving some thought to something new. I don't know why, call it momentary insanity that I would be making up SEX moves… PLEASE. I got skinny, I was feeling good, let's blame that. ☺ Things were all going along as one might predict when I got all funky on his ass and tried something new… Well let's just say the desired effect was reached but more importantly, The King was **surprised**! And after 22 year THAT is what I'm most proud of.

I surprised the KING. This is worth discussing. It's wasn't a chandelier swinging move but it had him talking about it for a week. And that's all I need ☺

We can now go back to being efficient, until the next surprise.

Here's the thing about GMO's

September 18, 2012

There has been a real buzz lately on the GMO issue. California is going for another controversial vote, this time forcing companies to label any product which has GMO ingredients in it. This is a very important issue simply because we, as consumers, have the right to know what we are buying and eating. You can't make informed choices if you are not given all the facts.

The big companies involved, like Monsanto, however, are spending billions fighting this issue. You have to wonder why?

What are GMO's? GMO's for those who may have been living under a rock are Genetically Modified Organisms. This doesn't help right? Ok, GMO's are foods that have been through the lab and modified from their original form to be a 'better' product, whether it's for higher or faster growing yield or a pest and drought resistant plant. These seeds are modified, not for better nutritional value but simply to gain more profit.

Here's the "Yes On 37" campaign's video explaining GMO's and the issues:

Who benefits and who suffers?

On the surface it looks like having genetically modified crops growing in your fields would be great because you can increase income as a farmer by a bigger yield, you have less problems with seasonal weather issues and pests no longer bother your crops. For the farmers, this is a win win. We can't blame the farmer, the fault is not theirs. They are not the enemy. They are sold on the idea by the big companies. Farmers have a tough life, they are reliant on getting enough rain for the crop to thrive, praying that too much rain doesn't breed a plague of locusts to wipe out their thriving crop and hoping that the chemicals that the company sold them has done a good job and knocked out all the weeds, while not harming the crop. So when they harvest their bumper crop, it is pure enough to sell for a higher profit margin. Of course there's more to it all than that but that's the simplistic version.

Being a crop growing farmer, is a hard way to make a living. And you know that the big companies are not out to help the farmer. They want to buy the produce for the lowest price and on sell it in their products for the highest, therefore making themselves even bigger.

Here we go all conspiracy theory again ☺

So why are these companies so against labelling their products? What are they hiding? These are troubling questions. Here is a link to the list of what is currently genetically modified , growing in the USA. Let's not forget that all commercial livestock, producing beef, chicken and pork, is fed on corn, which then makes the mainstream meat supply also GMO affected.

None of these modified foods have been properly tested on humans as to their effects on health. Whenever we buy anything from our supermarkets, chances are it's been modified. Almost all processed packaged foods contain GMO's and we are the guinea pigs.

Could this have something to do with the marked rise in weight gain, diabetes, ADD, ADHD, autism and cancer rates, along with many other ailments that have increased exponentially over the last decade? These things don't just appear in society without a reason. Could this be the reason? Are we being poisoned for profit? Do I even dare suggest that Big Agriculture and Big Pharma are in partnership? Poison the food, people get sick, sell more drugs… No I don't even dare ☺

How do they know it doesn't harm us?

There are studies emerging saying it probably does. If it doesn't harm us, then why do they care if the product has a label listing ALL ingredients, so we can choose?

Something is wrong. There's too much noise being made. Companies don't fight this hard if they're not hiding something. Why would the big companies threaten to sue states who want the labelling?

All these questions deserve answers.

Start researching, check things out for yourselves. There's plenty of information on the subject. Go to http://www.carighttoknow.org/ and learn more.

We need to stand up for the important things and our global food source is definitely that. If every food becomes genetically modified then we're screwed. We need to fight for safe food and stop these companies just doing whatever they want without us knowing. If we can force then to label *anything* containing GMO's and that hurts their profits because consumers stop buying it, then we have shown them we won't accept it anymore.

That is a very good thing.

I don't want my family being a Monsanto GMO guinea pig, do you?

Resourced material:

http://www.globalhealingcenter.com/nutrition/genetically-modified-foods

http://www.naturalnews.com/035472_GMOs_avoiding_soy.html

http://www.truthpublishing.com/poisonfood_p/yprint-cat21284.htm

http://www.naturalnews.com/036209_GMO_labeling_ballot_measure_California.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/13/other-names-for-sugar-maltose-dextrose_n_1874487.html?utm_hp_ref=tw

http://www.naturalnews.com/034858_GMO_labeling_grassroots.html

http://www.naturalnews.com/035628_Monsanto_Vermont_GMO_labeling.html

Hump Day Humour #16

September 19, 2012



Even though we've just had an extra long one ☺ Happy Hump Day

Culinary Fail - It Happens to Us All

September 19, 2012



Learning to cook is hard, all the things you have to remember. Recipes, cooking temperature, how to cook each food but the most important thing about learning to cook is remembering you have something on the cooktop.

We've all been there. Let's face it, at one time or another in our culinary careers, we've left a pot of rice to boil dry, we've forgotten something in the oven and set off the smoke detector. We've totally cremated toast!

It's a rite of passage, it's the first rung on the culinary ladder. The second rung is cleaning the pot.

Today, in this house, it was beans, simple pork and beans out of a can. For breakfast. Grand Master D had grand plans, starting off with cereal then moving to a delicious plate of pork and beans with some barbeque dipping sauce on the side.

He's still learning.

He opened the can, poured them into the pot, put them on to cook and left. From where I was sitting, I could smell the aroma start to build, the tempting taste of pork and beans filling the room, the sweet smell of food being perfectly cooked , ready to be served.



…… then I smelled the turn, that sickly sweet smell of the sugar burning on the bottom of the pot, I looked, thinking he was there attending to his cooking.

The kitchen was empty.

And right then I jumped up to check. The burning smell permeated the whole apartment, that horrible baked on smell. I called out, "You're beans

are burning". Having experienced this disaster before I immediately put it in the sink and filled with water to soak. He ran from his room, shocked, ……bummed that he forgot, double bummed that I said "Have fun cleaning that !"

And this is what he'll be doing on and off all day, with hot water and soapy steel wool… scrubbing and soaking until the pot is clean.

He won't forget next time. You only ever do THAT once, unless you're very forgetful and if that's the case, then don't cook ☺





I'm An Excellent Driver

September 20, 2012

Back in '98 we acquired a 1967 Red Mustang Convertible. I say acquired because around that time we had dealings with certain people who had abilities to make things appear. Not illegally, just unconventionally ☺

It was an odd time, the late '90's, with private jets and long cars and hotel penthouses but that's a whole other story…

The Red Mustang was an ex-rental car. In the city we lived in, tourists would rent cool cars to cruise the strip and hang out. It was a beach town, a glitzy resort town with lots of nightclubs and adult entertainment. A little bit of Miami mixed with a lot of Vegas.

It was a fun place, we were young and kid free, doing gigs, making money and playing hard.

So this car turns up. It was tired, it was rusty, it was a bomb but it looked cool! It didn't matter that there was a hole in the back floor 18" in circumference. The carpet stopped you falling through. It didn't matter that the seat wouldn't go far enough forward and I used a booster seat to reach the pedals but still drove with my toe…it was a cool car.



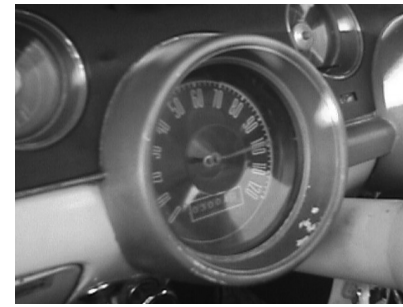
We looked good in storefront windows

It totally didn't matter that it was quite unroadworthy and needed a lot of mechanical work…..it was a cool car! It was so cool that Suncorp Bank approached us to use it in one of their lifestyle loans commercials.

While we were on our honeymoon, they borrowed it for 2 days.

We loved that car, we went everywhere TD or top down. It didn't matter what the temperature was, we went top down. Luckily we lived in the sub tropics and it was warm mostly all the time. Although at night I was glad for a sweater or jacket. I learned very early to always bring something warm. It even had to be seriously raining before the King would stop to put the roof up. A light sprinkle was NOT going to spoil the image. He didn't really care about my hair ☺ I used hats and clips to keep it tame.

We went on road trips, yes *those* kind



We drove this car the long way home one Christmas vacation, spending the millenium New Years Eve at Ayers Rock (Uluru). There is nothing more spectacular than driving through the desert at sunset in an open top car. We did need to have the roof up during the day travelling out there though, even we had our limits. Burning to a crisp was not a fun idea. The entire back seat became an esky (cooler) for water.

Out there, where there are no speed limits, we did 100 miles an hour, just to see if the car could do it. The front end started to lift, it felt like it was going to take off so we wisely slowed down, then, realising we needed proof, we had to do it again ☺

After that trip, all 5000 miles (8000kms), the poor thing needed a total rebuild. The morning, after we arrived home, the motor and the gearbox both blew up simultaneously. It got us home and then said 'I'm done.'



After the rebuild she was a happy car. The body still needed plenty of work but under the hood was perfect. The wallet did need to recover before we could start on the cosmetics. ☺

We drove it everywhere. It had pianos in the back, it had trees in the back and it had giant teddy bears in the back. There was nothing we couldn't do with it.

It never had a garage, we lived on 10 acres out of town and there was no shelter for a car, so she happily lived outside along side the truck. Sometimes we'd forget to put the top up and it would rain but no serious damage was ever done.

Then we bought a house.

Things were going well, we were growing up, we were married and I was 18 weeks pregnant. The mustang got a garage. However she had to share her space with 5 tons of PA equipment. I don't remember why the PA couldn't live in the truck anymore but it didn't. So jammed in a double garage beside all the big scary black boxes was our pretty little mustang.

The King, being the King, decided that it was absolutely mandatory that we back the mustang into the garage. His reasoning was twofold, first , it was easier to leave the house by just driving out of the garage rather than backing out and turning around and 2. It looked much cooler from the street when the garage door was open. (palm to face) Don't even ask.

Now coming from 10 acres and basically parking anywhere, it was a little difficult to get used to the tight space of half the garage and backing in beside the wall of big black boxes. The precision came in leaving enough room all around to get out of the car and making sure it was far enough in to close the garage door but not too far to bang into the back wall….

Can you reverse in that condition?

Taking into account my ever increasing girth, hormones and new home issues, backing the mustang into the garage was a becoming a little awkward. I complained constantly, saying it was too difficult and why was it so important ,blah blah blah. It fell on deaf ears and so back in we did.

I successfully managed the maneuover many times during the first few weeks but as I widened, my skills seemed to decrease. On this particular day I backed in as usual only to fall short by a foot. I couldn't close the garage door so I got back in the car but only half way. My thinking was I only had to ease it back a foot so I'll just sit in and use my left foot. This became my downfall because those of you who drive, are well aware that you don't have the same feel for an accelerator in you left foot as you do with your right foot, which has been trained over many years to understand the complexities of driving.

So here I am sitting half in the car, my left foot on the accelerator, my right foot on the floor of the garage, I turn the key and proceed to reverse the mustang a foot further into the garage. Our mustang, like most muscle cars, had a very sensitive accelerator and my left foot was new to this and so you can understand that when I put my foot down it was a little too heavily. The car lurched back and in my mild panic, with my right foot still on the floor I lifted my left foot to hit the brakes hard. My left foot obliged but didn't move and my action of tramping on the brake caused an almighty tire squeal, the wheels spun then screeched backwards in what I can only describe as a blur……The car stopped after an almighty bang, into the wall at the back of the garage. Luckily a steel lighting truss stopped me from ending up entirely in our bedroom. However that same lighting truss crumpled the back of the mustang quite substantially.

Watch out for that……

So there I was almost through the back of the wall, the open driver's door, crumpled and wedged against a protruding black box. I was very lucky not to lose my hand.

I managed to get myself and my huge belly out of the vehicle as the King and Wazza arrived at the side of the garage door.

Of course in those situations people ask the most redundant questions. "What did you do?" The King raged. By this point I realised I was ok, nothing terribly bad had happened and I would survive. To which I answered, "Well obviously I just backed the car into the house!' and then I broke down ☺

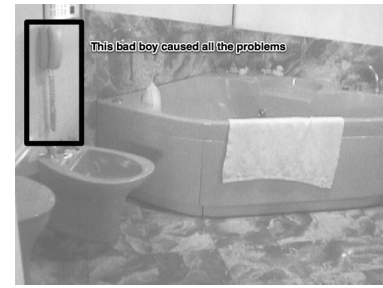
After that we all burst into laughter. I explained how it happened. There was nothing to say after that. So we went back to work.

And then!

You would think that would be enough excitement for one day but no, not for me. It became apparent that I had somehow taken the phone system out. I couldn't understand how but I suppose the wiring was in that wall. This wasn't good because we were running the company from our new home at the time. So I spent about an

hour on my cell phone to the phone company furiously trying to sort out the issue and get back to business.

While still being on hold, on my cell, to the phone company, my rolly polly body needed to use the bathroom.



This new house was rocking cool, it had a bidet, hot tub and a phone in the bathroom. There were marble tiles and mirrors everywhere. The bathroom felt like a 5 star hotel.

So into this haven I waddled.

And that is when I discovered the problem…… I hadn't broken any wiring in the wall. There was no need for any phone technicians to come out. The force of my bump had knocked the bathroom phone off the hook. (palm to face…again)

I hung up the phone and then I hung up my cell phone quickly and walked out shaking my head and laughing…… a lot. ☺

But truthfully……I AM an excellent driver. As for crashing the car, I justified it because the body needed fixing anyway. And that's why you have insurance. Right?

A Very Fine Line

September 21, 2012

A recent article has piqued my attention and I want to make a comment. It's a controversial topic but as an outsider, I have to ask….

(DEEP BREATH)

A 17 year old student at a university here in the US is trying to form a white student union. Now before you freak out and go all 'this is racist' on me, think about it for a minute. Why is this causing such a stir? Is it just because he's trying to form a 'white group'? Or is it deeper than that? Is it because 'white groups' have historically been disgusting, racial, hate mongering machines we are all ashamed of? Quite probably.

I know America has a very poor history in race relations, I know that on the surface it sounds very KKK but at some point there must be equality and freedom of speech is still a constitutional right. Why can't white students come together and discuss 'their' race issues, if people are being racist toward them? It happens.

That doesn't seem equal to me ☺

I have certainly been the victim of racial slurs walking the streets of my neighbourhood. Many times. I am in the minority but I'm doing nothing wrong, I'm just here. I'm not rude to anyone, I just live my life and fit into the area as best I can. I'm not trying to make anyone change for me but you can totally feel the animosity some days. So racism flows both ways, I think it's all really sad.

Having said that, I have some very awesome friends and know many, many people who don't behave like that, ever.

We now have the Black Actors awards, Black Entertainment Television channel, Black Shoppers Union. Black College scholarships and the list goes on.

I absolutely understand WHITE people did *very bad things* in the past…AND in some areas it still goes on today but why are we more sensitive towards darker skinned folks needs and feelings, than lighter skin?

Is that reverse racism? Just asking.

We're all the same, we are people of the planet, yes the colour of our skin is different but inside we all function the same. We all hurt when we're abused, we all bleed, we all want a good life, we all want what's best for our children and we all die.

White people aren't the enemy. There's a chip that so many black people carry on their shoulder from so many years of oppression, understandably, that has been passed on down the generations where it should no longer be. The being beaten down by 'The MAN' mentality clouds judgement and gets in the way of some helping themselves.

EVERY citizen in this country has the right to vote, the right to free speech, the right to a college education, the right to housing. Why does it even matter what colour their skin is?

In our neighbourhood, there are all kinds of people, there are middle class families, black AND white, there are homeless people, black AND white, there are unruly teens in gangs running around with guns, black AND white, there are poorer people black AND white. There are English speaking, French speaking , African speaking and Spanish speaking people, black AND white.

For the most part we do all coexist in harmony.

If this young man is trying to form a legitimate group to combat issues facing white students but isn't excluding anyone from joining and doesn't turn out to be another hideous white supremist group, hating on anyone who doesn't conform to their ideals, then freedom reigns… right?

In saying ALL this, I really know nothing about being anything but white and Australian. I didn't grow up here in America.I live in a predominantly black community and see many growing pains brought about by the changing neighbourhood. I do want to live harmoniously where ever I reside, with whomever is my neighbour.

Like John said :

….*A brotherhood of man Imagine all the people sharing all the world*

I truly hope that this young man is acting on a noble belief that there is a genuine need on his college campus and not stirring up trouble but only time will tell. It's just sad that the race button is always the first one pushed.

Perhaps a better name for his 'union' should be a more politically correct name like 'The complexionally challenged union for students who don't want to appear like white supremist assholes'.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/10/matthew-heimbach-towson-white-student-union_n_1870496.html

Reason # 73 for Being Crazy

September 22, 2012

Sir Lickalot has a girlfriend, He doesn't see her much because we can't handle the stress but when he does, he's an all or nothing boy!

Miss Vegas belongs to the Princess and when she's in da house, it's total KAOS.

The kids want her attention, Sir Lickalot wants her attention. I just wanna reach for something fully bodied and strong and hide where they can't get me.

After several hours of being here you'd think they would calm down and just enjoy being together ……

This is not that kind of love.

Here is the last visit in pictures. I thought it was never gonna end!



If I run under here he'll never see me

She's small and he's big but that doesn't stop him from following, at least he's learned to wait on the other side and not go under the small things. …. mostly.



I'm running, are you ready?

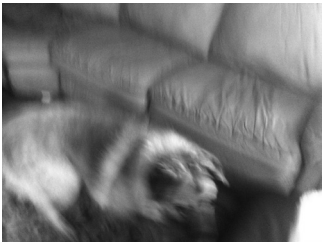


If I jump on the couch and into your arms he loses… hehehehehe

Her evil plot to kill this dog via heart attack seems to be working



Ding ding ding, Alrighty, round 6



Der, where'd you go? Come on, let me chase you



OH good, so we'll rest a bit… yeah *pant that's *pant a *pant good *pant idea
After *several hours* of around and around… can you see it's dark now!



I see you there resting, I'm gonna move now and you won't be able to help yourself.



You moved, I'm up, yep I'm ready, ready for anything.. let's go!



I may have moved to change position but that wasn't a signal to run more, don't you EVER give up?

And then I put her in with Miss Gremlin to sleep so I could relax in peace without them going around and around and *around and around and*…..oh you get the point.

But of course she kept coming out, just as Sir Lickalot finally settled, just cos she's a shit stirring muppet!

Sweet Lemon Pork Tenderloins

September 23, 2012

I decided to do something different with pork tenderloin the other night. I didn't want to leave the house, so I used what I had. I wanted a tangy but sweet taste.



1/3 cup lemon juice
2 tsp seeded mustard
2 tsp crushed garlic
2 tsp lemon curd
2 tbsp olive oil
2 pork tenderloins
2 sweet potatoes cut into strips
20 brussel sprouts cut in half

Preheat oven 350f Mix ingredients together and coat tenderloins. Place in glass oven dish. Cook in oven for 40 minutes. Be sure to txt your son to take them out of the oven on time because you're multitasking at curriculum night ☺ Let stand for 5 mins.







Serve with roasted sweet potatoes and brussel sprouts.



This meal can be eaten together as a family or how we did it , 4 people eating at 4 different times because that's just how the night worked out.

10 Reasons Homework Sucks

September 24, 2012

School is back and we're all getting on with our daily lives. With the new year comes a new set of responsibilities for our kids. This year Grand Master D is in 7th grade (OMG, he was just starting kindergarten last week, right?) and Miss Gremlin is in 3rd grade, the first testing grade in New York state. So the pressure is on, middle school rigors, getting ready to apply for high school (valium please) for my young man and teaching my baby how to sit state tests which will decide if she's smart or not until she goes on to brainiac college cos she's that smart ! Yeah, ok, but she is ☺

We've been back 2 and a bit weeks, well almost 2 weeks really because of the gazetted holiday days.

We mums talk, you know

Already I have had numerous conversations with mums about the H word… yes, H E double hockey sticks is the one that comes to mind, but the other H word which puts you right in the middle of H E double hockey sticks… ***Homework***.

There are so many different points of view on the value of the dreaded H word, some say it's essential to get ahead, some say it's just busy work but it teaches good study habits and then there's those who HATE it because of the friction it causes in our homes and family lives. The fights, the tears, the late night crabby kids, the even crabbier mornings because they need more sleep. Have you been *there*?

What is a reasonable amount, how do we get a happy balance, how do you keep your family life while still giving your child the boost they need by doing homework? All these questions need answers and the millions of parents who go through this torture every night with their kids, deserve to know.

The Answers?

I have no idea, I'm just one struggling parent. What I do know is we live in a different world than when we were educated. What worked then doesn't seem to work now. The question is why not and is it really better? Am I just longing for a simpler time ☺ …sure.

Advocating for our children is our job and we *must* but when do we suck it up and when do we say this is too much for my child?

Try as I might, I have always struggled with the homework load. I've tried to adopt a different attitude, knowing that for my children, I must support the school's policies because the children need to do what is expected and it teaches them that sometimes you have to do things you don't want to do in life but sometimes I think the line gets crossed.

Some days they rock it and some days I reach for the vodka. I guess that as long as the days they rock it out number the days I need vodka, then we'll survive this school year and maybe the next.

So here's my '10 reasons homework sucks' list:

1. Homework sucks because I want to let my children play after 8 hours at school. Don't they deserve some down time?
2. Homework sucks because we, as parents end up helping them, when all we want is to relax after a hard day working.
3. Homework sucks because it keeps kids up later than they should be, when they need extra sleep to be healthy. I bet there's studies on this ☺
4. Homework sucks because someone ALWAYS ends up in tears. In my house anyway.
5. Homework sucks because shouldn't *we, as parents,* be teaching them other stuff. Let the teachers teach school stuff, we'll handle the life stuff?
6. Homework sucks because sometimes it would be awesome to just play until bedtime.
7. Homework sucks because it makes me the 'homework nazi'…..and I hate that!
8. Homework sucks because shouldn't 35 hours of school a week be enough?
9. Homework sucks because it just does, alright! It did when I was at school and still does now I'm a mum.
10. Homework sucks because….I don't wanna, I don't wanna do homework with my kids! **stomp stomp*

(did I just have a foot stomping tantrum? Why yes, yes I did)

Do you think homework is important? Or do you hate it? I'd love to hear your opinion.

Is there a '10 reasons homework is good' list? I'd be willing to read it, really I would.

Did I just give you guys *homework*? Oh I'm bad, so very bad… mwah hahaha.

P.S. *I'm not scared of saying HELL but H E double hockey sticks sounds funnier and Miss Gremlin always tells me I'm not supposed to say HELL.*

I Need You to Take This - PLEASE

September 25, 2012

This has been stuck in my head for days, actually days and days!

Don't even ask.

It won't go away no matter what I try.

It's all consuming……so I'm giving it to you, in hope that you shall take it and love it and pass it on and I don't have to have it …*ANYMORE.*

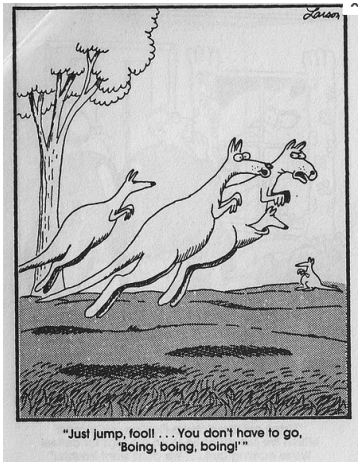
You're welcome…and….I'm sorry ☺

Hump Day Humour #17

September 26, 2012

Already I'm exhausted. I vote Wednesdays to be a middle of the week holiday every week. Who's with me?

For those who celebrate Yom Kippur, I wish you a meaningful and easy fast.



Pennies from Heaven - Literally

September 26, 2012

Things have been tight for a quite a while now, around the country people are still suffering due to the economy. The food bank line seems to grow every week when we pass by and has done for a while now. It's been a tough couple of years.

I feel a change in the wind.

There seems to be an anticipation of good things to come. Businesses are starting to move ahead, investment opportunities are growing and property has begun it's upward climb. These are all very exciting signs of an economy in recovery. I don't profess to be any sort of economist or know anything about such matters but I feel the change. Or maybe it's just the change in seasons ☺ However I do feel a shift and I am usually very perceptive in that regard.

Last night after the the King took me on another grocery shopping date (don't ask). He went back out to buy wine. Now the wine store is only one city block away, this is a good but sometimes bad thing ☺ Being so close to so much has it's pitfalls. That's another story though…

A Sure Sign

The King always stops to pick up pennies, you know those annoying little copper coins that should be fazed out and prices rounded up or down…? Yep those ones. Sometimes he finds 1 and sometimes he finds 3 or 4 but he always picks them up,



saying that you should always respect money. Well last night between home and the wine store, a distance of 1 block, he found this…pennies, all over the footpath. Abandoned, alone, left to fend for themselves… **22c** worth.

And ***THAT*** is how I know the economy is really getting healthier. People are treating the humble penny with disdain again. Just leaving them dejected all over the ground. They've become superfluous.

Disregarded because the need is less great.

Things are looking up folks, we're on the way back up…there's pennies from heaven, they're everywhere if only you look.

Working on the Now, While Feeding into the Future

September 27, 2012

I read an amazing post recently on respect, teaching respect, gaining respect. How it's a two way street. It reminded me of all the things I know and have learned over the years, reading all the books on child raising, that I just forgot. And in all honesty, haven't used much lately.

Solving the problems and having a harmonious household is my goal. All the blocks are there I just have to arrange them in the right order. Kinda like lego.

I can see the goal posts but they're a little way off. Starting today I am changing tact with both kids. School is back now, so electronics will be a privilege not a right, tv included. There will be chores and consequences for not doing them. They will help with household activities like cooking dinner and cleaning up. It will be tough to re implement but I am determined not to be a slave.

I have a new focus, this is my year. They are growing up and need to learn how to cook and clean, so we will focus on those skills. Besides slave labour is totally allowed when they're your own kids. Right?!

I am even going to tackle the room maintenance! Lord help me ☺ I have failed thus far but I think it's because I'm coming at it all wrong. So now I'll come at it right… whatever that is, I'll let you know when it works. The thing is I have the renewed energy to rectify some things that have been let go over the last year.

UPDATE: Since I wrote this post, I changed the kids bedroom around to give them separate spaces, although still sharing a room. They totally LOVE it. It's so refreshing to see them playing together, without arguing. I even believe the upkeep will be easier. SO I am on the right track……I hope ☺

here's the link to that awesome post: http://theycallmemummy.com/2012/09/04/respect/

Why I Haven't Watched TV in a Week

September 28, 2012

We are a techno family, we're early adopters of technology, we're on the cutting edge. Ok when I say 'we' I'm totally using the Royal 'WE'. What I mean is The King is a techno man, *he's* an early adopter of technology, *he* gets all the beta tests of programs to try.

I get the benefits of this by association. It's great and frustrating all at the same time but over the years, many years, I've learned to adapt reasonably quickly to the change.

We're totally addicted to TV

We watch TV a lot, we love movies but prefer to experience them in the comfort of our own home. So we've had a computer hooked up to our television for years, long before apple tv, even longer before smart TVs with internet capabilities and facebook, netflix and itunes built in.

It's great, we've had cable and netflix and itunes for years.

The TV makers may have actually stolen the idea from us! Yeah, probably not, that's a bit presumptuous of me ☺

Trouble in TV land



Lately though we've had a run of bad luck on the TVs. Our 50" blew up about 6 months ago and although we've tried our hardest to get it repaired, we finally gave up and trashed it yesterday. On our way out the door with it, to put it in the dumpster, a carpet cleaning man working in our building thought all his Christmases had come early. We explained it was broken, repairable but we were over it… He loaded it up in his truck and decided it was worth a try. Good luck I say.

Now while we've been trying to have the 50" repaired we've been downgraded to the *spare* 36" (cos everyone needs a spare tv) and let me tell you when it comes to TVs, size DOES matter. However for the last 3 months the little tv that could has been saying I can't a little more often than it should. When we turn it on we have to wait for it to warm up for the picture to come on properly and not just pixelate itself upside down on the screen. This has been taking longer and longer and we're up to about 15 minutes.

This is getting rather tedious and so on the weekend we decided that we would just leave the bastard on permanently and switch it to computer at night and the screen saver will keep it going.

Brilliant idea

To make it fun and keep it working until the new purchase, we've used the photo screen saver and have accessed all our photos, approximately 10,000. So on a rolling screen saver, in a gallery type setting, which actually looks like our own wall, we get to see pictures of our lives scrolling by. They're all mixed up and with every new screen, memories come flooding back.



landscapes and catering and kids on sprite……



vow renewals, weddings and toddling babies……



more weddings and swimming and school awards ceremonies ……



50's rock and roll and Christmas and running from trolls……..



deserts and snow and the contrasts of our lives….

So far this week we haven't even turned the tv over to watch a movie or a show! Our entertainment at night has been, with our laptops on our laps, writing and coding and watching the photos of our lives scroll by…and remembering each event.

It's a great way to see photos of long forgotten times and for the kids to see themselves and us younger. They remember events too and it's great family time with lots of interesting conversations about the photos.

If you believe, it will happen

The new TV will come and it'll be awesome and **big** and flash and stuff but we'll still have the computer attached. We think it's better than the dumbed down, inbuilt version they sell *en masse*.

The photo screen saver will have to stay, the photos are fun to see. Who needs commercial TV when we get to be the star of the screen 24 hrs a day?

Yeah ok, we might eventually get sick of it but not watching TV for a whole week…in this house that's a record.

Did You Ever Want to be a Turtle?

September 29, 2012



Today is yucky, it's pouring rain…total cats and dogs pouring! All the lights are on in the house because it's so dark. Little Miss Gremlin is home sick and Sir Lickalot is pacing like a caged lion but refuses to go out onto the terrace and I'm puddleducking* outside for no dog. So here we are ….set for one of THOSE days.

It's days like these, however, I think about how good it is to be inside, warm, dry and human.

Yesterday, when it wasn't raining domestic animals, I saw this and it made me smile and my thoughts turned to strange things……

How simple life would be if we were turtles. Sunning ourselves on the rocks to keep warm, swimming in the pond, eating turtle food things. Nothing to think about except eating and maybe looking for a nice turtle friend to lay eggs with.

But then I thought, turtles can't eat ice cream or chocolate. Turtles can't listen to music on their ipods while walking through the park enjoying nature. Turtles have the geese to worry about, and cars with BIG tyres to be squashed with … and arsehole kids to poke sticks at them when they're bored on summer vacation… and snow, outside with no warm beds.

So I think, all things considered, I don't wanna be a turtle…… until next time I see one sunning himself and I do ☺

**puddleducking*- going outside, jumping in puddles and getting soaking wet in the heavy rain. It does have it's own unique quality and fun about it. Little kids LOVE it. Everyone should try it at least one time.

The New Kid Haven

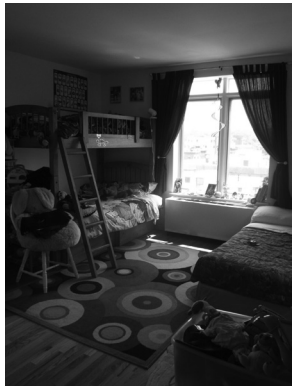
October 1, 2012

I spent the weekend painting the kid's room. Now that we've rearranged it and they have their own space it was time to get some paint on the walls. It's never been painted since we moved in. With them having bunk beds and lots of shelving there really wasn't much wall space showing anyway.

But finally I bit the bullet and decided to get it done.

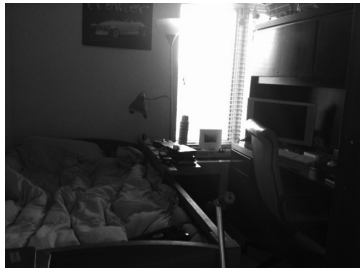
I've always loved bright, bold colours and I am a painting fiend. When we lived in Australia, I would send the King off to work with a beige kitchen and he'd arrive home to a blue one, no mess, no disruption, just blue walls. I'm good at that. I just move stuff to the middle of the room and paint. No fuss, no having stuff hanging around for days. Just get the job done.

So after rearranging their digs on Monday, I promised a new colour on the weekend.



This is how it looked before they got their own space.

Here's the comparison pics. It really came out great.



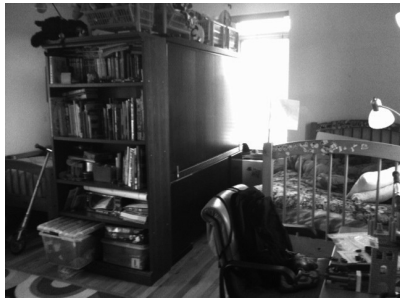
Grand Master D's side

After the move, Miss Gremlin described their digs. 'Mum,' She said 'Grand Master D has the luxury office and I have the military barracks!'



Little Miss Gremlin's side

While this is pretty true I did have to remind her that she had the queen bed.



And here's how it looks with a new coat of paint…or 3.



Grand Master D's luxury office



Miss Gremlin's military barracks



And here's what we found behind the divider desk. I had to snap before I painted over it forever more. Little Miss Gremlin's mitts.



Little Hands

It was a great days work, very satisfying and very happy children. Our house is finally completely painted.

The Room Magic Continues…….

October 2, 2012

After his sick day off school and finishing the homework I made him do anyway, Grand Master D started teaching his sister the lattice method of multiplication and algebra!

I haven't seen this in a very long time… they are working together, using the chalk board they haven't used for ages.

The room magic continues……it's amazing ☺



Professor D at work

I have no idea how long it'll last but I'll take it. Totally worth all the hours put in pushing furniture around and painting.

I Survived My First 'Real' Subway Breakdown

October 3, 2012

I had my first bonafide, actual, stuck in the tunnel subway ride on the weekend. We were headed downtown for some awesome family weekend activity, when between 86th and 81st the train came to a screeching halt.

Now I wasn't too concerned to start with because as millions of strap-hangers know, the MTA sucks. Trains stop, then go and some drivers bounce the brakes like Captain Kangaroo and some go too fast and others go too slow. The announcements are never audible because of the crappy speakers.

Basically getting on a subway train in New York is an overall crappy experience however I've always managed to get to my end destination without too much trouble.

Sure some days are more entertaining than others, some are more creepy too and occasionally you wonder why the hell didn't I take a cab?

Well to take a cab is to put your life in someone's hands who a) can't drive, b) doesn't know where he's going or *speak English* and c) probably only arrived in the country last week … remember The Terminal with Tom Hanks? Occasionally you'll get a good one but not very often. I just don't take them anymore.

Anyway I digress…

So there we were, stuck in the tunnel. As I've said, I've done this before….it's usually only about 5 minutes….. then they shut the train off and we're there, in the train, in the tunnel, in silence. :(

As they turned the train off there was a collective 'sigh' from the passengers in our car. An 'Oh *great*' sigh, you know the kind. I said something like "Oho" to the King and he said "Wait til they turn the lights out!"

I'm glad that didn't happen.

So we were marinating there in our subway car with everyone else, when an engineer came busting through the door at a breakneck pace checking something, radio at his hip blasting out instructions, then on to the next car. I imagine he was going right to the end of the train.

Are we in a movie?

Of course while we were sitting there all sorts of images came to mind… I didn't feel a bump, did we hit someone?

No, we're between stations, no one would be there.

Did something break? What could be wrong. The stages of panic ran through my head.

Then the King referenced the movie 'The Taking of Pelham 123', and I said 'If Densel comes through that end door, in fact if any actor does, then I guess we'll know it's a movie.' But no one famous did, just a different conductor asking if anybody tried to get off, open the doors while the train was moving or if anything was stuck in the door? UMM…no… really? Nothing like that happened in our car and so she continued moving forward through the train.

Waiting, waiting……

By this time we'd been there about 20 minutes and during this time, only once was there any announcement saying what was happening and the description was pretty vague. There was no 'Sorry for any inconvenience'. The MTA really don't care about your time or inconvenience.

And then, as if it never happened, the train started back up and we continued on without explanation.

You know, exactly like when you get hauled into security or immigration at the airport. They eventually let you go but *never* tell what the problem was. Oh that hasn't happened to you? Just me then? Right.

After a few minutes there *was* an announcement, like it was an after thought 'sorry folks' and that was it.

I wasn't in a movie, I didn't get to walk the tracks in the subway tunnel, I didn't even freak out, which I'm quite proud to say ……we were just late to our destination.

Totally not in a movie that day …

Hump Day Humour #18

October 3, 2012

It's hard to be funny this week, with both kids home again today…

One with the dreaded seasonal cold and the other a suspected broken nose…



This is how they feel…
Don't feel sorry for me, I'll get through because I pour them strong……



This is how I feel

My Italian Superman- A Travel Guide

October 4, 2012

When you visit Italy, it's best to wear a superman cape and be 3.



I must fly up there and save that…..



The wind isn't making my cape flap right

When you're 3 and wear a superman cape, you can have a love affair without words. Italian chicks dig the strong silent type.



Yep, she digs me!
So do little sisters.



I'm superman, my sister can eat me if she wants
When you're 3 and wear a superman cape, the Colosseum is bigger and you can imagine flying around it.



Now if this dad person will let me go I can fly over there
When you're 3 and wearing a superman cape, you can totally straighten that crooked tower in Pisa. Cos you know how annoying it is when things are crooked.



And you totally have to pretend with the trash can…



I'll-just-use-my-strength-to-straighten-this-trash-can.
Should you ever find yourself in Italy, if you can't be 3 at least wear a superman cape.

The Aging Face and the Youthful Heart

October 5, 2012



Birthday #2 with the Grandies

It's my birthday today and although I'm happy to grow another year older and I'm not really concerned with my onward march through middle age, I do see the years catching up in the mirror. I see my mum and my grandmother looking back at me in different parts of my face. It's funny how that works. One day it's not there, then bam it is. Of course that's not how it happens but when you look at something everyday you don't always see the changes.

I still feel 20

It's also funny how you don't feel older. I still feel like my 20 year old self. Sure I'm wiser and have had many experiences but I don't feel like I'm charging through my 4th decade. Being able to remember events from 20, even 30 years or more ago is a little bit surreal.



My 21st celebration

I wish I could go back and tell my 20 year old self a few things… the journey would have been different if I knew then what I know now but it doesn't work like that does it. ☺

I probably wouldn't have drunk so much and I would have been kinder to myself and stood up for what I wanted more but then I wouldn't be me.



Wouldn't change a thing

Doing all that stuff, making all those mistakes brought me here, to this place and this day. I know that and I'm thankful to all who helped me get here.

I'm happy and healthy and loved…. and on your birthday that is all you can ask for

Not bad for an old chick right? …well maybe the iphone 5? yeah I had to ask.



Birthday Roses…

So Happy Birthday to Me, and thank you to all who love me, support me and make me feel special, even when I make it hard to do so. ☺

The Art of the Simple Birthday Party

October 6, 2012

We had a birthday party to attend today, it was early, it was Saturday.

It was my nightmare.

The venue was right in the neighbourhood. The original plan of mini golf… buses and trains away, was changed seeing as the weather was turing nasty later on. I was secretly pleased. Is that mean? Was I being a grouch?

I didn't want to get up at 7am to navigate to a place I'd never been before. My adventurous spirit was still in bed sleeping where I wanted to be.

We got up in time, did the last minute gift purchase, which was actually better than the usual money in a card. ☺ Miss Gremlin said 'Why do we always do this last minute on the day of the party?' I had no answer, well not one I could say out loud. I'm lazy, I don't like birthday present shopping. It was early, I was tired ☺

Next stop, coffee.. If I was going to be up, I needed sustenance and being late to the party was irrelevant. As it was we weren't late… or should I say we weren't the latest ☺

The kids all arrived, the parents met each other and the party began.

Party time

It was funny to watch a game of 'pass the parcel', the kids had no idea what to do. Then they played twister, which should be renamed 'piles of kids' because that's how they spent most of their time. After that, there was a game of partner building, where you get a partner and hold hands, then with the free hands you build a tower. You have to cooperate because you only have one hand each. The team with the tallest tower after 5 minutes wins. It's a great game teaching patience and cooperation. Well done mommy host for making it up.







Another game of lego building was played but it was a little too tough, too many kids, so they abandoned that. Although I could see that being a fun game with only 1 or 2 kids. It involved building a certain pattern with lego in a time limit. It was an ipad/iphone game called Life of George.

Then onto the food part, burgers, chips and juice, not too crazy with junk, simple and inexpensive. After they ate, the kids got free play running around on the roof deck for an hour or so until things changed and the kids started arguing.

You can always tell when a party is over and a wise host limits the time and sends everyone on their way with a goodie bag and a feeling that this was a really fun party.

The perfect scenario:

Small number of guests,

time limit

several simple games *(old school is fun because they often haven't experienced pass the parcel or musical chairs or pin the tail on the donkey)*

food *(just enough without being too much)*

a little free play

goodbye and thanks for coming!

I can handle a party like this and honestly for the kids it's enough. There's no reason to go crazy with huge expensive parties. It just stressful and expensive and hard work.

Keeping it simple makes it pleasant yet still a great time for the birthday child.

Todays event was perfect. Miss Gremlin had a blast…and that's what counts right?

How do you do parties? Are you an every year party family? Or do you pick milestone years, 5,10,13,16 etc. Do you do the huge themed party? The bowling alley or skating rink? Or are you a simple laid back parent. I know which I prefer… to throw and attend ☺

There's Another Star in the Sky Tonight

October 8, 2012

This morning I woke up to a message from a friend that his mum had finally lost her battle with cancer. As I read the message and the tears flowed for his family and then for mine, I felt in that moment how fragile life is.

I have been talking with him on a regular basis while he was going through the pain of the last stages of her life. It's so painful to see a loved one suffer and when they pass the pain is worse. Of course it's over for the one suffering but then we're left to deal with our loss and heartbreak. No words can help and often people have no idea what to say or do.

When you hear news of another's loss it brings back the pain of your own. I know exactly where they are right now. The journey has changed, they're no longer worried about their mum's suffering. Her pain is gone but their's is just beginning.

There will be many dark days ahead. Grief is like that and although we tell ourselves that person is better off because they're no longer suffering, we still want them back with us to talk to and be with. Knowing that we can never hear their voice again or hold them becomes too much to bear.

Over time the grief changes. It's always there in your heart but life goes on and we think fondly of the one who is gone. There will be many firsts, where it will all come flooding back, first birthdays and christmases without that person and the smallest

things can trigger tears. Let them flow, it helps but over time that will fade too.

Tonight there's another star in the sky, another soul gone but never forgotten, and they live on in the memories of those left behind.

Sweet memories of the precious will never fade.

The Luckiest Number

October 9, 2012





On this *Nineth day of October in the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Nine*, I had the greatest honour of marrying a man who makes me laugh and cry, happy and sad and pushes me to do things I would NEVER do on my own. Hey I'm writing a damned blog aren't I? And living in America!

He's the father of my children and the Captain of my heart. He drives me crazy but loves me fiercely (I drive him crazy too, it's not one sided)

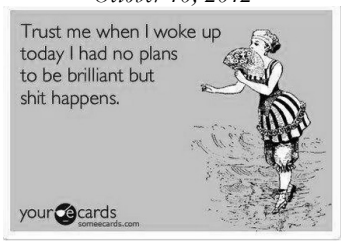
We have been through much in these **13 years** but together we have accomplished a lot. I feel very lucky indeed. The road hasn't always been smooth, sometimes we couldn't even find the road but we've stuck together and we're stronger than ever. To me that's all that matters.

Happy Anniversary My Love, if you play your cards right you might even get lucky :P

(did you submit your request forms in triplicate?)

Hump Day Humour #19

October 10, 2012



Now as someone said yesterday … Where's my muse?

The Conversation Everyone Should Have

October 10, 2012

A story on the news last night was trying to get America to talk to their families about end of life decisions. Apparently nobody talks about this stuff and it's causing issue when people are dying and the family doesn't know their final wishes. This makes sense and it's an important conversation to have.

There was a case last week where the parents of a woman who has terminal brain cancer and no hope for recovery. She wants to be removed from life support, she's had enough and wants to die but the parents took her to court to stop it because they are waiting for a miracle and think she is just depressed. Believing she is trying to suicide and will go to hell. In the article, the parents are devout in their religious beliefs and strongly believe she is just depressed and will get better. Now that is just denial. When it comes to this stuff you have to be realistic, sure miracles happen but more often than not they don't and the person will die.Why would you spend your last time with your dying daughter fighting against her wishes?

As it turned out a court ruled against the parents and the woman has the right to die. How very selfish of the parents. How very sad for the woman, spending the last weeks of life having to fight for what you want.

I feel it is very important to discuss with your older family members what their wishes are, whether they want life support or if they want to let nature take it's course. In my opinion if the dying person has seen everyone and said what they wanted to say then let them go, ease the suffering. It's not about the loved ones this time. Their time will come but when a terminal patient is at the end then let them die with dignity, let them know it's ok to go, if they're ready. Everyone dies and the sooner we accept and honour it as the final part of life the better these situations will be.

Have the conversation, include your children, they may have thoughts to express.

What if something tragic happens to a younger member, you need to know what they want.

If you have an honest conversation, then I believe not many people would want to linger on, brain dead or totally paralysed, having a machine breathing for them. Everyone wants to die with dignity, we can't chose when we shuffle off this mortal coil but we should be able to chose how and everyone should inform their families of their wishes. It's so important.

If you think there will be problems and family members are a little unrealistic then put it in a living will. They are easy to make. State legally what you what, who would have medical and financial power of attorney over those decisions if you can't make them. Families go through this every day. They second guess, they wonder what the right thing is, they don't want to lose their loved one but want that person to be treated in the best way possible and sometimes the best way possible is to flick the switch.

Medical science is brilliant, there have been many advances and they have prolonged life expectancies but we still don't treat end of life the right way. Filling cancer patients with drugs and putting them on life support is cruel, making them wither away painfully.

We would NEVER do that to an animal, our pets are truly loved and become part of the family but when they are terminally ill and it's time to go, we do the right thing. No one puts their dog on life support for decades. Why do we do it to people? I have never understood that. Nature knows.

If they are done, they're done. Keeping people in comas and vegetated states for years on end. Would they wish for that? Is that how they would want to live their life?

And THAT is what we must honour. If there is nothing left then they must be allowed to go.

I'm so glad the courts in the woman's case saw the reality of the situation and did what was right. I haven't seen if this woman passed on yet or not but it must be relieving for her to know that now she can.

How do you feel? Would you want to be on life support, prolonging your life if it's no longer meaningfully functional?

There's something to be said for euthanasia, I know it has the scope to be widely abused and therefore has remained illegal but in the countries where it is legal is there really the abuse that is feared? Or are people more comfortable knowing that they are still in control of their lives when it comes to making the ultimate life decision.

http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-10-04/news/34243320_1_tumor-tube-doctors

Save Me from the Junk Food and Other Crazy Hormonal Ramblings

October 11, 2012



I'm out of control, that's it--I need an intervention.

Someone needs to come and save me. I can't stop eating junk!

Up until now I have been going really well with paleo eating, avoiding all the bad things, cooking well, eating well. I have the occasional nibble at something naughty.

But this week I didn't just fall off the wagon, I hurtled myself headlong into a chocolate, cake, cookie munching frenzy. I even baked with wheat flour and sugar, not the alternatives. I can't stop and I'm hungry ALL the time. I could have easily sat down yesterday and eaten the whole carrot and walnut cake on my own and washed it down with milk. Thankfully my self control whimpered a little and I only had 3 slices before I hid it in a tupperware container in the back of the fridge……damn, I remembered……

munch, crunch, chew…excuse me while I brush the crumbs off my face…ahem

Right where was I? Oh yeah, I have shocking cravings and I can only put it down to monthly hormonal changes…don't go, it's ok I promise not to go into any menstrual cycle details. That would just be weird. So why am I feeling this? Is it normal? Am I having a '6 months on paleo' breakout? I don't think so…I really think it's cyclic.

I think my body is just craving some bad stuff. I'm not stressed, all is well.

I can't be the only one this happens to. Do we need different substances at different times of the month? I suppose it could make sense. I've never really tracked it before but I really notice it now that I'm eating clean.

I try to listen to my body, it seems to know what it needs but this week it's telling me to be bad ☺ and I don't even care. Tomorrow it will probably tell me enough, eat properly and I will.

But today…pass the chocolate.

The 10 Best Things About Autumn

October 12, 2012

Autumn… or Fall , why is it called Fall? What was wrong with Autumn? I know leaves fall in Autumn but why? We don't call winter Snow or Summer Sweat do we… I don't understand ☺



Anyway Autumn is a beautiful time of year.

1. The trees display spectacular colours during the early Autumn days. So many rich, warm tones. Very beautiful. The kids still love to build piles and jump in the leaves.



2. Apple cider and pumpkins get to feature in menus. I'm not a pumpkin pie fan but I do love muffins and slice and soups made with pumpkins. It makes you feel warm and cozy. It's pretty good fun to go apple picking and to get lost in those creepy corn mazes.
3. The chill in the air is invigorating. It's not too cold to spend lots of time outside in the fresh air.
4. You get to wear boots again!



5. You can wear your hair down without getting hot and sweaty. And the wind blowing it around feels awesome!
6. The kids are back in school, this could be #1 actually .
7. Halloween and Thanksgiving are fun times to enjoy. Even though these things are relatively new to us, we enjoy them.
8. The crazy people go inside in the evenings because it's getting too cold. Summer is a cranky time in the city because everyone is too hot. In Autumn they get to cool down. This is a good thing.
9. Winter menu foods are here. I love soups and stews and hotpot meals. I love the smell of the house when there's something cooking all day.
10. The weather is cooler and you can sleep at night, snuggled under the covers. No more noisy airconditioner or loud street noise with the windows open.
11. Cos all cool things go up to 11… I've heard pumpkin spice latte is da bomb but I'm too scared to try it.

It truly is a beautiful season. I think it's my favourite.



Our New Best Friend

October 14, 2012

We bought a new coffee machine!

Seriously, it was time… the old one was killing us slowly. We had a system to limp our way to coffee in the mornings but man… we worked for our morning coffee. Some days I just gave up and went to Starbucks!



it's had a hard life… time to go to the Princesses house to live out the rest of it's days

So being as how October is birthday/anniversary/birthday time, what better time to spoil ourselves.

So we bought this…



Shiny newness

And it's awesome. You can see the excitement in the face of the King. He sent me a picture to show it arrived.



Come home quick…It's here!

It does this…



Automatic grinder

And this…



The delicious aroma fills the apartment
And makes these, perfectly every time…



Espresso macchiato
We had so many coffees on the first day that we couldn't sleep ☺
Happy October to us.

Leibster Award

October 15, 2012

Liebster Award

I am very humbled to have received an award from Anna @annaeddins. It's my first one and it's pretty exciting. The Leibster Award is an award given to new bloggers for encouragement on a job well done so far…It's an interesting journey writing a blog. So far I am enjoying every minute.

So this is how it works:

Yes, every award is *awarded* with rules. :-)

Each person must post 11 things about themselves.
Answer the 11 questions the person giving the award has set for you.
Create 11 questions for the people you will be giving the award to.
Choose 11 people to award and send them a link to your post. Go to their page and tell them.
No tag backs.

Here are 11 things about me:

1. I LOVE open fires
2. I love the smell of summer rain
3. I need to go walking by myself often
4. I miss Australia
5. The kids drive me crazy a lot
6. I love springtime flowers but can never get motivated to plant them in time
7. I think getting up before the sun is unnatural and should be illegal
8. I think fast cars and loud music Always go together.
9. I HATE ironing!
10. I'm fascinated by foreign languages and try to learn them often… I am not fluent in any but I can order beer and coffee in 2!
11. I can't get into to an unmade bed, even if that means making it then getting in

And here are the questions for me to answer:

1. *What is your favorite hobby?*
   I have several things I call hobbies but I guess the biggest one is making clothes. not that I do it very much anymore.
2. How soon did you or would you marry after your first date with your true one-and-only?
   Our circumstances we're not conventional to say the least. We married after 9 years but I believe I knew he was right after about 3-4.
3. Pro-life or Pro-choice? Explain.
   This is a tough question. Although I'm a Christian I am pro-choice. I believe you should have total control over your own body and no one should dictate how you handle your reproductive life. There will always be those who need to terminate for whatever their reason and it's not for us to judge, their time will come.
4. How do you feel about gay marriage? Explain.
   Another tough question. I have no issue with any couple committing their lives to each other. I think the real issue is having equality in the eyes of the law for those unions. The laws need to change to recognise life partners regardless of sexual orientation. However, calling it marriage is a separate issue. Marriage is a religious ceremony borne by the church between a man and a woman. That is not the same as a civil union which is defined by the law of the land. Everyone should have the right to equality under the law. What you call it is irrelevant.
5. If you were to find $10 in your pocket right now, what would you do with it?
   Get excited I had 10 dollars more than I thought and put it in my wallet.
6. Cappuccino, Frappuccino or latte?
   All of the above ☺ why choose?
7. Who is your favorite band/vocalist?
   Zac Brown Band
8. Would you or have you ever given a child up for adoption?
   I haven't and I couldn't say what I would do unless the situation arose.
9. Would you or have you ever considered adoption?
   I have all the children I can cope with.
10. What is number one on your bucket list?
    To see the 7 wonders of the world.
11. *Are you now, where you want to be for the rest of your life?*
    I am where I'm supposed to be for now but life is a fluid thing and to say this is where I'm supposed to be for the rest of my life would be just poking the Gods ☺ I'm certainly with the one I should be for the rest of my life though. Where he takes me next.. I can only brace myself for ☺

Your questions:

1. Do you prefer sweet or savoury? 2. Drinker or Non-drinker? 3. Dogs or Cats? 4. Did you plan your children (if you have any) or were they surprises? 5. Do or have you ever given blood? 6. Do you prefer country life or city life?Explain. 7. Do you have any irrational fears? 8. What is your opinion on euthanasia ? Explain. 9. Would you or have you ever been skinny dipping? 10. Have you ever been caught in a compromising position ? 11. If you took drugs as a young person would you admit it to your children at an age appropriate time or would you take it to your grave? Explain.

And the Nominees are:

1. Momaical
2. They Call me Mummy
3. It's A Dome Life
4. Suburbia Interrupted
5. A Faded Ginger
6. Smart Sexy Paleo
7. MissDi.com
8. Buried With Children
9. The Adventures of the Family Pants
10. Well Done everyone ☺ These are the blogs I love to read, I'm not sure if everyone qualifies but it's so hard to tell and I failed on reaching
11. It's taken 3 days to compile the list I have. Forgive me.

The Kids Are Foxing… I Think……But How Do You Really Tell?

October 15, 2012

At what point do you believe your kids are sick? Is it when they say I'm sick in the tummy but they have no temperature and they haven't vomited? Do you believe them at 7am Monday morning when they have been perfectly fine all weekend? Do you negotiate until they're late then let them stay home?

This is my world today. Miss Gremlin, from the minute I woke her up, started with the I feel sick. Now she is usually great at wanting to go to school but lately she has started feeling 'sick' more. I suspect hormones are in play, she is moody and teary and probably does feel sick and with her, she is so far ahead in school, it's not really a concern. However I feel like I'm being played a bit too. How do you decide? How mean do you get ? Do you send them to school snivelling and whining and actually crying ? Or do you take the soft route and say 'Ok stay home?'

I know when the King gets up there will be a confrontation but short of physically dragging her out of bed what are my options? I'm so frustrated!

Then you have Grand Master D and Lord knows he'll try and get out of school any opportunity he can. He uses the I feel sick in the stomach all the time. Is this a real phenomena or is it an act? We argued all morning today, beyond the time he needed to leave. There were lots of tears, he insists he feels sick and I have let him go back to bed but I said 'When you wake up better, then you are going to school' I know I could have fought it but to what end and how do I even know what the right thing to do is?

Maybe they are both feeling bad, perhaps they do need extra sleep and they feel sick. Maybe it's just mondayitis. I really don't know and I feel bad either way. I don't want them home all day, they need to be in school. But if they're really sick and I send them am I a mean mummy. I wear that badge and I'm not scared of it but I don't know what to do about this.

I find it so difficult to decide what the right course is. It makes me crazy…

Today though, when they both wake up, they are getting dressed and going to school because I think I have to prove that foxing won't really work.

I'm so tired of this.

What would you do? I really want to know.

Sir Lickalot-Special Dog

October 16, 2012

We love Sir Lickalot, we really do, he's our special child. I've told his story before which you can read here but in short he has brain damage from abuse when he was a puppy. We got him at 10mths and he'd already had a hard life. We have no idea what really happened to him but even 5 years on he has cellular memories to things and reacts strangely.



When we feed him, we have to completely back away from the food bowl before he'll come near it usually cowering but we've never hit him or chastised him about food. He's freaked out by the bag of kibble. Whenever I bring it out to feed him he goes upstairs! I think he doesn't like the noise. He doesn't like dog treats and using food as a teaching tool is out of the question because he won't take it from your hand.

He's a very fast learner. His damage is not in his intelligence areas of the brain, it's all motor skills. So he walks like he's drunk and rather than circle 3 times to lay down he just falls over like he's been shot and with gusto… he can move the bed when he flops down at the end of it.

At night, one false move and he thinks it's time to go out. He's learned that I have to be dressed before he's actually going anywhere but if either of us gets up in the night for a bathroom break, he becomes crazy change position dog.

You know how you walk around your home in the dark and you know where things are, well when we get up in the night we know where he is, either laying on the floor on my side of the bed, in the hall or at the end of the bed. They are his 3 favourite spots, except when it's hot then he likes the bathroom tiles.

So when nature calls we scope him out so we don't trip over him… but he's got other ideas. He can be dead asleep when we step over him but when we come out of the bathroom, we trip over him all the time…….*because he moves!* It's like he plays a joke on us every night.

He can traverse our open rise stairs in a matter of seconds, especially if we've said 'walk' or there's someone at the door. He's very social and needs to meet everyone that comes to the door. He gets super excited when we put shoes on, regardless if he's going out or not. He gets really pissed if he can't go but he always forgives us when we get back.

When he lays down he must be against something and likes small squishy spaces. He hugs the rug, with one foot under it. He takes comfort in the closeness … like the Temple Grandin hug machine thing. He is special you know.

He's extremely vocal but NEVER barks. We've heard his bark 3 times in 5 years.

He gets cranky at us and huffs like a child, which is hilarious.

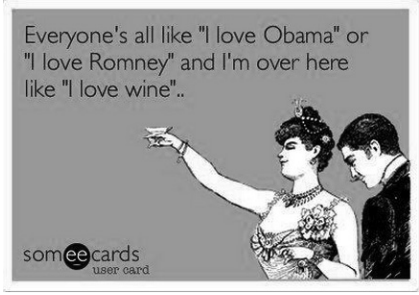
He drools a little all the time. If they made dog bibs he'd be wearing one! He drools more when little Vegas comes to visit. We have no idea why. He is obsessed by her.

He LOVES little people, obsessively…and he loves us. Which is awesome because we love him, our very own special child.

Hump Day Humour #20

October 17, 2012

This election season, let's focus on what really matters ☺



Happy Hump Day… and for those with NYC school kids… Happy Half Day!

The Step Monster lives…

October 18, 2012

Today I'm linking up with They Call Me Mummy and her momfessionals. Here's a story about a not so great step parent, Me.- Before I had any idea what I was doing, I was in charge of someone else's child. It was tough and I messed it up, pretty badly at times. Do you think I damaged her much? You'll have to read to find out ☺ Hope you enjoy.

At a young age I became a step mother. I was a step mother before I had children. It's different. Inheriting someone else's child comes with a different set of rules. It's not clearly defined. It's not all you. Whether we realise it or not, before we have children, we have preconceived and often unrealistic ideas, on how they should be raised. I was very guilty of that. When you have your own children you grow into the roll from birth. It's a totally different thing to start at aged 8. I felt I needed to prove something to The King, that I was a good mother, that I knew how to do things properly. I knew nothing! I was also trying to settle in a new relationship, in a new place. All of a sudden being a "mother" to an 8 year old was hard to navigate, even if it was only for short periods of time. To be honest, loving someone else's child doesn't come naturally. It's much harder to find that unconditional love. It has to grow and evolve.



I did my best with the very limited knowledge I had, the only real experience I could draw on was my own upbringing. Totally irrelevant 20 years later. It was tough when the Princess would come for vacations. The King was busy trying to get us going in the business, things were uncertain and there wasn't the opportunity to take time off. So it was really left to me to do things with her. I approached things all wrong, I was so insecure and trying so hard to prove myself in my relationship and my roll

as partner and "mother" that I didn't take the time to just hang out and be fun. I didn't think about how all the changes were affecting her either. It must have been awful coming to visit, with dad too busy and being stuck with the step-monster all the time. It wasn't an enjoyable time looking back, we did our best but we could have handled it so differently. Luckily kids are resilient.



It went on this way, a couple of vacations a year for 4-5 years. The relationship grew but it wasn't natural for me. I was still trying so hard to prove myself. Looking back now, I was so wrong. I was the poster child for how NOT to step-parent.



Despite all this, at 14 the Princess decided she wanted to come and live with Dad for a year. To get to know him a bit better. By then, Grand Master D was 3 and Miss Gremlin was on her way. Again I was thrown in the deep end but this time it was permanent. I had to navigate high school for the first time when I hadn't done anything beyond play-group and daycare. We had an instant teenager, who by that time was a little more free range than either of us liked and we set about reining that in. We were so naive. It was a huge adjustment all around. I can only imagine how hard it was for the Princess. I was only looking at it from my side. 7 months pregnant, a 3 year old and a new teenager. We made it work, we adjusted because we had to. There were problems at first but she managed to fit in at school and youth group at church.



I'm not sure she got to know her dad the way she'd hoped as he was just as busy as ever, now travelling to the US every 3 months but she did get to go on a trip. I suppose that's something most 14 year olds don't get to do. He actually left for a 3 week trip, 2 weeks after she first arrived to live with us.



In spite of the difficulties, I think we managed to live through the year well enough and actually grew close. The Princess got to spend time with her brother and sister and in the process achieved some great things, including singing on the beach in Surfers Paradise at an International Surf Carnival and losing 52 pounds. She also became very good at looking after little people. After the Princess moved back with her mother, we moved countries and she came to live with us again when she finished high school in December 2007. It was very different second time around.



A couple of years ago I had an opportunity to talk to the Princess about those times and I asked for her forgiveness for not being as loving and fun as I could have been. She was gracious enough to say there was nothing to forgive but we talked a lot about all the years past. We got to a great place, she said she never hated me and didn't even think it was all so bad. I was relieved to find I hadn't totally scarred her for life.



I still feel bad and although I can't change it, I've righted it the best I can by talking about it with her. We have a great relationship now as it's on an adult level and I no longer have the same insecurities but deep down I wish I had handled it differently.



I did learn some valuable things along this journey though. The best way to be a step mother, in my opinion, is to just love the child the best way you can. Don't try to change everything they are just because you might have issues with their other parent. Ultimately it doesn't matter. The reason you're even in their lives could be painful enough for them, a divorce or death of a parent. Be kind to them and be kind to yourself. It will work out. Life has a way of doing that.

I wish someone could have told me not to try so hard and just to go with the flow. It could have been a much more pleasant time. As adults it's really up to us to set the tone of the relationship with our stepchildren. If we love their parent then we owe it to all involved to just do our best to live and love together as a family.



Do you have a secret, some dirty laundry, a skeleton or two in your closet?
We do and it's time to speak out.
Welcome to the MOMfessional – a space where other parenting bloggers can let it all hang out.

bloggers post a piece on their blogs under the title of MOMfessional, it might be dark and heavy, it may be uproariously funny. It just needs to be something that people don't talk about or easily 'fess up to. We'll link up to it , so you'll be able to find each month's piece right here. Easy peasy.

Are you a blogger who wants to take part? Email Michelle at yourlifestory@me.com with your post. All you need to do when you post your own MOMfessional is grab the banner above and link it to http://theycallmemummy.com/momfessional and we will make sure your post is listed.

Mani-pedis Are a Waste of Time and Money on Me

October 19, 2012



I love being pampered, who doesn't but I very rarely go out and pamper myself. It's a waste of time and money. No matter where I go or how much I pay it never lasts…not ever!

Unfortunately I'm not wealthy enough to do nothing all day and the constant use of my hands ruins any work done within hours.

Why is it that toes can hold onto nail polish for months on end but no matter what you do fingernails chip within hours? It's so frustrating and why I never pay for it anymore. At least if I do it myself I can touch it up each day until I just give up and take it all off.

On Sunday afternoon I spent an hour doing the King's feet and hands. He's discovered that he likes nice nails… and you know I want a husband with clean fingernails… for many reasons, I'm sure you get what I'm saying. It's fun actually, we sit outside in the sunshine together, the kids doing their thing and me pampering my man… now don't get scared I'm not spoiling him and I'm no 1950's wife but it really is a nice quiet time spent together. We talk cos he can't type :P



I do like a well manicured man

Once he was all set and had shiny clean nails, yep I lacquered them with base coat and top coat, I decided mine needed some help, especially as I dyed my hair without

gloves again and you know nails and hair LOVE dark coloured dye. Painting my nails serves a purpose this week, it keeps my 'I dye my hair at home' secret… Oh, oops, I guess that secret is out now.

So this is how beautiful they looked last night when I did them



Beautiful, right?
Toes too…



This is a pretty colour on some pretty toes!

This morning after sleeping… and nothing else, they looked like this



Chipped along the top…

I didn't make dinner last night, so no dishes, no clean up, nothing… SO frustrating. By midday they looked like this…



Ok so I made school lunches and breakfast.

I haven't been doing anything heavy duty, no cleaning , just light food prep and writing.

Here's how they looked by 3pm……



This is insane. I need to wear gloves

I can't even go one day without messing up my nails. It's just nuts.

I did all the right things, base coat, 2 coats colour and then a top coat. I let them fully dry. Less than 24 hours later they are totally ruined.



Useless… not even 24 hours later

I'm so glad I didn't pay to have it done. The only benefit would have been the pampering. Clearly I'm not the girly type……

But the toes ……exactly the same ☺



Still perfect!

Don't Put Chocolate in your Hoohaa- Just Trust Me, OK?

October 20, 2012

You might think that *not* putting chocolate up inside yourself would be obvious ……I'm a smart lady and that would seem like a given right? but I'm here to assure it's not.



When you're young and silly, you are apt to try new things. This is good because new experiences help you grow as a person. This is also true sexually. It's important to explore things, how else do you find out what you like and what is just a little too kinky.

Of course you must be with someone you feel comfortable with and safe so that you can relax and enjoy whatever new experience you're about to try. Or so I've heard ☺ being that I'm still as pure as the driven snow…snort!

So this one time……

We were on the road, the King and I,

It was the early days, he was a rock musician and I was….I was….um……

the hotel room entertainment ☺.

We spent a lot of time on the road going from town to town and gig to gig. It was really was lots of fun… every time movies like The Banger Sisters, Almost Famous or Walk the Line or any other rock musician movie comes on tv we get a little nostalgic for the old days…but then we remember how hard it was too and how sucky living on the road really is. (*sigh*)

There we were in some little backwater town somewhere in Australia, and we decided we'd take a bath, with bubbles, cos baths with bubbles are more fun than without, especially for 2.

Things are moving along in the usual fashion (*insert own dirty bath sex thoughts here*) when I decided that some chocolate would be nice…to eat.

So I jumped out to get some, we got into a wrestle because I wasn't sharing, the King wanted some and blah blah blah, you can picture the scene. He was almost able to grapple the chocolate from my grasp when I had a brainwave and hid it where you just shouldn't.

Well we both disolved in fits of laughter, the King couldn't believe it!

His face registered total shock.

He wasn't getting MY chocolate -but then it happened…remember we're in a warm bath, with warm bodies and it's chocolate ….in a hoohaa and IT WON'T COME OUT.

It had started to melt so I couldn't grab it….panic registered on my face. Foreign objects were not a regular inclusion into my lady parts. I was am a good girl.

What were we gonna do? I had 6 squares of chocolate stuck, up inside me. *INSIDE* me.

Alternating between hysterical laughing and mild panic, we worked out that if I just sat in the warm water and kept washing, that eventually the chocolate would melt and come on out into the bath……

And so it did *(phew)*

But for a little while I thought I was going to have to explain to the emergency department why I had a chocolate hoohaa.

Facebook Sucks

October 21, 2012



Remember life before social media? Before we put everything up on facebook and twitter? When we had a big night out and nobody had a cell phone camera to post immediately to the world how badly we behave when we think we're having fun?

Yeah me too.

Remember when a big night out couldn't be remembered but no on else could show you what you did? And as the foggy memories came back you felt embarrassed and perhaps had to make some phone calls but it was all forgotten quickly?

Yeah me too.

Remember when kids weren't committing suicide because they were harassed beyond what they could bear on a computer? When the bullying was contained to school hours? When there were no photos? Where they were safe from it in their homes? Before things went viral and those bullying cowards hid behind a keyboard and screen?

Yeah me too.

We have a social problem, a blemish on our society. Social media is destroying our privacy. It's destroying lives and families. It's ruining kids chances of getting into colleges or get jobs. Prospective colleges and employers now make it a habit to search the internet for information on candidates.

This seemingly innocuous program is out of control. We're friends with people we'd never be friends with just because once we went to high school with them. We say things that we shouldn't say and post things we shouldn't post and others have the ability to do the same. It seems like nothing is off limits.

Kids are making bad choices about uploading semi naked pictures or other inappropriate content. They don't understand the long term effect of what they're actually doing.

Sure it's great for families to stay connected across the miles. It's a great way to share pictures and events but it's so very important to remember how dangerous it can be.

Our children are being preyed on by paedophiles.

Our teens are being bullied and harassed. Some to death!

People, mostly teens, are being meaner because they're seemingly removed. It's easy for the gutless to say terrible things when they're not face to face with their victim.

Mostly, they still have a shred of conscience when they have personal contact but when they sit alone or with friends in a room with a computer, the bravery comes out and they say what they want about others, without repercussion.

There are *always* repercussions. You can never take it back.

We must teach our children how to behave in this new social world. We need to change the culture of facebook and the way it affects the lives of the young. Somehow take it back to a fun, safe, happy place to interact with friends and family.We must show them how to interact in this new world safely, decently and appropriately.

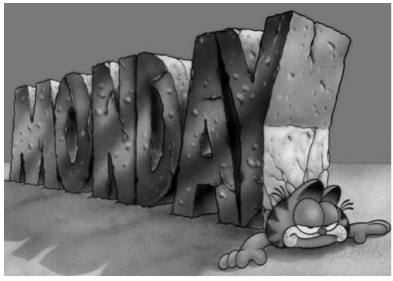
We have to try for the sake of our young.

But unfortunately for now, it's a great tool gone bad.

The Weight of the World

October 22, 2012

Here it is again, that one day of the week the whole world hates. …*MONDAY* …The energy, or lack of, is palpable. Everyone is tired and cranky, in a rush and usually late. Things always seem to go wrong on Monday mornings when you're trying to get organised.



This is how it really feels

BUT WHY? …It's just another day, no different to any other. Why does Monday have such a bad rep?

Songs are written about it. The Boomtown Rats, The Mamas and Papas, The Bangles… and there are so many others.

My twitter feed has been clogged with negative Monday comments, I did it myself this morning. Face book is no different, all those monday jokes and complaints. No one complains about Tuesdays or Thursdays.

I try on sunday nights to relax and get the kids organised for an early bed but The King doesn't want the weekend to end so this creates a problem. He actually stays up later on Sunday nights than on Friday or Saturday, it drives me crazy.

Mondays are just so tiring, even the kids have trouble getting going. I'm always dragging my feet on too little sleep.

Psychologists have done studies on it, telling us it's all in our heads. Well DUH but why?



I guess it has something to do with getting back into work mode, feeling tired from your sporting activities, partying or late night weekend. Especially if you don't particularly like your work/ school or if you're coming off a vacation.

They've also done studies about sleeping in and how it messes with your sleep cycle but let's

face it no one wants to get up early on a weekend. We all sleep late and stay up late. It's the rules.

Whatever the reason, we should try to love Monday more. I'm sure it's a lovely day really. Adopting a new attitude could be all it takes to move past the Mondayitis we all feel.

**This post was finally brought to you by tired Monday eyes and too much coffee.*

Reasons I know I'm NOT married to a Sensitive New Age Guy …

October 23, 2012

SNAG's wanna help with kids and stuff:

Yeah not in this house. Of course if I ask him, the King will willingly help me but it's not on his radar to offer. He doesn't think I need it because apparently, I look like I have it under control. I guess that's a compliment but if I showed how I was really going some of the time then he'd probably want to buy me my very own straight jacket. Purple, I like purple.

SNAG's want to give you foot massages and talk about your feelings:

OMG I just snot laughed on my own keyboard! We talk about feeling, sure…Did you just see that flying pig?

Feelings are for girlfriends. Just deliver the information already and I'll fix it ☺. Ok that was harsh and not entirely true. We talk about feelings, every third thursday of the full moon on tatooine.

SNAG's do housework:

The King just got me a cleaner, I don't work-who needs housework help?

Being a SNAG is not natural:

I couldn't imagine being a husband, the expectations are so high! Go to work, earn the money, but come home and help out at home, share the domestic duties equally.

We're built differently, we really are. Men look at things a different way, they want to please us, they want to protect us and fix things for us but we want them to see things like us. THEY DON'T but they still love us. We have to remember that, just like they have to understand we like to talk about feelings and they should just let us.

Who needs a SNAG anyway?

But seriously ☺ I like manly men, I just do, so why do I need my man to do my job. We chose, well me, I chose not to work out of the home while the kids were young (may they never grow up) and so I do the lion's share of the home duties. And that's fine! The King works hard, long hours, *for us*. I work hard long hours too. He doesn't expect me to help him with his work, why should I expect it of him?

As a team we do things together in a balance that works and over the last few years he's become far more involved in the family day to day stuff. I appreciate that for sure. Is he ever gonna be a house husband? No. Do I want that? No. What we have works for us and works well. I even got over the fact he wants to cook dinner several times a week. He doesn't dislike my cooking, he's *helping* ☺

I don't have a SNAG and I'm ok with that.

How does it look in your family? Do you both work? Are you a SAHM or the main breadwinner? There's no right or wrong. It's just what works best for you.

I still like purple.

Hump Day Humor #21

October 24, 2012

The Children's Bible in a Nutshell

In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness, and some gas. The Bible says, ' The Lord thy God is one', but I think He must be a lot older than that.

Anyway, God said, 'Give me a light!' and someone did. Then God made the world. He split the Adam and made Eve. Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden…Not sure what they were driven in though, because they didn't have cars.

Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel.

Pretty soon all of the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something.

One of the next important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham. Noah built a large boat and put his family and some animals on it. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob was more famous than his brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in exchange for some pot roast. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat.

Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people. These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable.

God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti. Then he gave them His Top Ten Commandments. These include: don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbour's stuff. Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humour thy father and thy mother.

One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies. Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town.

After Joshua came David. He got to be King by killing a giant with a slingshot. He had a son named Solomon who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines. My teacher says he was wise, but that doesn't sound very wise to me.

After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets. One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then got barfed up on the shore.

There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them.

After the Old Testament came the New Testament. Jesus is the star of The New. He was born in Bethlehem in a barn. (I wish I had been born in a barn too, because

my mom is always saying to me, 'Close the door! Were you born in a barn?' It would be nice to say, 'As a matter of fact, I was!')

During His life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like the Pharisees and the Democrats.

Jesus also had twelve opossums. The worst one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.

Jesus was a great man. He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount.

But the Democrats and all those guys put Jesus on trial before Pontius the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus. He just washed his hands instead.

Anyways, Jesus died for our sins, and then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminium. His return is foretold in the book of Revolution.

Putting Yourself Out There…..

October 25, 2012

I have such self doubt some days, ok most days…Why would anyone want to read my blog? Sure sometimes I have things to say. I like to think I can put a funny spin on something, but really there are so many talented writers out there, what makes me think I can even do this?

Some days the inspiration is just not there. I make something work but still wonder am I good enough?

How do you put yourself out there every day on display for the whole internet to see, trying to promote yourself among the throng, tweeting you guts out, facebooking yourself like a cheap 2 dollar hooker and then get nada on your stats!

It's a strange choice, an odd place to be but then you get people commenting and relating to your posts and 'liking' what you do and you start to think, maybe I do make a difference, maybe what I have to say is important to someone.

What if I stopped tomorrow, would anyone care? Would I care?

I have no idea if anyone else would, but I care.

I like doing this.

It's fun.

I'm not always going to be super awesome. (You can still tell me I am, though ☺)

How can anyone live up to that?

But I *do* have things to say and I *am* funny sometimes.

I *have* had experiences I can share and maybe, if just one person has a better day because of something I tweeted, or facebooked, or wrote about here, then that's enough and that keeps me doing it, even when nobody's watching.

But keep watching… *pwease* ☺

Sometimes It Takes A Couple of Goes to Get a Good One

October 26, 2012

October 15 was Pregnancy Loss Remembrance Day. Millions of women everywhere, every day suffer the loss of a pregnancy through miscarriage.

In fact 40% of all pregnancies end in miscarriage.

I didn't know that, until it happened to me. I also didn't know how many friends around me had suffered a similar fate, until it happened to me. It's not something people openly talk about. I don't think they deliberately hide it, but it's not something that comes up in conversation either.

The miracle of life, the fertilisation of an egg by a sperm is the most natural thing in the world and it happens all over the world every day. For that miracle to occur, so many things have to be exactly perfect. You don't need a biology lesson from me to get the idea.

Getting pregnant is NOT always easy, staying pregnant can be even harder for some… for others, they breed like rabbits and pop babies out like nothing and have lots. For them it's easy.

That wasn't the case for me. I started thinking about it around 28 yo but circumstances prohibited any action until I was 30. Once we decided, well I decided, because the King decided he didn't really want to do it again, but if I did, he was happy to continue on and let me handle it ☺ There were lots of decisions going on back then!

A little background

I have been a sufferer of endometriosis for 32 years, from the start I had menstrual troubles, haemorraging at 13, spending a week in hospital. Over the years I had a few other scares but managed to handle it. By age 28 I had pre-cancerous cell removed from my cervix and endometriosis was diagnosed at the same time via laparoscopy and burned off.

After that the doctors tried all sorts of hormone treatments to control the pain and heavy periods. They put me into medical menopause… THAT was a glimpse into the future… stripping off because of hot flushes at 28 is pretty weird, and funny. Many of those treatments gave me debilitating migraines. It was a tough time. It turned out I have low progesterone and that caused a whole slew of issues.

Knowing all of this, when it was time to try and get knocked up, and it didn't happen after about 6 months, I went to a Chinese herbalist. He gave me the most disgusting concoction to boil up and drink that you can ever imagine. I was clearly committed to the task for drinking that shit, I swear!

Circles on the Chart

We got into a cycle, the doctor wanted me to take my temp each day and circle the chart when we had sex, to plot my cycle and check for ovulation. It became fun for the King to get those circles on that chart. So this went on for about a year and then we went to another herbalist, who was known in Australia as the baby maker. She was so booked up, there was no way I could see her but I was able to see her husband and he treated me the same way. Within 2 months I was late for my period, one week, two weeks then three. Every week I'd do a pregnancy test, nothing. I couldn't work out why I was late and NOT pregnant.



Then on day 21, I got up and did a test and there they were, 2 pink lines

. We were up the duff! Now what? Well pretty quickly we were in the swing of it and I was sick. Morning sickness is a bitch as we all know. And I was not spared.

Now what? Well, The King did what all self respecting partners do at the this time… he figured we'd better get legal and proposed. You can read that story here.

So we were pregnant and getting married.

We got the wedding squared away and set off on our honeymoon. After we returned I started to not feel right, and then I started spotting so I went to the doctor to check it out. She sent me for an immediate ultrasound and I can still remember everything. The sonographer asked questions and checked my dates, the more she asked, the more knew something was wrong. You can tell when it's not right, they avoid your questions, they take on a differnet demeanor, it's not their fault, they know but can't say.

She left to room to confer with a colleague, who came back in the room and started asking all the same questions about dates and how I was feeling and symptoms etc. It was then I saw the screen, there was my little baby with little arm buds and leg buds, looking like a teddy bear floating in my uterus, 9 weeks 3 days, the problem was, I was 12 weeks.

I had my suspicions confirmed, but only after I opened the film and report I was supposed to transport straight back to my doctor. When I got back to the doctor she told me I would need to go to the hospital the next morning to have my baby removed.

So we did that, with all the usual physical and emotional pain experienced with a loss like that. This is not *that* story.

Three months later and we were pregnant again. This time with all the same symptoms but with the added fear of loss, every single day along the way.

Through the Grace of God, we managed to go along this time and 12 months to the day of the miscarriage, I went into labour with our beautiful baby boy. He was born in the early hours of the next morning. A very healthy 8lb 7oz, who turns twelve in 2 weeks.

He completed us…..but then we wanted more ☺ Well I wanted more. I hated the idea of an only child. The Princess was an only child up until Grand Master D was born and that hadn't been going so well. I come for a large family and wanted more than one child.

I won out, as I always do ☺ (don't tell the King) and we started planning for #2. Again it took some time, but I didn't take any shit tasting Chinese herbs this time. Then that morning came after I was 21 days late and had already wasted 2 pregnancy tests. Damn that low progesterone.

This time I was very sick, I mean really sick, sicker than I ever imagined a foreign object growing in your body could possibly make you. We went to the doctor for confirmation and to try to alleviate my malaise. Of course I was a little panicky, knowing that I only had a 50% strike rate on pregnancies. I took it easy, well, as easy as you can take it with a 2 year old.

Not in the plan

Things were going along but then I got sicker and sicker, the morning sickness was out of control. So I went to the doctor, who decided I should go and have a scan to be safe. The details of this one are a little fuzzy but the outcome was the same as the first time, this little soul was 11 weeks along.

I knew the drill, take the scans back to the doctor, who told me to report to the hospital in the morning. This time however, there were complications. It was what

they call a molar pregnancy . Mine was a partial molar, but it was what caused me to be so sick.

Once it was removed, I needed to be monitored every week to make sure the hormones went back to normal, so every week off I went for a blood test. Things took longer than they should to get back to normal. But get back to normal they did.

The loss was harder to take second time around.

Finally, well it felt like that long, things got back to normal and low and behold the King managed to knock me up again! He's a stud ☺ This time I was a total mess. It was completely obvious to me that I didn't do this very well. Actually I was in pretty deep into that Egyptian river for a while and couldn't understand why I felt so sick. I did the test, which of course came back negative so I just assumed I had something else.

It'll Be OK

After this went on for a while the King said you need to go to the doctor. I was so sick I couldn't drive myself there so he took me. We got into the doctors office and the King explained for me as I was feeling queasy. She made me pee in a jar and she did the test right there, nope nothing, so she took blood …

It came back the positive, which filled me with immediate panic. Every day was so very tough, what if I lost it again? When would this sickness go away?

Thankfully, I was able to hang onto this precious heart and but she made me sick every. single. day. until. delivery. ☺

She was born, 10lbs, exactly 12 months to the day of the second miscarriage. She had some initial complications but within 24 hours she was a healthy newborn the size of a toddler!

It had happened again… Leading me to my theory, that in my case, it takes a couple of goes to make a good one ☺ But I think they're great ones!

We've retired the baby factory, you can read that story here and settled in to life knowing that little souls waiting for us someday.



Little Miss Gremlin 6 weeks



Little Miss Gremlin Newborn



Grand Master D 6 weeks



Grand Master D Newborn

Frankenstorm……Another Halloween Interrupted

October 28, 2012



Last year on Halloween we had a freak snowstorm. It was our only storm. 8 inches of wet snow on all those autumn leaves..

Yeah we had a couple of little snows over the rest of the winter but not much. It was a strange sight, Halloween trick or treating in snow boots? Yep, but we coped, and still got candy.

This year we're staring down the barrel of Hurricane Sandy, which has been dubbed Frankestorm, a record storm.

This storm is the largest in diameter ever on record in the Atlantic ocean, it's converging with 2 other storms later this afternoon. You can see the track here .

We're watching the announcements right now and the Mayor has called a mandatory evacuation in some low lying areas. This is an historic event in NYC, only the second time ever that they have called for mandatory evacuations.

So they're taking it seriously. And we are too, but where we are, I think we're pretty safe.

We're heading out soon to brave the worst of the storm …….at the grocery store. Where people will be whipped up into a frenzy by the media. Where they will be freaking out and buying the strangest stuff.

If by chance we lose power we'll need non perishable food, fresh water.. and CASH.

The city transport system is shutting down at 7pm tonight, no buses or subway trains. School is closed tomorrow…

Until Sandy hits, we wait, like a life on hold. The worst part is the not knowing… When Irene hit, she didn't impact us at all and so we wonder will it be the same? Are the media just foaming at the mouth for a story? Scaring people needlessly? Driving up sales?

We must be prepared. It's the responsible thing to do but it is also important to remain calm and rational. For us, in a high rise apartment building, we will be ok. For those in low lying areas and houses in the boroughs, they are looking at different scenarios.

So we wait and pray it will not be as bad as they predict.

By Wednesday, we should be able to trick or treat, we should be back to normal but there'll be some whose lives will be in disarray, depending on how hard our area is hit.

Whatever happens Frankenstorm will be in the history books.

Please stay safe.

We're in Hurricane Lockdown

October 29, 2012

We're here, still waiting on Hurricane Sandy.

School was cancelled, so it was a lazy morning. An extended weekend.

The announcement has just gone out that there will be no school tomorrow either!

The winds are really starting to really pick up but we're still waiting for any significant rain…Sandy is still 2 hours off the coast.



We're keeping the tv on to stay updated…



We got to sleep in…like Sunday morning all over again ☺



Grand Master D is getting extended youtube time today… He better get his homework done…



Don't worry… we have sustenance ☺ ……and I baked!



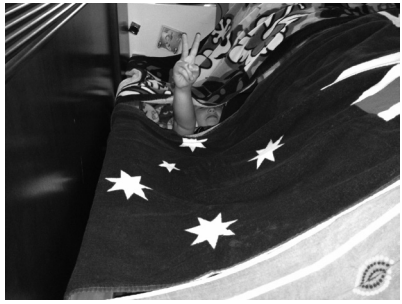
Sir Lickalot goes between checking out the current terrace situation… Where he seems to LOVE the winds…



To complete indifference…….



Miss Gremlin has resorted to building a cubby…



She's snavelled my ipad and is tucked up watching netflix. She's good as long as there's power ☺

The Princess is hunkered down in her apartment with her friends… but she's ready for anything



The King is continuing to work, the show must go on… at least until the power goes out.



I'm a little worried about the neighbour's playhouse… They don't seem to have done much weatherproofing. If you find it… it belongs in Harlem ☺



So this is what we're doing… How are you all coping with Sandy?
I'd love to see some pics..
Stay Safe and stay inside!

Post Hurricane in Pictures

October 30, 2012

We weathered the Hurricane, we came through the other side safely, albiet a little unnerved.

We retained power, although for about a 20 minute period the lights threatened to go out.

It was our first experience and all things considered we are very lucky.

This afternoon, because I couldn't cope any more with the restlessness, we ventured out in the 'hood to discover the local damage.

This is what we saw when we first entered the park, which was closed but we stayed in the open spaces.



A huge tree fell on the baseball cage



It was completely uprooted not just snapped!

And on the other side of the field…



We walk by this tree every day.



It's gonna be a busy clean up

These photos were taken by a friend on her walk this morning to survey the damage in the 'hood.



Near the school yard



Random trees along the road



Trees in front of the school



On the school block

We were so very lucky that we were completely safe and undamaged. The city is going to take a long time to get back to normal. The devastation downtown is immense but New Yorkers have a way of just getting through it.

Hump Day Halloween

October 31, 2012



The kids are excited, the costumes are ready. The candy bowl by the door is full, in anticipation of dozens of little hands reaching in for goodies. Your spooky sign is out…

Trick or treaters need a sign ☺

If you're crafty you've baked and decorated some treats, if not, you've bought some but you're all stocked up. The temptation to raid the stash has been too much for some, pounds of tempting goodies have been around for weeks, but it's almost over.

The kids are super excited.

All the stores have put the candy away, they're onto the next holiday.

Now there's a phenomenon I don't understand, one year I went on Halloween morning to get my candy and there was nothing left! I was very new to the Halloween game. They were setting up for Christmas. I had to buy the expensive chocolate. Sometimes we learn the hard way.

The City will be a bit subdued this year, Sandy has kicked us in the teeth. We're down but not out.

They've cancelled the Annual Halloween Parade. It seems right. But we'll do our best to have some fun. It's what New Yorkers do.

It's hard to get in the spirit here, but I hope you go out tonight, enjoy the kids and their costumes and get lots of loot. While you're out, spare a thought for those who won't be participating, those who are just trying to survive, those who've lost a love one. The kids who wish they could.

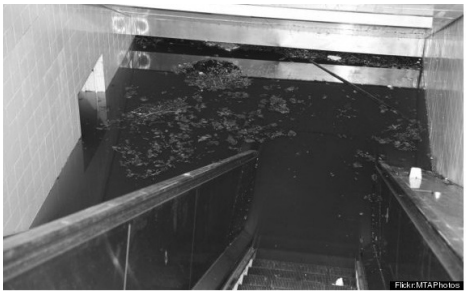
I wish you all a Happy Halloween, be safe and have fun.

The Show Must Go On….. But Should It?

November 1, 2012

This Sunday, less than a week after the worst storm EVER hit New York and New Jersey, The New York Marathon will still go ahead.

As of right now, Thursday, there is still no power below 23rd street, there is still flood water covering lower Manhattan.







The Governor has called a transit state of emergency, with bridges open to high occupancy vehicles with 3 or more people per car only able to cross into Manhattan. Cabs are allowed to pick up multi-fares and Gypsy cabs are allowed to pick up street hails.

The subway is only partially running, as are buses. Nothing is going below 34th st. The MTA has waived all fees for riding.

People have not been able to go back to their homes. They are holed up in hotel rooms or with friends around the city. First responders are still finding bodies and we are all still glued to the tv for updates.

School has been suspended until monday.

Not all area airports are open yet. Flight back log is enormous, there are stranded people everywhere.

The New York Marathon puts an enormous strain on New York in normal conditions. Roads get shut down, thousands fly in to compete, taking up hotels. Police line the route, making sure competitors are safe and people behave.

Now, this week, it's all too much. People have lost everything, some their lives. The death toll has reached 30 and is expected to climb. Others are still living like refugees (we have 3 people staying with us). Some are doing their best to mop up the damage.

It's not fair to put the added strain on a city in crisis. It's selfish of the organisers to go ahead and irresponsible of the Mayor to support it.

Why has this decision been made? Is it because the officials are trying to make everyone get back to normal? Are they so invested that they can't back out? Why can't we reschedule?

Of course the logistics to reschedule would be enormous but so is what we've already been through and are still coping with.

Sometimes we just need to think beyond the dollar signs and have compassion for New York. It's like a slap in the face, like those affected don't matter.

New York needs to get itself back together. Holding the Marathon this Sunday will hinder that, not help.

It's probably too late to change it now, but I hope they do. It's just the right thing.

Awards, Awards, Awards…

November 2, 2012

It's so much fun to write this blog and always a surprise when someone gives me an award. Last week That Suburban Momma awarded me the Sunshine Blogger award. She's a crazy lady and I love reading about what she does on her blog.



Sunshine Blogger Award

Rules:

Include award logo in blog post and site and thank the blogger who gave it to you & include link back.

Answer 10 questions about yourself or list 10 facts about you.

Nominate 10-12 bloggers for the award and contact them at their blog site to inform them.

10 facts about me:

1. I live in NYC
2. I am very patient
3. I'm a step monster mother
4. I've lived in placed with koalas and kangaroos at the back door

5. I'm nervous of the ocean
6. We got engaged in a helicopter
7. I'm practical (mostly)
8. Getting up before the sun should be illegal
9. I HATE ironing!
10. The kids drive me crazy a lot

I nominate these awesome bloggers:

They Call Me Mummy
One Funny Motha
Life On the SOnnyside
Buried with Children
Cloudy with a Chance of Wine
Latte Mum
Pile of Babies
You Know it Happens at Your House Too
Go Merrily
Suburbia Interrupted
Diapers Or Wine?

Congratulations to everyone for the amazing writing you all do. You make me laugh 'til I pee, on a regular basis!

She Really Does Love Him

November 3, 2012

Tomorrow is Grand Master D's 12th birthday. 12, I can hardly believe it, but more on that later.

Today, Miss Gremlin wanted to make his birthday cake. She shopped for it then came home to cook.

I let her.



What?! I always look like this when I cook



pouring the cakemix



I'm doing it all mum!



Ok so I got some all over the wall, isn't that what paper towel is for!



Now for the eggs and oil



The obligatory taste test



The masterpiece goes in the ovenexactly 34 minutes later……



Then for the next hour, she pestered me silly to ice it. 'Not until it's cool' became my mantra.



A blank canvas with which to decorate

Mummy helped spread the icing so the cake wouldn't break…





Oreos, oreos and more oreos

TADA! My brother's 12th birthday cake-Made by ME!

It's cooling it's heels in the fridge, tomorrow the candles will go on and we'll sing the birthday song and he'll get presents.

Today, little sister did something very special for her big brother.

The Tricky Teen

November 5, 2012

Yesterday, our boy had 'the best day of his life so far'. His words. And we were so pleased to be able to provide that for him.

This kid grew up. 12 years old is such a tricky time, with so much going on.



Grand Master D @12months

But he's turned into a thoughtful, caring , considerate, loving, sensitive (in a good way) young man.

We think he's awesome.

His sisters think he's awesome.





The Princess loves him

Miss Gremlin thinks he rocks, always did.

These two girls love their brother more than anything. He's their shining light. He puts up with a lot from both of them, but he's so patient and kind, he just lets them do their thing.

The birthday cake, made with extra love, was a total hit.



Blow those candles out

The gifts just kept on coming.



This



and this



and this

Another year older, another centimetre taller, he's our one and only awesome son. Congratulations Mate.

The Race That Stops a Nation

November 6, 2012



The First Tuesday in November has special significance. Here is the US, every four years, that November day is Election day, *Presidential* Election Day.

This November Tuesday, Americans will go to the polls to choose their President, well those who want to, because voting is not compulsory. It's not required of citizens.

Vote for your future, but only if you want to…

Doesn't that seem crazy? Well it does to me ☺ But I'm not going to go into that political dogfight.

I want to talk about the *other* first Tuesday in November, the other race that stops a Nation……a horse race.

A f*amous* Horse Race, The Melbourne Cup, run on the first Tuesday in November. It's Australia's most prestigious race. A two mile handicap race (3200 metres). One of the most

prestigious turf races in the world, with horses travelling from as far away as the United Arab Emirates, Japan, USA and Ireland.

The race began in 1861 and only 24 horses can compete. Those 24 places are coveted by the racing world globally.

The prize money for first place is just over 3 million dollars, not bad money for a 3 minute pony ride. That's a million a minute!

Australian's love their race, they always hope an Aussie horse will win, sometimes they do, sometimes they don't, but everyone loves to get involved. Kids in school even get to watch the televised race when it runs just before 3pm.

Many businesses nationwide take the day off and head to the local races as an annual company picnic. Others run office sweepstakes and bet on the place getters. The entire city of Melbourne basically shuts down for that day. It's a gazetted Public holiday in the state of Victoria, of which Melbourne is the capital. Over 100,000 people flock to Flemington Racetrack, where the race is run.

Don't even think of calling Australia on Wednesday, She'll have a hangover, I guarantee!

Expats all over the world gather together in local bars, those who televise it, and hold events to celebrate the day, even though they are far from home. It's a way to stay connected. It part of our culture, we're a sporting Nation.

Australians love their football, their cricket, their horse racing, anything involving sport, and we love to bet on it.

It's been said that Aussies will bet on two flies climbing up a wall. That's pretty true, but that's just the way it has always been. I guess it comes from our convict heritage. That's ok with me. It's a heritage rich in tradition, mateship and honour, even if it began among thieves. It keeps the Aussie spirit alive.

There's something incredibly uplifting about the Race that stops the Nation, that brings the country together, regardless of political beliefs, age or religion… It's just that special…The entire country holds it's breath for 3 whole minutes…

….On that Tuesday in November when they run The Melbourne Cup.

Of course, upon publication of this post the race has already been run, cos Australia's in the futcha you know!

I didn't win :(…

Here's the Thing About Kids and Drinking.

November 7, 2012



It's not a new problem, teens and drinking. I would imagine it's been going on since the beginning of time… The minute someone found out that you could get a buzz from fermented fruit, Ug and Glok, the teenage cave dwellers, were hiding around behind the bush, sneaking the elders' fermented googleberries ☺

Our parents did it, our grand parents and probably our great grand parents too. It's almost like a rite of passage. A welcome to adult life… between 16-18. If your grand parents are still alive ask them about drinking, I'm sure they have stories. If they're American, they probably have prohibition stories! They would be fascinating.

These days, parents spend thousands of dollars sending their kids off to drinking school, I mean college. The trouble with all of that is it's now illegal!

Whether you agree or not, the drinking age in America was increased to 21 many years ago. So every college student under 21 who partakes in alcohol consumption is breaking the law.

So What…

Kids are going to get into alcohol, that's a given. How are you going to teach them about it? Are you going to abstain in front of you children? Are you a non drinker? Do you drink in front of your children but never let them near it? Or do you openly discuss it, the benefits, the dangers, the abuse that occurs? How it changes people, how it can ruin lives? When to say no and how to be a responsible drinker?

College kids die from binge drinking, all the time. The colleges know it goes on, they turn a blind eye to it, kids will be kids, right? Girls get raped because they get too drunk to know what they're doing or they just pass out.

Why does this all happen? Is it because they can't handle it at 18 and 21 is a more responsible age to start drinking? Well let's look at some statistics.

In countries whose legal limit is 18, the majority of the world, how many alcohol related deaths of 18 yos do they have? In cars or out of cars?

Are the stats any different here in America? Does it increase in American 21 yos who are legal but go just as crazy as a foreign 18 yo?

The highest percentage of deaths in cars from drinking in America is 21-24 yo males.

Do 18 yos die less because alcohol is illegal for them? They can still get it easily enough.

31% of drink driving deaths are from the 16-19 yo age group. That's huge considering it's illegal to that age group.

Car-Related Statistics:

- About 5,000 people under the age of 21 die each year as a result of underage drinking, 1,900 of those deaths are from auto accidents.
- About one in three high school students has been a passenger in a car driven by someone who had consumed alcohol.
- Alcohol is involved in 31% of teenage car accident fatalities.
- There is a much better chance that an individual will drink and drive if they had their first drink prior to age 19.
- The average blood-alcohol level of intoxicated underage car accident victims was 0.40 percent, five times the legal limit for driving.
- Compared to every other age group, young people age 15-20 years old are more often involved in alcohol-related car accidents. Age 21 is the peak for fatal crashes.

Do you let them have sips? Or a small glass with dinner?

Have you or would you let your teen have a taste of beer or wine at home with dinner in a social setting? Would you show them how to drink responsibly in a safe place? Do you think that takes the mystery away so it's no longer forbidden fruit?

Studies say no…but is that really what happens?

If a young person has a glass of wine to accompany a meal, isn't that teaching them how to enjoy it and do it responsibly. I don't advocate taking underage teens to a bar and getting them smashed. I don't want anyone to get smashed. It's awful, you become a loser and lose your judgement and the hangovers are killers.

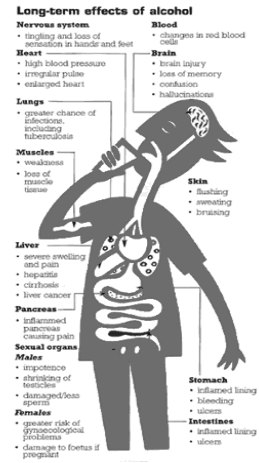
So what do you do about it?

What I do think is that it is extremely important to talk to your children openly and honestly, teach them and guide them through the pitfalls and enjoyment of alcohol in a positive way, it at least takes the mystery away.

Educating them may help prevent them from going to college to get totally smashed every night, that's not what you took the second mortgage out for is it? Hopefully they'll have learned how to do it safely and responsibly.

I believe the most important lesson is to *never* drink drive and *never* get into a vehicle with someone who has been drinking. That's for any age.

Alcohol has many health risks when abused, but there are also benefits in moderate consumption. New studies come out on the benefits all the time. The nightly news is full of them.



Regardless of what age you believe is the right age, whether you expose your children to alcohol or completely shield them, alcohol causes humans to do stupid things.

At any age, too much booze messes with you. It crosses all social barriers. It's doesn't discriminate when choosing it's victims. Booze makes us make bad choices.

If alcohol were invented today, it would be totally outlawed. *ILLEGAL*. Yet we live in a society driven by it and it will never be outlawed, prohibition proved that doesn't work.

It's a part of our society and something we need to educate children about. Knowledge is ALWAYS power and if your teen is armed with knowledge, they can hopefully make better, safer choices about alcohol.

Referenced Materials:

world drinking ages deaths caused by alcohol underage drinking stats responsibility project long term effects

Hump Day Humour #22

November 7, 2012

With everything that's happened in the last couple of weeks, I totally forgot it was Hump Day.

We have a snow storm in the city right now… So here's to not going outside!



First Sandy, Now Athena… These Bitches be Mad!

November 8, 2012

The North East has copped another pounding. Winter storm Athena has dumped record snow fall for November. 4 inches in Central Park. Some places received as much as 10 inches! More power outages and that has compounded problems for those still homeless from Hurricane Sandy.

Whatever the reason, it's almost more than a Koala can bear!



Sir Lickalot LOVES the snow



Outdoor cocktails?



Miss Gremlin playing in the light coating



Armageddon is over, for now



It just kept coming



For all the grief it causes, it sure is pretty.

Stay safe warm and dry… until the next one!

Outside Influences

November 9, 2012

When your children are little, their whole world revolves around you. You are the most important thing in their lives, the source of food, comfort and survival. As they grow of course, this changes. At 3 they want to be independent and everything is no and I can do it. By 5 they're off to school and they turn to you and say 'I got this'.

Then we know nothing…

The eye rolling starts at around 8, well it did in this house. I hate it. Miss Gremlin has just started it but Grand Master D has totally perfected it. He turned 12 last week

and although he still needs us for the necessities of life and parental guidance, the outside influences are starting to creep in. School friends, a favourite teacher, sometime those influences aren't so good.

Save them from themselves…

Unfortunately kids can get off track sometimes, and head down a path which turns them to gangs, crime or worse. Nobody wants that for their child, everyone starts off with all the right intentions, but along the way things go wrong.

As parents we can only do so much, the teenage years are tough to navigate. We know nothing! We don't understand them at all! Well that's what they think. It's important to find some positive adult role models for your kids. People who have it together (well mostly, cos who has it completely together, right?) Someone who can show them that what their parents have been saying is kinda cool.

We have found a couple of good people for Grand Master D to idolise and trust more than us. Yep it's gonna happen to you too!

Handing over…..a little

These friends are still young and hip enough to be cool, but also smart enough to be a good influence and know they are contributing in a positive way to a teenage life. I'm proud of how my boy is growing up, he's a wonderful son. I will continue to surround him with as many of the 'right' influences as I can, we need to counter the teenage crazy some how. Thanks John and Matt, we really appreciate you taking an interest.

How does it look in your house? Do you have some good role models you could enlist? I really hope you do. We need to continuely guide our young ones and if we can do it through others when they no longer listen to us, that's powerful too.

Climbing the Walls

November 10, 2012

Updated with long lost picture…..*Originally Published July 29th…*

Kids do weird things, lets face it. Our family is not immune to the strange habits of the small to medium child.

When they start climbing the walls, you have to wonder if everything is ok, will it be ok and what the hell do I do now?

Wall climbing:

climb (kl m)

v. ***climbed, climb ing, climbs***

v.tr.

1. To move upward on or mount, especially by using the hands and feet or the feet alone; ascend: climb a mountain; climbed the stairs.
2. To grow in an upward direction on or over: ivy climbing the walls.

v.intr.

1. To move oneself upward, especially by using the hands and feet.
2. To rise slowly, steadily, or effortfully; ascend. See Synonyms at rise.
3. To move in a specified direction by using the hands and feet: climbed down the ladder; climbed out the window.
4. To slant or slope upward: The road climbs steeply to the top.
5. To engage in the activity or sport of mountain climbing.
6. To grow in an upward direction, as some plants do, often by means of twining stems or tendrils.

n.

1. An act of climbing; an ascent: a long, exhausting climb to the top.
2. A place to be climbed: The face of the cliff was a steep climb.

Idiom:
climb the walls

To be anxious or frantic.

Grand Master D climbs walls, he's always done it… I have no idea why. It's just weird ☺



Even moving countries didn't change the habit…
(this is a long lost pic I couldn't find for the original posting date)



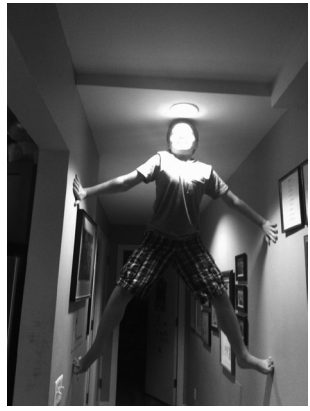
Miss Gremlin isn't real sure about it either.



He's much bigger now but this is how I found him the other afternoon. WTF?



Clearly he's going for a halo here ☺



Strange child… How will this work when he's 6'2 ?

Little Girl Meltdowns and Crabby Mamas

November 12, 2012

The last few days have been a hormone fueled crap fest. Miss Gremlin is 8 and all those new hormones are starting to move around in her body, she's happy then sad, angry and needy…SHE'S 8! Lord help me.

I'm not 8, but those same hormones move around my body at an exaggerated rate and some days the two don't mix. I am trying to figure out how to be patient and kind and teach her how to deal with fluctuations but as I'm plowing through my dreaded pre-menopausal stage, my patience tank is sadly bone dry.

No wonder teen daughters clash with their mothers, everyones hormones are trying to kill them from the inside and the struggle spills out through vitriolic words and total meltdowns.

Husband, fathers and brothers often run for the hills!

I don't want this for my household. I want to be sane and rational and help my daughter to understand her moods and learn to curb her tongue. But first I have to work it out myself!

Yeah I know I should have it down by now but that's not how it works, just when you think you've got it, you hit the next stage of life and you're in unfamiliar territory again.

It's hard.

I'm working on two separate yet interlocking issues. The answers are out there, it's just a matter of finding them… *OR* we could just curl up together with our blankies and chocolate, not speaking because the hormones have taken over…

The Cardiologist said….

November 13, 2012

Recently, we spent a little time on our health. I've been dealing with breathing issues and thought I probably had asthma and the King was due for his 3 monthly check on his trygliceride levels.

He has always struggled with these tricky little things. His doctor told him his levels were 'incompatible with life… Mr Mills your blood is more fat than blood', in her thick Russian accent and he'd better do something immediately, so for the last 2 years they have been working to reduce weight and bring the levels down. This is happening, albeit slowly. He's tried lots of things like giving up drinking and cutting out certain foods. There have been mixed results. Not drinking did nothing to change levels but the weight loss has helped. Imagine his delight in that!

At this visit he mentioned to the doctor that he had a sore hand, his left. There had been persistent pain in his left hand for a week. He was racing around before the appointment, as usual trying to squeeze every last second out of the day, and by the time he got to the doctor his blood pressure was 'sky high'. After the clinic nurse did all the prep and passed the info on the doctor, she burst into the room with a panicked look…. and fired off 50 questions, checking everything out. You totally know she was thinking …OMG you're on the verge of a heart attack-not in my office!

She calmed down after examining him and figured it wasn't a heart attack, probably muscular but wanted to check it out and sent the King off to the cardiologist immediately.

There goes this month's wine budget…we're uninsured you see, or self insured, you pick…but so far this has worked for us. It works out cheaper, *waaayyyy* cheaper! 7 years and counting ☺

So anyway, being as it was last minute, the earliest appointment for the cardiologist was the next day, so that was scheduled and the prep was done.

The machines they hook you up to are weird looking but everything was apparently great, the heart of a 20 year old. AWESOME! 'Perhaps don't drink a whole bottle of wine a night, but really Mr Mills, you're doing fine, keep doing whatever it is you're doing.'







So he got a clean bill of health, that's always a relief, my turn next month for a chest xray, there's goes next month's wine budget too! Luckily the cardiologist told him to cut down consumption anyway ☺

Hump Day Humour #23

November 14, 2012

It's been a crazy week, and it's only Wednesday… I've managed to avoid folding laundry for 3 days now so this kinda fits.

I'm waiting for the day that the kids will do their own. They are a bit young yet but that day is coming. If they have to do their own they may wear a few less clothes…or not… it's a theory ☺

Anyway Happy Hump Day, it's the weekend soon…….and we can do more laundry!



Vote For Me, Homework will be Illegal …

November 16, 2012

That's it… I'm a crappy mother. I can't do anything right. Nobody ever listens to me…

Yeah yeah, I know, this is not true. I'm a good mum and I do my best and most of the time it's enough, my kids are kind and loving and polite and intelligent and special and beautiful (on the inside, of course)

But this week has been quite a trial. This morning the threats had to become a reality for Grand Master D. This homework thing is just not working.

We had parent teacher conferences this week. Oh how they raved about him.

He's a wonderful child, he's a pleasure to have in the class, he is very intelligent… I'm so sorry about these grades Mrs Mills but Grand Master D just won't do his homework and that counts and is reflected here.

And there was my queue.. there it was…the empty space I wanted to fill with all my frustrations… You people have no idea how your stupid homework is killing me slowly from the inside. It's destroying my family one frigging reading hour at a time! How is this ever gonna do anything for him? Why are you setting stupid goals. I hate this, I hate you, I hate my son for not doing your stupid homework, I hate who I am becoming because of this stinking useless homework.



photo credit: David Castillo Dominici

That's what I wanted to say… but you know I didn't because I wasn't hauled out of the school by security. That would have been on the 6 o'clock news.

This is how it really went down… Mrs Mills his bad grades are reflected by his incomplete homework. He's a very smart boy but he's not trying hard enough. He gets his classwork done but doesn't do his homework. This is important as we're trying to teach them how to organise themselves and get ready for high school, you want him to get into a good high school don't you?

Well of course I want him to get into a good high school. Do you have any idea how much sleep I'm losing and the anxiety already building up in me for an event that is 2 years away? 2 Freaking YEARS. You think I don't know? Oh I know, but it's a knowing that comes from NOT knowing anything! I didn't do high school here. I don't know what a 3.0 or 4.0 average even means? I have no idea what SAT's actually are….

So help me, teachers! Give me suggestions on how to do this. I'm out of ideas. I am lost. I've tried pretty much everything…

All I know is my son has just turned 12, he has to read at least 5 hours a week and write at least a page every night and do at least 2 math pages every night and complete spanish homework and science homework and write about what he just read in his

reading life journal and eat dinner and go to Taekwondo and have a life and be a kid and be in bed by 8.

He's 12, yes, he still goes to bed at 8. (And weren't the teachers surprised by that!) I can't get him out of bed before 7 and then he's slower than a snail with a broken foot slithering over salt…He's tired, cranky, moody, sick in the stomach, headachy (it's a word ok) prepubescent and a pain in my arse!

3 days a week he tries to get out of going to school for some reason or another. He makes plans to get his homework done, tells me those plans and then proceeds to do whatever else he can to avoid getting those plans completed.

The teachers tell me I have to help him. I say he's 12 and this is his homework, not mine and I can not be this bitch anymore. But I have *tried so very hard* to help him. Every word out of my mouth is about homework , have you done your reading, how many hours have you done? Are you doing your homework? Have you got much homework tonight?

I hate it, He hates it. I have encouraged, punished, yelled, cried, ignored, got The King involved… and trust me nobody wants THAT!

I'm fucking over it!

This morning was the last straw and I snapped. We had discussed the parent teacher conference and how he had to get more organised and get it done. We made a new plan. He's been telling me all week the math packet wasn't due until Friday and he was doing it. He had a half day Wednesday due to the parent teacher conferences, plenty of time to get ahead.

He told me it would be done, he told me he had plenty of time… 'Mum I'm on it'.

Well he wasn't. He had done 6 sums, 6, out of 5 pages! I lost it!

Just what I wanna do at 7 fucking AM on a Friday… That's what I want, to yell at my kid before school. To fuck up my day, and his… To be an arsehole mother who yells at her kids in the morning. I told him that the phone was going for the weekend.

He was shocked! Genuinely shocked, like why would I do that? It's like there's a disconnect…

I don't know what else to do.. he's too old to sit next to every night and monitor his every pen stroke, he doesn't want that, I don't want that but we have to almost go back to that because he just doesn't do it.

There are no consequences at school, except for grades.. but kids don't relate to those until it's too late, they don't see the importance, *they're 12*…. they think they can make it up… But this is serious and this is where the system sucks. Make him stay in after school, make him stay in at lunch, make it painful, shame him, make it hard to not do your homework and have real consequences. This is YOUR job, you set it, you make them do it. What 12 yo thinks about what will happen 2 years from now when they get a shitty high school because they've got so much going on that they can't sort the homework out in 7th grade.

Help me! This is affecting MY relationship with MY son. I don't want that!

Tonight the fight will continue because he needs to read for at least 3 hours on the weekend just to get the 5 logged by next Friday.

Tonight the negotiation will continue, he already asked just before he left…'If I get my stuff done can I have my phone over the weekend?' I'm thinking no, there has to be pain, there has to be a lesson. It's just a weekend, right, but it might be enough pain to get him on track. I hope so because I can't continue on like this.

This makes me hate the process, this makes me seriously contemplate, if only for a minute, homeschooling… but then I slap myself, hard, really hard. You can't even make them do homework…I want them to want to learn, I want them to invest in

their own future. I tell them ALL the time, this is YOUR job, this is for you , I've done my homework and schooling. But nobody listens when they're young and so I look for a new tact, a new way to inspire, a new way to make them do it, so that I don't have to…

And to top it all off Miss Gremlin sees it all and because Grand Master D rocks her world, she's doing the same thing… and NOW I really have to sit, every night and do fucking homework.

When the Vacuum Does Other Stuff

November 17, 2012

Sir Lickalot



Our special, brain damaged, weirdo rescue dog has many odd habits, some funny and some sad. I really wish he could talk and explain to us what happened to him…..

These are the things we've learned so far..

Whenever I get the dog biscuits out of the cupboard to feed him, he goes upstairs, he seems frightened of the crinkling noise of the bag.

When he gets bumped, instead of getting out of the way , he splays his legs out and crouches down in fear.You have to step over him or move him out of the way by sliding him with your foot.

This became very problematic one morning when I tied him up outside of Starbucks (yeah I know) to get coffee. For some odd reason he always moves onto the road. Well this time there was a car parked and the owner started to move, now a normal dog, when bumped by a car pulling out would move out of harms way, but not Sir Lickalot, he crouched in front of the car in the street, as the car kept moving he crouched lower in an acceptance of the fate about to befall him… I was in the line watching on thinking surely he'll move, but no… and just as I was ready to race out, a stranger saved him from probable squishing, by physically dragging him back on the footpath.

I have never tied him near the road since.

Loud noises freak him out and he comes and sits right on my feet. He's not a fan of NERF guns either.

Sometimes if there are too many people around he retreats upstairs where it's quiet.

He never barks… I mean never! We've owned him for 4 years and have heard him bark as many times. It's the weirdest thing…

He adores little people…well of the child variety. I haven't tried the other type ☺ . He whines if he can't be all over them. Of course his size is rather frightening to a small child and therefore we have to hold onto him but he just loves them.

He doesn't like cigar smoke and won't take food out of your hands … ever.

The cellular memories of his abuse must be very strong because we care for him with extra love… And never hit him…

He LOVES to get up on the chair for cuddles, no mean feat for 60lb dog!

But his strangest habit yet, is the fact that he LOVES to be vacuumed. He's a fluffy dog, he has that double coat under fluff thing going on, which sheds like nothing else. When I clean the floors I can make several small dogs out of the fluff I collect. Because of this we need to groom him often, we don't ..but we need to.

It's such a task and you could literally brush him for an hour and still not get it all… so I started vacuuming him… Of course with his history I expected him to freak right out, imagine my surprise when he got up, only to turn over so I could do the other side!

Ever since that day, he gets a weekly vacuuming which can last for 30 minutes! He just loves it.. sometimes his leg goes, you know, in the scratching motion that dogs get when you hit the right tickle spot. ☺

So last night was his evening of pleasure, and as usual he loved it… He wanted to share his joy with you, so he asked if I could post these pictures …It seems a bit voyeuristic I know, but enjoy it anyway.



Oh good, the vacuum… I am a little itchy scratchy…



This way mum? Is this where you want me?



The leg was going in this picture…



Yeah that bit on the back of my neck… ahhhh that's the spot.



Careful of the jewels… careful…mmmmmm



I'll lift my leg, hang on, yeah that bit, you got it!



And that my friends is the closest I'm ever gonna get to dog porn ☺

A Trip Back in Time

November 19, 2012

Today I was a chaperone to Miss Gremlin's 3rd grade trip to the Museum of Natural History. I'm not a big Art Gallery or Museum goer, I know, I live in a city with some of the worlds best museums and galleries … I've been to many but I'll admit, only to you, that it's not really my thing. WHAT! I know, I'm showing my country bumpkinness… now and again, I don't mind going, but spending HOURS there is just too much.

I love how most of the Museums are admission by donation… Yes, the *suggested* price is what they try to rip you off for, but you can pay just $1.00 to go to the Met, The Natural History and many other New York museums and galleries. Of course they don't really advertise that, hoping that unsuspecting tourists will pay top dollar to go inside. Naturally, if you've paid $25 bucks then you'll want to get your monies worth and stay for hours and hours…

Today, armed with 16 kids and 4 adults, we braved the subway (another freak out for me, lots of kids on the subway) and headed to the Museum. We were on a mission to see the dioramas and the bio diversity room. The kids had a scavenger hunt sheet to answer questions and we adults just had to keep the kids together.

This is part of the museum I do love, the details are fantastic and if you're in the right frame of mind you can be swept away and feel like you're standing right in front of the animals.

Today, for me, was one of those days. It was a sort of time travel. I imagined I was living in that time, caveman, native American Indian, eskimo, whatever the case may be. It was a fun trip…



Hiding behind a snow covered rock, trying desperately to slow my heavy breathing, the beating of my heart booming in my ears.



I turn to see the lynx isn't after me but the Musken Ox…crouched in my position I see the ferocious beauty of the circle of life… the blood on the snow fascinates my senses.



The animals out on the plains do their thing, the males fight for dominance.



After a successful wade into the river, he's having fish tonight!



This guy's getting sex… he just needs to decide which lady is first.



A midnight hunting trip… this time the deer managed to get away.



I picture these guys fighting, butting their heads together.



Imagining myself as Pocahontas, I watch these little coyotes dig a den and play by the water.



This guy is just majestic and the school mascot, all the chanting kids brought me back to reality…I was back in the darkened museum looking at taxidermied animals… but the trip I had been on in my mind was pretty cool.

If you haven't been, you must go, it's so well done, you could easily spend an hour in this one room alone.

Once we did the Night at the Museum tour, zigzagging through the building with a checklist, finding Dumdum, Dexter and Rex…

The kids were good, no one got lost on the subway and we made it back to school. I was a lot less frazzed than after other trips, I like these 3rd grade kids. I think I'll do it again.

Mouth Watering Yummies

November 20, 2012

It's been a while since I posted any food stuff. I got side tracked. Things evolved. I still cook, I haven't completely given over to take out boxes…… I'm still on my paleo journey…

Here are some dishes that I have done recently. In no particular order of yumminess.



Roasted Brussel Sprouts

So this is a favourite at the moment. I love brussels and as it's getting cold outside they are a perfect accompaniment to almost anything.

Cut the brussels in half, throw them in a dish then throw over the top: 1 onion, chopped button mushrooms sliced dried apricots chopped craisins sliced almonds 3 slices bacon chopped

put in oven at 380 for about 40 mins, stirring occasionally, the fruit sweetens the brussels and they cook in the bacon fat. Everything cooked in bacon fat is good right? They're awesome cold the next day too!

Sweet potato has become a staple in this house, The King hates potatoes anyway, something about being Irish… I don't know.

I don't eat them because they're technically not paleo…although sometimes I will cook them. But sweet potato is our go to roaster right now. I sometimes make them as oven fries with parsnip, which the kids love, other times I cut the chunks bigger, so they are most roasted veges.

Just cut them up, drizzle with oil and put them in the oven next to the brussels



Roasted sweet potatoes

Ok so by the time I remembered to take a photo I'd already served most of them up but they still look yummy.

The King is a steak man, most men are, he loves it and as luck would have it we have a butcher literally next door, selling organic, grass fed beef, lamb, chicken and every other meat required in any carnivore household. He loves to cook it and has a whole routine, including slapping the steak and commenting that it sounds like a stripper's ass, OH please…Miss Gremlin thinks this is spectacular and never lets him forget to do it. (insert eye roll)

I just stay out of the way and man the steak alarm (smoke detector) with the billiard que.. He never fails to set the thing off. I swear no one will even flinch when the detector goes off for real, not even the dog..The only down side is the mess. The grease that cooking steak produces is insane and naturally it's MY job to clean up… But I don't have to cook so I'll take it.

Here's last weeks effort..



The King's steak prep

And here's what it all looks like together on a plate… Paleo ain't so bad. When people ask what we eat if not grains… well here's your answer.



Paleo meal

Hump Day Humour # 24 Abbey Road?

November 21, 2012

The Famous Abbey Road crossing needs no words……it's iconic.



And so is this…..



Exactly the same right!?…..cos we're that cool!

In our heads…
Happy Hump Day and A Happy and Safe Thanksgiving travel day.

Funny Kid Phobias… The Things That Eat Our Sanity

November 21, 2012

We all have phobias, right, cos we're all a little strange. Some are stranger than others. There's the obvious ones, freaked out by buttons, can't eat a banana out of the skin, like to sit in tight spaces, can't poop in public. Petrified of rodents, snakes, spiders. There's thousands of them. Google it and you may never get anything done again.

MY kid, you know 12… Grand Master D, won't eat at school. Now this kid loves to eat, he has an adult appetite, can wolf down a 10 oz steak and 2 sausages with his dad and will eat almost everything you give him, he's no fuss pot…He's always been a good eater.

But when it comes to lunch at school, FORGET IT! We've tried everything for many years. We don't qualify for free lunch, so if he wants school lunch I have to pay for it, now I have no problem doing that if he eats it, the thing is he wont, it's crap, we all know that, it could be really good, there's plenty of staff, it's a commercial kitchen to die for but the food is crap, the kitchen is perfect because it's unused…unless you call warming prepackaged foods cooking… but that's a whole other post, I digress.

He won't eat the school food, so we opted for the home lunch thing and everyday since for about 5 years, the lunch bag came home with food in tact. He wouldn't eat it, he didn't like it.

I've tried, sandwiches, plain or toasted, wraps, bagels, quesadillas, chips & salsa, muffins, chicken wings, mini sausage rolls, fruit, yoghurt, finger foods, take out left overs, home left overs, soup……. you name it I've *tried* it.

Nothing works. I'm ready to give up, I have no idea what it is but his kid WILL NOT eat lunch at school. The best I can get him to consume is a variety of snack things, but even then, not all of it. He exists during the day on perhaps a handful of cashews, peanuts or, pistachios… maybe a granola bar. Sometimes not even that. Even on the days when the school meal night be nice (it happens)… he won't eat it.

I can't wait til next year, 8th grade when at least he can come home for a nice home cooked, fresh lunch or go to the store to fill up on junk.

He needs to eat and it drives me crazy! He needs the energy, his body and brain need fuel to get through the day.

I ask him for ideas, for things he thinks he'd like to eat and I buy them, regardless of how I feel about their nutritional value. I pack them, the things he's requested and when the bag lands on the counter at 3.15, it's hardly touched.

I changed tact for a while and started cooking a big breakfast for him but all that did was give him stomach pains and a need to eliminate at the exact time we needed to leave for school. He's an efficient processor, food in , food out within about 20 mins. That then fuelled the 'I feel sick' thing that he would put on so he could get out of school. Mornings became a total nightmare.

I'm lost, I'm stuck, I'm out of ideas. Short of delivering a steaming hot cooked meal at 12 midday (and I'm so NOT doing that) the kid eats before school, and straight after school, lunch at 3.30 pm, it's our new thing…

I've tried getting him up earlier but that is just not happening. We've tried eating before the shower, after the shower, on the way to school but that only causes the 'I don't poop at school' dilemma.

This is an odd quirk, he can't explain why he won't eat at school, I wondered if it was embarrassment but he says not, so the mystery continues and meanwhile I rack my brains for new ideas for packed lunches that he'll eat at school.

Got any cool lunch ideas? Send them over, I'm listening.

Thanksgiving- A Time for Giving Thanks

November 22, 2012



Extra Thought Required

November 23, 2012

We all have them, the person who is super hard to buy for, Christmas, birthday, Anniversary. Whatever the special occasion, the thought of buying a gift that he or she'll like, that will bring genuine joy, makes you break out in a cold sweat.

Well it does for me, and that person is The King… naturally. He's the most difficult person ever -over the years, many have tried and failed…. but sometimes you score a good one.

One birthday I bought him the Kramer portrait, it hangs on our stairs. It's quite a talking point with guests.



For his 40th birthday we bought him a star, which the kids named the Daddy Rock Star from starregistry.com

There's been smoking jackets and accessories.

The Princess bought him a title one year. Now he's a scottish land owner, which bears him the title Laird, so you can imagine how insufferable he is now that he's a Scottish Laird (Lord). It's a square foot and probably a scam but that doesn't stop him ☺

He has personally engraved bottles of cologne. Gold engraved cuff links. Monogrammed shirts… blah blah blah

My mum has always managed to find interesting things, once she bought a Big Ben teapot



because we had a business called London Music Group…it made the continental crossing but later it got smashed :(

And *everyone* needs one of theses!

We've bought ourselves gifts and wrapped them from each other. One year I bought him golf clubs which I never saw…he bought me a drill!

This year I haven't got a clue- He has everything, and what he doesn't have he just goes and gets. It's so very frustrating. Every year I say I'm gonna find something awesome, sometimes I manage… other times I can tell he's disappointed…



This year I'm soliciting ideas, so send them through, He's big, loud and obnoxious, drinks, smokes cigars and likes the finer things in life…. all suggestions considered ☺ !

No I'm not wrapping myself in a bow, it's been done…

Not Why We Do It

November 24, 2012

On Monday I went on a field trip with Miss Gremlin's class, you can read about that here, it was quite fun, far less painful than some trips I've been on.

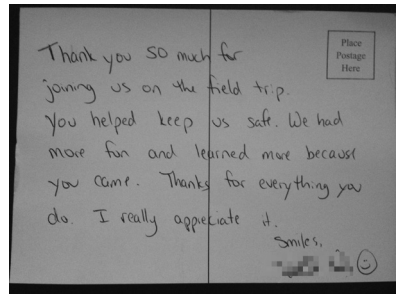
Going on trips with kids is hard, especially when I'm a bit OCD on behaviour. It makes me crazy, but I do it because I'm available and I know the teachers need help.

Later in the week, Miss Gremlin gave me a note from the teacher…



A sweet thank you

It was a really lovely surprise. While it's never why I do it, it's lovely to be appreciated. It's also nice when people take the time to send thank you notes.



Appreciated… OH yeah ☺
I know she reads here, so thank you for being thoughtful and I appreciate you too !

Wheat Belly- A Review

November 25, 2012



Wheat Belly by William Davis MD is a very thought provoking read. It discusses the theory that eating wheat causes you to get fat. Dr Davis explains in detail how modern wheat is not what it once was and that our bodies have not been able to keep up with the evolution and therefore can no longer process it.

Our love of all things starchy and bread like is causing us to get and remain fat regardless of the amount of exercise we do and no matter how many calories we count.

If you break down the average diet, 'healthy heart whole grains' are in everything from the humble bagel to baked ziti. All the snack foods have wheat in them too. We are a population addicted to wheat. The studies Dr Davis uncovers about the damaging effects on the body are startling, the insulins spikes, the bloating and stodgy feeling, the cravings, which are, of course, addiction.

Gluten is the main culprit causing damage, but he suggests that replacing that with 'gluten free' products doesn't make it better, in fact he goes on the suggest that replacements like corn starch, potato starch and tapioca, while not as irritating as gluten continue to trigger the insulin spike, in some cases worse than gluten itself.

It's not a light read, it gets very technical with the studies and the adverse effects of wheat in our lives but it is definitely an eye opener.

In the second half of the book he offers an alternative, with plans and menus to lead a wheat free life. It's quite extensive and has some really great ideas.

I found it to be a great resource to changing your lifestyle. Its not a 'sit down and read' kind of book, it's more of a reference. You can read chapters out of context and still get the main idea. I keep it on my side table and refer to it often.

If you're looking to drop weight or thinking wheat might be causing you problems. I thoroughly recommend you have a read.

It goes hand in hand with the paleo diet which has worked wonders for us.

The book is readily available on amazon in hard cover, paperback, kindle and audio books.

* I wasn't compensated in any way, this opinion is my own and I purchased my book… I find this topic interesting and just wanted to share.

10 Cool 'Holiday' Things to do in NYC

November 26, 2012



It's that time of year, when everyone breaks out the Christmas decorations, hang their lights and decorate their homes until they drop.

New holiday movies come out, they show reruns of 'A Charlie Brown' everything and 'A Christmas Story', the apparent Christmas classic which is just weird to us ☺ ….

They show Planes, Trains and Automobiles and National Lampoons, and Home Alone , all the Tim Allen Santa Clause movies and all the other wonderful movies about this time of year.

The funny ones, the quirky ones the sad and thoughtful ones.. it all puts you in the mood.

It's also a time when the City becomes a magical fairy land and glitters in the holiday spirit. I want to say Christmas spirit but it's not, it's a very generic, non confrontational, excluding no one decorated City.. And it's still lovely.

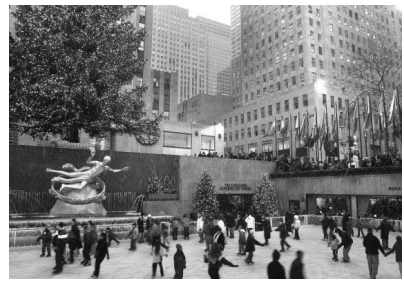
Thousands of tourists flock to the City for Christmas holiday shopping and to see all the special displays. Here's a beginners list of things you should see while you're in the City for the Holidays Christmas.

1. Rockerfeller Plaza Tree



Every year a special tree is selected from an upstate farm for the great honour of presiding over the festivities in the City. This tree is transported into the city in early November and is set up in the Square at Rockerfeller Centre at 50th St Between 5th and 6th Ave. The Tree is lit on November 28th this year and will stay lit through the holiday season, until after New Year. It's very beautiful and worth a visit.

2. Rockerfeller Ice Skating



While visiting the tree you can hang over the edge of the Rockerfeller skating rink and watch the skaters go round or you can even join in for some time on the ice. It gets pretty crowded but the atmosphere is quite magical.

3. Saks 5th Avenue Light Show



The Light show set up on the side of the Saks building right near the Rockefeller tree is wondrous! It's always a delight and warms the hearts of young and old alike. It runs every evening from sundown at 6 minutes intervals. There's a countdown clock this year which builds the excitement.

4. The Radio City Music Hall 85th Annual Rockettes Christmas Spectacular



This show is a must see Christmas spectacular! It runs 6 times a day from September until New Years. The show runs for 1hr 30 mins and takes you on a magical winter wonderland tour from NYC to The North Pole. It gives you a glimpse of the Nutcracker and shares the shows history… Topping of the evening with a nativity pageant with

live animals! Just being in the old theatre is a treat. There's a Rockettes museum and you can have you picture taken with a current Rockette. It's a wonderful family show and well worth the effort.

5. Macy's Holiday Window Displays



Macy's really gets into the holiday spirit, beginning the season with the Sponsoring of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Following that as a kick off to the season, The Macy's Holiday Window displays are the most exquisite displays I've seen. Every year, thousands of people bustle along the sidewalk to catch a glimpse of the creativity, which captures the imagination and the spirit of the season. It's not just for kids. These windows span an entire City block and are a wonder to see. Other Holiday Window Displays worth mentioning are Sak's Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's, Bergdorf Goodman, Lord & Taylor and Barneys.

6. Santaland at Macy's



Every year Santa comes to Macy's. On the 8th floor, you'll come to the entrance of Santaland, where you'll catch a 'train' to the North pole and as you wait in line to have you picture taken with Santa, you'll meander through the woods of the North Pole, through the village complete with model train sets and into Santa's workshop, although the lines can be long, there is so much to see the kids don't get bored waiting to see the guy in the Red suit. The excitement builds along the way. We go every year. The photos are reasonably priced at around $25 and you can have a digital copy if you prefer. When you exit Santa you can also go to the floor which is dedicated to holiday ornaments and decorations. There are so many uniquely BIG APPLE ornaments to adorn your tree with and remind you of your trip to the city. You can also send a letter to Santa, here is a link

7. Cirque De Soleil-Wintuk



While I haven't been to this show Cirque De Soleil have a great reputation and the reviews are great. This shows through the holiday season.

8. New York Ballet- The Nutcracker



The New York puts on The Nutcracker every year. I have been a couple of times with school field trips and it is lovely! The kids are enthralled by the story and it's well worth a look.

9. Bryant Park Holiday Market and Ice Skating



Every year in Bryant Park on 42nd and 6th they erect an outdoor ice skating rink and surround it with a holiday market. The market has many different crafty gifts for the hard to buy for someone. The atmosphere is very festive and just watching the skaters while sipping on a hot chocolate from a local street vendor puts you in the mood. There are other holiday markets around the city as well, one at 59th Columbus Circle at the south west corner of Central Park and one on 14th St.

10. Snow



If you're very lucky, Mother Nature gives you the gift of snow. NYC covered in snow at anytime is so beautiful but during the holidays with all the lights and decorations it is a truly magical place. The City gets quiet with the snow fall and just for a while you imagine it's a winter wonderland and Frosty could appear in the streets.

Then of course the Big City comes back to life and the snow is just a bother… But for Christmas it's a truly wonderful thing……

Come for Christmas, or 'The Holidays', we really do put on a great show!

Is This Santa's Last Year?

November 27, 2012



Christmas is a magical time, it's a time for friends and family. It brings back childhood memories of the super excitement, the build up waiting for Santa to come. In our house as kids, Santa prefered a bottle of beer to be left for him. We didn't know any better and being Aussie we just accepted this as fact.

I remember being devastated when a family friend told me, at aged 10, about the Big Guy secret. It was mean, and a rotten thing to do. Like stealing something magical away. I can still remember where I was and can still picture that very moment, some 34 years later!

As I got older I insisted on believing again. I just do, it's part of the magic. I've done my very best to make it special for my kids, the building up of the season, the letter writing, the going to see Santa to get a picture, they love it but I think it's almost done in this house. Grand Master D is 12, he totally knows, although I've never admitted, I say to him don't spoil it for your sister. He's a beautiful boy, sensitive and sweet and would never ruin it for her and I know is secretly hoping it's not true.

I have always been super protective of both kids and their belief in Santa because I think it's a special part of childhood. It makes me sad to hear parents say they tell their children he's not real because they don't want to lie. It's not lying, it's using your imagination and making childhood magical.There's no harm in that, no child needed therapy because they believed their parents about Santa…or the Tooth fairy or the Easter Bunny.

We still teach them the real meaning of all those holidays. I think there's room for both.

Miss Gremlin still talks about Santa but I think she's almost done. She's 8, and you know the kids at school have been talking… She asks now and again and my answer is always the same… 'What do YOU believe?' And that's what's keeping it for her, she wants to believe. Who wouldn't … It's way cool to believe a jolly old fellow flies around the world delivering presents down your chimney…

To keep the dream alive here's how we spend the lead up…

The weekend before we go Christmas tree hunting, and that is such fun, we get our saws and go on a hay ride out into the paddocks where all the trees grow, where we wander around finding the perfect tree. One year we saved the poor little crooked tree standing alone, rejected, because he wasn't straight… we imagined him being so sad seeing all the other trees get picked, we just had to have him, that poor little spastic tree we called ST(H)eve (with a lisp). We could feel how proud he was being tied down to the top of our car, and we loved him all the more!

Every year one family member gets the turn of placing the star on top of the tree once we've decorated. Then the boys go outside and put up all the lights and the dancing reindeer on the terrace…

On Christmas Eve after we've baked the cookies, we watch The Polar Express , with our hot chocolates and apple cider, then we read the Night before Christmas and The Aussie Night Before Christmas before setting out the milk and cookies for Santa… Our Santa, who would surely prefer cognac, gets milk and cookies!

Then they try desperately to go to sleep so the morning can come…

I don't know how many times I've had to stop the King from cleaning up the plate and glass because there MUST be evidence of the visit…he's OCD like that ☺

I think she knows the truth, our little Miss Gremlin, I think she's worked it out… but I'll keep Santa alive as long as I can because of the wonderful magical memories I hold onto and I want my kids to have as well.

Are your kids clinging to the last glimmers of childhood this year? Do your children still believe? Do you have special family traditions? I'd love to hear about your family traditions or childhood memories.

Update: Here's a fun link to an email message from Santa

Hump Day Humour #25 The Santa Edition

November 28, 2012



Santa's security team



Be careful when travelling this season!

Happy Hump Day peeps!
Loving this season…

A Santa Fest…

November 29, 2012

Because I LOVE Christmas, over the years, I have tried hard to start our own family traditions and get Santa pics for the kids. I didn't manage it every year but it's nice to see how they've grown with each photo and it's fun to look back and enjoy the memories.

Here's some Santa pics -- just for fun today.



Our Boy's First Christmas- 2000

Clearly he wasn't all that into Santa that year but I was and showed it by wearing my Santa dress.



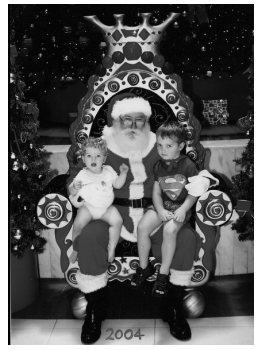
2002

He's starting to think it's ok…



2003

A brave boy going on his own…This was a huge feat for the boy who wouldn't try anything.



2004

2004 was Miss Gremlin's first Santa experience, for some reason Grand Master Superman wasn't feeling it that year…



2005

Our first American Christmas, Santa at Stew Leonards…Miss Gremlin was having her doubts…



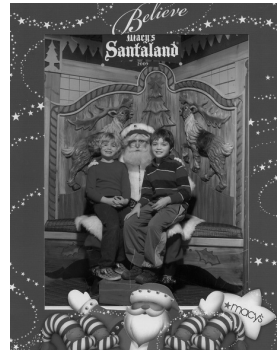
2007

The discovery of the Macy's Santa with friends. Miss Gremlin is on the right.



2008

Grand Master D is just not sure of this guy… He does look a little creepy… Some Santas are better than others.



2009

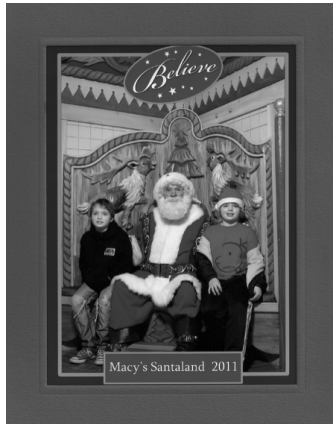
Same creepy Santa…



2010

We missed the Macy's Santa this year, who closes Santa at 4pm on Christmas Eve? Just sayin'……

So here's a shot of us with the Aussies hunting for St(h)eve (said with a lisp) the Christmas tree instead.



2011

The body language is telling me this will be our last Santa photo for Grand Master D… Miss Gremlin is truly in the spirit though.

That's how we do Santa……

This morning I asked Miss Gremlin if she wanted to go to the Macy's Santa this year. She said they're a little creepy mum, but sure I still wanna go…

How you get into the spirit of Christmas? Do you go and see Santa every year? Do your kids love it or hate it? I'd love to hear your experiences…

Fern Knows the Way…

November 30, 2012



Recently some strangers moved into our building and they were very weird.

The dog didn't know what to do, the kids didn't know what to do, there were strange goings on in the night.

The residents lived in fear.

They parked their vehicle on the roof in the common area. The Residents were all a flutter about these strange looking new neighbours, meetings were called to discuss the 'problem'.

Whenever we saw them in the elevator, they would say to us, 'Widgy, wodgy', what did that mean? Why were they trying to be our friends? Didn't they know we didn't talk to strangers?

Didn't they know they were different and we shun different? How were we going to fix this problem in our building? This invasion? Those people can't be here.

And then, as if on queue, an email came from Fern, she knew just what to do… Fern had met these strangers before and she said she was their friend!

She came to our resident's meeting, she told us all of tolerance and how different isn't bad.



She had an idea in her head, of how to help the world, by teaching all the children that different doesn't matter, we're all same inside.

The residents, they listened, to the words Fern had to say, she shared her message and her songs, it felt good to think her way.

Fern even knew their language, that strange phrase they kept on uttering… 'Widgy wodgy' she told us, means 'We like you and You like us!'

Ooohh and Ahhhh..light bulb moment, the residents were muttering.

How interesting they became, no need to be aloof, they took us all for rides to Mars in their space ship on the roof!

We learned from Fern and those alien friends that we are all the same, even though we're different looking, we can still all play together, the residents knew their shame.

The residents all have parties now and play those special songs, that Fern knows best but wants to share and help us get along.

So if you ever have an issue with someone that is different, remember Fern knows how to help.

Her songs are just magnificent…

If you would like to help your kids learn about diversity in a positive way, you can visit Fern here and get more info here

This post was sponsored by Fern.

Daydreams of Home

December 1, 2012

I have a picture hanging in my bathroom. We've had it for a long time, probably 15 years. It's one of my favourite pictures.



I look at it every day, several times actually … It's my view from the loo ☺



Whenever I look at it, I am swept up by what the photographer, Ken Duncan , might have seen.

It whisks me back in time, when this house was a home or a homestead and these paddocks were worked by horse and plow. I see a farmer's wife standing at the door, white apron on, dishcloth in hands, shooing away flies or wiping her brow from the heat.



I picture children running around outside in patched overalls, hand pumping water from the tanks to play in. I see an old dog lying in the shade of the bullnose verandah, long fallen down.



I imagine the scraggy, stunted shrubs trying desperately to be the english country garden they were born for. The heat and lack of rain scorching their dreams along with their foliage.

I picture life on the land, I think of home and the country I no longer reside in.

I get lost in the deep blue sky and the clouds. I can feel how hot it is on that day, the gentle breeze cooling me, by blowing on my sweat soaked shirt.



I ache to run full speed across the wide yellow paddock by foot or on horseback, all the way to the hills behind.

I imagine what the land was like before it was cleared for cropping, now with it's lone tree off to the right, where all you could see in any direction was the blue/green hue of the gum tree, and smell the bush and hear the noises.

Sometimes I'm an outsider on horseback riding by, sometimes I am that farmer's wife.

Some days I can't look, it makes me too sad. It makes me miss home and family.

But mostly it's more interesting to look at than the view outside the window while I'm showering.



P.S. Out of interest I looked up the print on Ken Duncan's website gallery



He's printing it in reverse now and we certainly didn't pay that much… here's the link…He also shares the story.

The Blue Bag Brigade

December 2, 2012

I am a proud member of an elite club, a collection of very special people who everyday, sometimes several times, get to traipse the city parks and streets with their mutts. And those mutts shit! Lord Do they… The law says we have to pick up that shit or we get a fine.



Be considerate of others, not an ignorant douche

I am ok with that because living where I live, too many people think they are above this law and walking down the street is literally like dodging land minds, of the dog shit variety.

It's unfair. Who do they think they are? I bet they're the same people who let their kids sit in shit for hours because they don't wanna deal with a diaper change. No… probably not, I'm totally judging…

But it pisses me off, it's not the worst job in the world, you get a little baggy and put your hand in it and pick up the poop! Yeah ok it's a little gross but it's the decent thing to do.

I'm totally into shaming non poop pickers, but in a nice way so as not to get bashed or shot, yeah Harlem is still progressing…if I see someone leaving poop and I happen to be out with Sir Lickalot, I will say, 'Oh did you forget your bag? I have a spare you can have.' You'd be amazed how that works, people get embarrassed when you call them out on their bad manners.

But I can't be everywhere and I won't be the crazy lady carry dog poop bags in my coat pocket in case I see an offender. Cos that'd be nuts … What I will do is pick up my own dog's shit. Every single time, (except that one time in the bushes in the park at night and I couldn't find it and I still feel guilty) I promise…Let's ALL do that and be part of the Blue Bag Brigade!

Cos there's nothing worse that dog shit on your favourite shoes!

Everything Changes……

December 3, 2012

Our world has turned upside down, everything we've known has changed. We're not sure what the future holds……too dramatic? Nope it's real…

Our neighbours of 6 years, moved out last week, Tuesday. We've lived across the hall since our kids couldn't reach the PH button in the elevator, before they were 2. We are great friends, we've helped each other countless times for all sorts of reasons.

We borrowed things from each other, milk at 7am, drills at 10pm and everything else in between. We dropped by just to say hi and have a glass of wine often, just to catch up on stuff.

The kids have played for hundreds of hours together!

A & I traipsed all over the 'hood with kids in strollers. Seeking entertainment for Miss Gremlin and their oldest son L… J and the King would talk business and all sorts of other manly stuff…

We were baby sitters for each other for many years…we know their family and they know ours, extended too! We've borrowed each others apartments for extra guests.

We know each other very well, for good and for bad ☺ They're like an extension of our own family.

It took years to build that friendship, when we were all new to the neighbourhood and an 'in it together' comradery developed.

But all that is gone now….. They left……..For a really great place, 4 minutes walk away…way better for their family and lifestyle, but it will be different, it always is.

We miss them, even Sir Lickalot… It's quiet up here on the top floor alone…

I needed some olive oil the other night, they weren't there. I had to make do.

It's quiet in the hall, too quiet……

We met the new neighbours tonight, they haven't moved in yet, and probably won't before Christmas. They are nice and we will probably become friends. They're not outwardly weird or anything :P

But it kinda feels like we're cheating on J & A… that's dumb I know, but it just won't be the same.

Stocking Stuffer Ideas - For Those Special People in Your Life

December 4, 2012

Stuff The King found on the internet last night, when he was supposed to be doing important busy work… and sent to me…

I know, I rolled my eyes too.





A yodelling pickle?

Bacon bandages…so the dog can bite you AGAIN.



The Bullshit button….who doesn't need this? I wonder if it has a limit on pushes per day.



What the f**k time is it? I would be late… every. single. time. I'll admit Math is not my strong suit.



Racing Grannies for the person who has everything…We're totally buying these for the kids.



Shut the hell up chewing gum for whoever you might think needs it. Pass it around the office Christmas party!



Asshole repellent no explanation required… better buy 2.

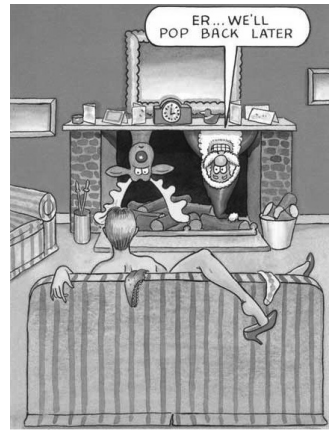


Irish accent mouth spray because why not!
And then I made him stop…Happy stocking stuffing.

Hump Day Humour # 26

December 5, 2012

Remember whose coming down the chimney this year mummies and daddies, let's save the gifting 'til after he's been.



Hope the preparations are continuing to go as planned…and you haven't stapled yourself to the roof or broken your neck falling down.

Happy Hump Day… I'm back to the eggnog (hic)

The Spirit of Giving

December 6, 2012



The Gift of Giving

For a very long time I have wanted to have enough money to help a random stranger in the supermarket line who is unable to pay for their groceries.

For whatever reason we've all been there, in the line with stuff we need and our card doesn't work, try another and another. Sometimes you get lucky and can pay for everything you want, sometimes you have to put some things back, you feel the hostility from behind you, Mr Huff and Puff shifting around and now you're taking forever because you have to decide what not to buy.

You're embarrassed, deeply . It's a horrible feeling, sometimes you just walk out because you just have no money to buy what you need.

I've been there. Last week actually!

Luckily for me that 3rd card worked. (what is that 3rd time lucky thing) This week we're back in the black. That's the joy of being married to an entrepreneur. There's never a steady flow, it's feast or famine… but that's ok. I'm still one of the lucky ones.

The neighbourhood I live in is full of people struggling to make ends meet every day, without respite. No feast or famine, just famine. I seem to always be behind someone these days who can't pay. The economy is toughest on those who have the least.

Tuesday night, I happened to be 2nd behind a lady trying to buy her groceries, she was furiously swiping, nothing, try again, nope, different card, nada. She made a phone call to get a transfer or find out why or whatever. I couldn't really hear and I wasn't trying to eavesdrop. She said 'Please hold these, I'll fix it' and moved out of the line. My heart skipped a beat, the man in front of me went through with his purchase. Then it was my turn, I asked discreetly how much her total was, the cashier offered the information and doing a quick calculation in my head (I can do this!), the next words out of my mouth were 'I'll pay for her groceries'.

It took a minute for the cashier to ring up my stuff then work out how to put hers onto my amount.

We got through it, I paid with my shiny new Disney 101 Dalmations credit card, recently cashed up and then the cashier asked if I wanted to give it to her, she was still standing away a bit on the phone trying to solve her problem. I declined saying 'no you just give it to her.' I was trying to just get out of the store anonymously but they told her, as I was leaving and she thanked me but I think she was too shocked to understand what had just happened.

I wished her a Merry Christmas, with a lump in my throat (I'm holding back tears now) and walked out of the store.

I have finally been able to help someone in a way I have always dreamed of, given up some of my money to help a person in need on a very personal and immediate level. It felt awesome. I was on a high as I walked into Taekwondo to collect Miss Gremlin. I have no idea who she was but I like to think my actions saved her, even if only this time.

It's always good to give… but I feel like the lucky one.

A long time wish was fulfilled for the princely sum of $3.12.

The One Where You Thank Me Because I Married Him Instead

December 7, 2012



So last night turned out to be eventful. The King had a function which was going to be over by 7:30. He wanted dinner, that was the plan.

That totally didn't happen.

Here's what really happened.

notice the time ⁉ He answered me at 11:30… THIS MORNING!

He arrived at 2:30 am, a little slurry, then proceeded to tell me about his evening.

Not being very interested, as I had imagined him pushed on the subway tracks (it happens) and I was pissed off he hadn't told me otherwise, I tuned out, until he started talking about fainting and polar bears!

We've all been here, rolling our eyes at the men in our lives and their booze fueled imaginations, but sometimes they produce photographic evidence.



The Most Interesting Man in his Own MIND WTF?



I don't always fight polar bears but when I do there's evidence
This is normal in our house… yeah lucky me!

How Wimpy 'Greg' Saved Us from 'The Elf on The Shelf'

December 8, 2012



The Elf on the Shelf, we've all heard of it, and if you haven't then which rock have you been living under?

Anyway for those of you with moss on your shoes, The Elf on the Shelf is just that, a little elf on a shelf, he's Santa's spy, sent to sit around your house and keep those little people in your life well behaved for fear of coal in their stocking from Santa…

It's cute, and a fun concept, filled with magic for your children when he moves each night around your home… but apparently he's naughty!

Although he's Santa's narc, he's a 'do what I say, not what I do' kinda guy. I had no idea how bad this little guy is!

I have been seriously thinking about getting in on the action because I thought it would be cute and great fun to set up things for the kids to enjoy… I have been reading so many blog posts about the elf antics and wanted in. I was hooked. I googled him and then amazoned him and discovered that to become part of the elf on the shelf crowd I would have to part with $29.95… That's a lot right?! But I was sold.

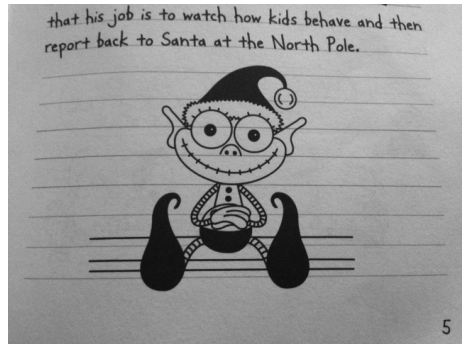
I was already in full making up tricks mode after following @elfshaming on twitter and reading some great posts from Badassmama and People I want to Punch in the Throat.

So when Miss Gremlin got home from school, we had a chat about the elf on the shelf, and who he is and what he does… and did she think she'd like to be part of the fun? She had heard of it and thought that it could be fun and when I told her about some of the tricks I'd read he's gotten up to she couldn't wait to get one…

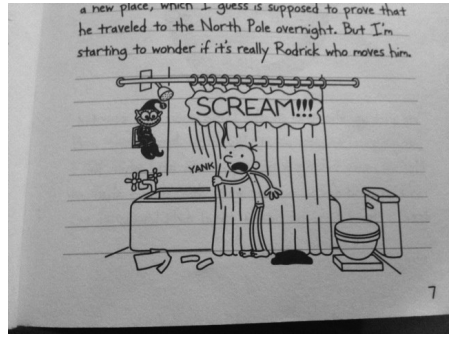
Of course Grand Master D and The King were skeptical but I was in and had sold the idea to Miss Gremlin…

At bed time instead of reading, we took the ipad and googled him, then we went on amazon to chose our very own little Elf on the shelf to buy. She chose a boy one with blue eyes… Operation Elf on the Shelf was a go. Afterwards we did read Harry Potter for a chapter and she settled down to sleep.

About 45 minutes later she came out, with Diary of a Wimpy Kid in her hands and said "mum I've changed my mind, I've been reading wimpy kid and they had an elf on the shelf and it's creepy' So I asked her to show me, which she did and then she said 'I really don't like the idea of him doing things around the house when we sleep mum, I feel weird about it.'



Elf from Diary of a Wimpy Kid



I think this shower scene did the damage

I was a little disappointed but tried not to show it, I hadn't ordered our Elf yet because we had company and I was distracted, then I thought about it and realised I had totally dodged a bullet!

What was I thinking? She's 8, I've already written about how I suspect this is our last Christmas believing, why am I trying to introduce a new tradition, and then it hit me, I'm trying to keep the magic alive. *I* wanted an Elf on the Shelf, no one else, just *me*. *I* wanted to do all the tricks because it looked like fun, *I* wanted to continue the magic of Santa and Christmas. *I* wasn't ready for it to be over, but it's not over, not yet, she still believes. I don't need to start something new or spend more money on it, she's still in…

So as I settled down myself last night I said a silent thank you to Greg Heffley, who was creeped out by the Elf on the Shelf and Jeff Kinney for writing it that way.

When He Thanks Me at the Oscars

December 10, 2012

When you live in a house full of creatives, and you're one yourself, then you get to do different stuff. It's just like that..

Grand Master D has an unscheduled day off school, no he's not sick, it's not a half day… there's no hurricane or snow day, his 7th grade class has a field trip today. He didn't want to go.

So why didn't he participate you may ask? Well because that trip involves going to the movies…

WHAT? he doesn't like movies? but he's a kid?! All kids love movies.

Well of course he likes movies, no wait , he LOVES movies, obsesses about movies, knows directors and producers, how many movies they've made, what genre they like etc and actors and all manner of shit I have no idea about…

He write screen plays for heavens sake, on his iphone, with screenwriting apps. The boy's got chops!

In fact he's using his time to write one now, on my ipad, in his cool clothes, not sick, at home with Dad.

This Kid loves movies, always has, since I sat him in front of the tv at 2. It's his kiddy crack, well that and steak --but watching movies while eating steak? OMG, Forget about it!

One day we're all gonna remember back when he obsessed about doing it, writing, directing, acting…when he drove us crazy!

One day when he's his generation's Spielberg or Christopher Nolan or some other famous director.

One day when we watch him receive his Oscar for best feature film or Best Director and he thanks me*… And in his speech to me, he thanks me for allowing him to follow his dream and for not getting bent outta shape when he didn't focus on math, when he thanks me for believing in him, even when I didn't see, but mostly he'll thank me for letting him stay home so he didn't have to go to the movies with his 7th grade class to see……



Twilight-Breaking Dawn part 2

And I'll sit in the front row, with tears streaming down my face, so proud of his achievements and I'll mouth 'You're welcome, Son!'

* He thanks Dad in his speech too but this post is ALL .ABOUT. ME!

Paleo Cabbage Noodles

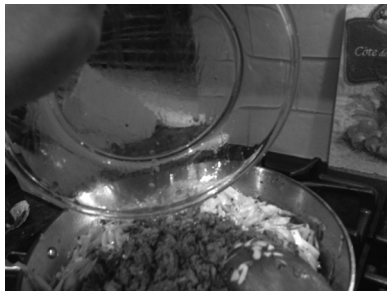
December 11, 2012

Some days you just don't feel in the mood to cook, well perhaps I should rephrase that, most days I don't feel in the mood to cook. I just want something quick and easy but it has to be nutritious and mostly paleo because that's just how we eat now.

Looking in the cupboard doesn't usually yield much because being paleo it has to be actual food ☺ So armed with what I have, cabbage and ground beef, I headed to the interweb for paleo insipration and I ended up here at everydaypaleo.com

Here's what I did with that recipe:







I didn't have apples so I added shredded almonds and craisins. I served it with roasted sweet potato and parsnip.

It was totally yummy and the kids even ate it ☺

Some days you just win.

Hump Day Humour # 27 - The Politically Correct Santa

December 12, 2012



The Craziness of PC

I know which one I prefer…Happy Hump Day

Sightings In the City, When Celebrities See ME!

December 13, 2012

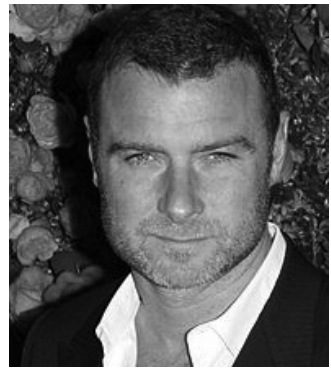
New York can be a very cool place… There are so many celebrities living in and around us all the time, sometimes you get lucky when you move around just doing your everyday thing… They are doing the same.

Today I saw Kyra Sedgwick on the 'C' train while we were headed down to Santa. I took a sneaky picture. I think she knew though. She starred in my favourite show, The Closer.

It was very exciting……



Kyra Sedgwick on the 'C' train



Liev Schreiber

Liev Schrieber has also sat across from me on the train …I knew, he knew I knew ☺ I've had coffee in Starbucks with Renee Zellwegger and Neil Patrick Harris,



Renee Zellweger



Neil Patrick Harris

Sting has seen me while riding by on his bicycle.



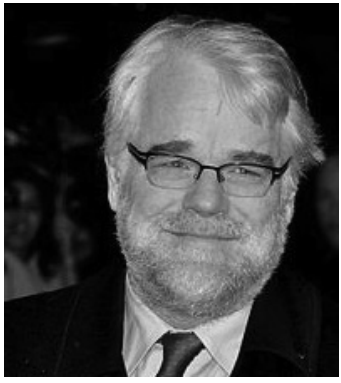


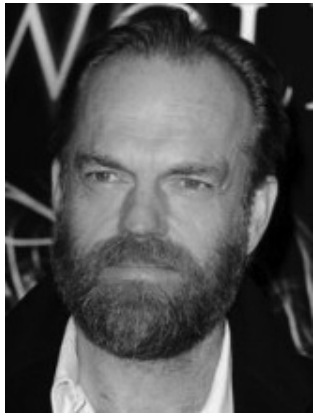


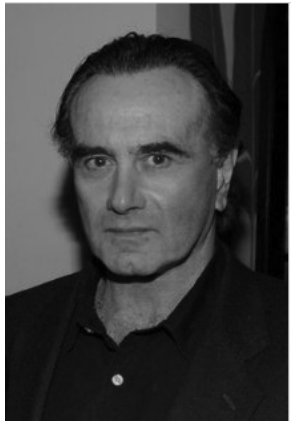
Miss Gremlin and I rode the elevator with Kathleen Turner by ourselves and boarded the same plane as Hugo Weaving, who is way taller than I ever thought.

Luke Wilson came off the plane with my parents when they came over to visit.

Phillip Seymour Hoffman was checking us out in the West Village one night, while crossing the street.







Dan Hedaya jogged by one afternoon. He was my first. I didn't even live here yet.

The Princess and The King move around the city more than me and have seen plenty of celebs. The King usually has no idea… He saw Justin Timberlake a couple of weeks ago and thought 'Oh what is Shawn Parker doing here!' Doh.

The King and the kids have even had a vodka with Dan Aykroyd out at the Hamptons. He knew they were special!



Dan Aykroyd selling his Crystal head vodka

They are just people, they have lives and I always feel uncomfortable for them that they have to put up with people bothering them, I never know what to say and so I say nothing. I always kick myself later because I'd love for them to have a photo op with me but I know they feel intrusive so I just let it go…

I am always approachable, and one day they may get the courage to come and say hi to me ☺.. Until then we'll just continue to look knowingly at each other in silence.

Going Back to the Farm

December 14, 2012

Since the kids were born we've taken them back to see the farm and my parents.

Since we moved to America it has been less, obviously. It's a long way and it's a lot of money. I try to take the kids every other summer so they get to see family but don't miss out on summers either.

Every time we've been back I've taken a 'gate' photo when we leave, just to see the changes…



2006

Miss Gremlin was 2.5 and Grand Master D celebrated his 6th birthday there. He had 3 parties that year. The flies were more than Miss Gremlin could cope with, along with the other bugs and anything that moved…. we were toilet training that trip too ☺



2008

In 2008 we flew back for my Dad's 70th birthday. We were a surprise. It was the best thing, he totally didn't know we were coming. There's a 'gate' photo, I know, BUT for the life of me I can't find it…The extra on the right is my nephew ☺ The kids were 8 and 4. Miss Gremlin started school just after we got back to NYC.



2010

2010 was a big year for the kids, they were older and got to really enjoy the farm, running around the house paddock with their toy guns was quite the highlight! Yes we had to replace them twice on that trip but the fun they had was worth the extra $40. It was the last trip they spent with their Pa too.



2012

There were a lot of changes this last trip. This was the first time back for the kids since Pa died in July 2011, so it was hard for all of us to come back and find the farm missing him. Then we had the cemetery and all the visits to family, the grieving process continued…

But this year the kids spent a good amount of time on the farm, and being older they had free reign. I just took them to the top of the hill and showed them the boundary fences.Then I said 'Don't cross them, have fun!'… They really did get to explore freely, like my brother and I did 30 years before, when we were 12 and 8 ☺

Since Dad died, Mum has had to sell of part of the farm, it's too big and she needs the money, so next time we go, it will be different again but also still the same !

The gate will still be there and until that's gone, I will take these pictures.

When Will this End?

December 15, 2012

UPDATED*



I cannot believe that I am writing about this again. The last time I wrote about it, 6 months ago, 12 people lost their lives in a movie theatre, innocently watching the midnight session of The Dark Knight Rises, when some crazed gunman entered with a semi automatic and just mowed people down. 58 others were injured. It was shocking!

Earlier this week a man opened fire in a crowded Oregon Shopping Mall, killing 2 and injuring one, who is still fighting for her life.

Today, a young man walked into an elementary school, in a quiet country nook of a town with a bulletproof vest and 4 weapons, and killed a kindergarten teacher who was his mother, 20 of her kindergarten students, and several staff. The final toll of 27.

How can this be possible? How can we allow it to happen? It's an unfathomable tragedy, made even more tragic, coming at a time when those little children and their families are getting excited about Christmas. Now, instead of shopping for gifts, their parents are making funeral arrangements.

The country is reeling, shocked and horrified, the President cried while addressing the nation, which just made me cry *AGAIN,* the whole nation is struggling to make some sense where there is none to be made.

I've been crying all afternoon, I can't help it and I can't stop. I picked my kids up today because I needed to, then I walked them to Taekwondo, because I needed to. I told them about the tragedy, we are all very, very sad… The Princess posted this on facebook from Australia:

I would dare anyone to walk up to the parent of one of those kids and tell them that "it's not guns who kill people it's people that kill people.." Go and tell them exactly why you should have the right to bear arms. I will never ever send my (very far in the future) kids to a school in America with gun laws like this. You shouldn't have to be thankful that it wasn't your kids school. It just shouldn't happen. Can't take moisturizer on a plane, but give any dumb ass who can write their name a gun.

It's somber in America tonight, parents are holding their children a little tighter, though 20 families are not. Parents are turning off their phones and computers and playing with their children and tucking then into bed, though 20 are not.

Perhaps *this* time it will stir enough passion to have a real debate about gun control, a real conversation about the 2nd amendment, which needs a serious revamp.

How can we live in this country, and not be able to safely send our children to school. Not college, not high school but elementary school. The place where they learn ABC's and do paintings for the fridge. Where innocence resides…and belongs. They have a right as children to be safe in school. It is our responsibility to ensure that safety.

This is not a war torn country, we're not in Israel or Palestine, Syria or Afganistan, where it IS dangerous for your children to attend school.

We live in the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. We're better than this. Or we should be.

Is this enough now? Are we done yet? Can we stop the senseless slaughter of innocent people by gunman now? Can we? Are we brave enough?

It was said today by the White House Press Secretary, that today was not the day to talk about gun control, BUT IT IS……

Every day is the right time to talk about it, and we need talk about it and keep talking about it until INNOCENT children stop being slaughtered at school. Until innocent people stop getting slaughtered while they shop. Until it's FIXED. Every single day.

Other countries can do it. Plenty of them. American can too, I know we can, so let's grow some fucking balls and end this. Write letters, have protests and marches, make the Government listen. Make them change the laws. This has to end now, before it happens again, because if we don't then it's only a matter of time before it does.

Let's work really hard to make this senseless slaughter the last one. EVER. For those beautiful little kids.

* Since writing this post, the details changed a little. The shooter killed his mother at home, she was not connected with the school and the children were in 1st grade.

And Then…. We Had to Send Them Back

December 17, 2012

Friday's tragedy still weighs very heavily on my heart, as the details emerge, the senseless loss of life is still so hard to process. The young man was mentally unstable, his mother owned the guns, she died first in his rampage. The reasons he chose that school are unknown and will probably never be known.

The vigils have started, the first funeral is monday. The entire country is in mourning and holding their children tighter.

But today is Monday, and across the nation every parent of school age children has to send their child back to school, the children will be talking about it. If you've shielded your child from this horrific news so far, they are gonna hear it this morning.

Every child, teacher, parent and administrator will be trying to process this and wonder if it could happen in their school and the answer is unfortunately, a resounding yes. It can happen in any school, it has before and it will again. We know it will, we pray it won't but it will.

Schools know this, they plan for it, there are lockdown procedures. My kids' school doesn't practice them but they have them.

I'm sure this will be discussed by teachers this morning, should we practice the drills? How much should we discuss with the children?

I'm scared to let them go. I want to keep them home and safe but life must go on and they must go to school.

My heart breaks for the parents and loved ones who, today begin burying their babies and try to make sense of this tragedy.

Untitled

December 18, 2012



This Blogging Thing Has Benefits!

December 19, 2012



When I started this blog I never really imagined where it would go. It's been growing slowly and it is fun to do. Writing about fun topics and meeting wonderful people have been a real bonus.

But thanks to 2 lovely ladies, Abbey and Monica at LifeWellBlogged, I'm now a published author!

I get to be more obnoxious than the King! I get to behave like a Queen…for about 15 minutes then he's sick of it and I go back to being just me ☺ ,cleaning the kids bathroom, up to my elbows in…. oh you don't even wanna know.

You see, the King has been published for many years and isn't afraid to use that to get what he wants.

But this time it's about me, and my thoughts and how I have come together with a group of hilarious women who I get to call friends and share in some success. This writing gig is beginning to pay off. It's so exciting…

The book, Life Well Blogged To Bliss and Back is a collection of stories from bloggers about love, marriage, first dates, date nights and this crazy life with husbands, partners and kids.

So if you're looking for a fun, inexpensive gift for a friend, colleague or someone who needs a laugh grab a copy of Life Well Blog To Bliss and Back. I'm in it!

I feel so priviledged to be included among this group of kick ass bloggers…Check them out!

Here's just a few……

Life on Peanut Layne, Momaical, Insomniac's Dream, My Life as Lucille, Hot Mess Mom, Mommy Unmuted, Life On the SONnyside, Menopausal Mother, Crass Parenting, Diapers ..Or Wine?, Suburbia Interrupted, Cloudy With A Chance of Wine.

The Healthcare Debacle and Why it has to Change

December 20, 2012

Coming on the heels of the most horrific tragedy in America, perhaps more will be discussed about the sad state of the health care system in this country. Of course guns will be first and foremost in the conversation, as they should be, but there are always other pieces to the puzzle.

When profit is put before the wellbeing of people, which it is done thousands of times daily by insurance companies, then we have a real problem.

Over and over again you hear arguments from outsiders saying 'Our country can do this, why can't you?' And its a good question. I think it can be done. The entire system needs an overhaul and the health insurance and pharmaceutical lobbies need to be stopped as much and the gun lobbies. Politicians should have to wear sponsor suits like race car drivers, so you can see where they get their money. Then you could really make an informed decision when you vote. It's a theory… it could work.

You can't have a society where young people can't get access to affordable birth control and then stop them from having affordable terminations if they choose. Make the prevention cheap enough so that the widely debated abortion issue is unnecessary. Prevention is always better than the cure. Nobody wants to have to make those choices or decisions. Ask any mother who has had to and they will tell you how much it pained.

Let's look at a situation where you lose a loved one in an accident or an illness. If, for example, you become a widow, you're whole life is changed and you're grieving. How much more difficult is that process when you have the financial worries of paying for your passed husband's medical bills, often thousands of dollars, you're already looking for thousands to bury him!

I think it is shameful.What about the family whose child was injured in a car accident and dies later at hospital, what an insult to then receive a bill from the hospital and the ambulance that carried him there!

I don't know to fix the issues, but we must try and there are other countries that could advise and help with these problems. Our children, our elderly, our veterans… the entire population deserves access to free healthcare. The children deserve to feel safe in school. The elderly deserve to be cared for well, they've earned it.

When will the government of this country do the things for Americans that other countries do for their citizens?

This is supposed to be the best country in the world. It's not, and there's a lot of work to do.

I love living here, but being an outsider, I can see some of the problems that *can* be fixed. I've lived where it happened, in my lifetime…

But hey, what do I know? I'm not American. I'm just a lowly Australian, where healthcare is free and there are no longer gun massacres.

Healthcare in Australia How we fare around the world.

Gun Control How and why we obtained it.

The End of the World? What Will We Wear?

December 21, 2012

So apparently this post won't make it. I'm writing it and planning on posting tomorrow, friday, the END OF THE WORLD. So if you're reading it then OMG they were wrong?

How could they get it so wrong? Theses little people from South America, predicting the end so many thousands of years ago?

I'm shocked. I thought for sure they were smart enough to get it right. They were an Ancient Civilisation and we all know they are better than us…deeper thinkers and stuff.



We've planned a party so it must be going to happen…There are so many conflicting times. I don't know if were gonna cease to exist at midnight tonight, or midday tomorrow or some where in the middle. It's very thoughtless of them not to give a specific time. I have things to fit in damn it. What if I have money left over that I haven't spent?

I would really like to speak to a Mayan and get my facts straight because seriously, if I shop for all this party food and it gets vaporiser before anyone can eat it, I'm gonna be mad. And I've bought a new outfit, which was difficult to find. What does one wear to the end of the world anyway?

So stay happy, be with your friends and family and if this finds us alive in the morning then I guess we will have to go Christmas shopping after all. SHIT!

The World Didn't End… NOW WHAT?

December 22, 2012

Ok so we all know by now, that the Mayan's were smoking some pretty good crack. It didn't happen, the world is still here. But what a marketing campaign! The doomsday sellers sure did sell some stuff… did you fall victim?

So now, here we are, we've passed through the End Of the World unscathed, what the hell do we do now? It feels like such an anti climax.

No doubt there will be a new End of the World prediction coming soon after the New Year…it seems we need something to aim for. Some 'event' to keep us in line.

I guess I really better get this Christmas thing happening…Are you ready? Shopped? Menu planned?

I have some of this organised but still pulling it together….The Christmas Spirit is festering just under the surface.

What I am really hoping for, is that this new lease on life, this second chance, will help us all to be nicer to each other, to get some perspective on the importance of community, togetherness and peace……

Yep I'm drinking the coolaid but if we don't hope for these things then what's the point?

A Post in Pictures

December 23, 2012

In the lead up to Christmas and the End Of the World here's some pics of what we did…We've been pretty busy



Talking to the Fat Guy

Miss Gremlin having some fun



Silly Santa



Trimming the Tree



It's Beginning to look a lot like Christmas
It's tough to decorate for Christmas



took a nap



Enjoying the outdoors

visited some New Jersey friends…



Waiting to test for a new level



The Taekwondo Team

What a successful afternoon… Everyone passed!



Took another nap



Making cookies for the teachers

I made 120 cookies in 2 days!



Ah maybe I need a nap



Entertaining the masses

It's been pretty busy over here… I'll be happy to rest for Christmas. How busy have you been?

The End of the World, Christmas and Puke…..

December 27, 2012

Christmas has come and gone, in this house we celebrated in style… like we always do. Everyone got plenty of goodies. Even though it was less than other years, both the kids were very happy. Grand Master D commented that it was the best Christmas ever. Miss Gremlin hasn't taken her new bathrobe off yet…

We had a beautiful day with great food and lovely friends. Naturally, I did all the prep ☺ It's a chick's job after all … But by Christmas afternoon I was done, 4 functions in 5 days. That's enough for anyone. Time for a break.

As if on queue, the minute I announced that it was a 'fend for yourself' dinner I started to feel sick… Within an hour I was in the 7th circle of hell unable to decide which end of my body needed to be in the toilet bowl. Yeah, I know, sorry for the visual but if I'm going to get any sympathy then I need to be graphic… right?! It went on like this for many hours. When you're in this it's hard to think it will ever end. There really is nothing worse…

Now, you know us mothers, our lives don't stop for illness and we have to be almost dying before we allow ourselves to stop. So you can imagine how bad I was to stay in bed ALL day yesterday. But the guilt was there, I know I shouldn't feel guilty for being sick, I never get sick or stay in bed but we get conditioned to think that the family can't do without us. Sure we do the Lion share of the work and we think our husbands can't pull it together without us but the truth be known, they can, if we let them.

I had no choice but to let him, I just couldn't function… I was lucky to stumble from the bathroom to bed, I spent a great deal of time in the fetal position on the bathroom floor.

Amazingly the house didn't fall apart, everyone got fed, even the dog…I got to recuperate and in the process lost 6lbs! That's gotta be some new record for the Christmas period ……

It was indeed a very Merry Christmas after all.

Stop the World I Wanna Get Off!

December 28, 2012

I swear it's a world gone mad, in the last month this country has suffered enough tragedy to last a lifetime. The Newtown shooting is the biggest tragedy making international news, although the same week there was another mall shooting in Ohio.

That same week in the NYC we had a random subway pushing, some crazy guy just pushed a stranger into the path of an oncoming train. This is very unusual, sure people suicide semi-regularly but a random act of agression is very uncommon indeed.

Last night it happened again, this time a crazy woman pushed a man into the oncoming train. It's just incredible that these things are going on…What's causing this desperation? These random acts of evil? Is it the beginning of the End?

On Christmas Eve, a lunatic set fire to his house, called 911 and lay in wait to ambush the fire fighters. He shot at them, 2 died…who does that?

Last night 2 high school girls were shot outside a school gymnasium after a basketball game.

When will all this end?

I am appalled at the things that are happening. Nowhere is safe. It feels like it's time to go off the grid and stay away from people…ALL people because who do you trust? When you can't stand in a subway anymore minding your business and be safe, or go to school or shop, then we're lost…..

America, I feel sorry for you, all this violence and desperation, the fiscal cliff, the natural disasters…You've lost your way, I hope you can find the path again and climb back to super power status because right now you've lost your crown.

Some Days I Just Wanna Punch Incompetence In the Face

December 30, 2012

I have had the most frustrating day due to incompetence . I just wanted to punch someone by the end of it all! Everywhere I went there were long lines, and only 2 staff working. It's nuts, when you go to USPS and the line is curled around the office and 50 people are standing there waiting open another couple of windows! Get some efficiency people for heaven sake.

Then I do the exact same thing at the Rite Aid pharmacy… grrrr. What the hell is going on people, there are folks searching for jobs, plenty of them. Hire more people and make your customers happy.

Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse I go to the supermarket to get dinner stuff and the cashier was so rude, too busy chatting with the other staff, making me wait to pay for my groceries. So frustrating! I wanted to shirt front the kid…

So here's the thing… hire enough people, but hire the right ones, bad staff are hurting your business.

End Rant…now where did I hide my valium?

Where I have to let go of the hope that we'll ever be Normal…

December 31, 2012

When I was little I dreamed of a life, a normal life, you know, married, children, home, a nice, neat *normal* life. You know what I mean, the suburbs, the 9 to 5…I'm thinking Brady Bunch or Huxtables. Either one works for me, they're nice happy families with just your average issues, comfortable income, nice home, well rounded lives…Here's where it all falls down…It's fucking Television! Am I kidding myself?

Sadly yes……I don't have that life, I won't ever have that life. I have this life. The life where computers out number family members, where once my living room was a repair shop for dozens of computers. They'd live on the coffee table, permanently in pieces.

I have a life where musicians record in my home until 3am, where board meetings happen on a Sunday around our dining table. Where film crews come and invade.

Our businesses have always been in our home, punctuated with office space elsewhere, which lasts about 6 month only to be back in our home. I learned how to breastfeed in my living room surrounded by staff.

I never know how many mouths I'll feed at a meal but because of this I'm exceptionally good at making meals go around to extras.

I live a life where, when the door bell rings and The King announces "oh yeah so and so is coming for dinner!" palm to face, I smile and be gracious. Where there's always extra people coming or going.

Sounds exciting? …Nope, it's hard, I'm always on alert for change, things that will mess up my calm. I am patient, I am kind, I am easy going and I am all too accommodating. It's my coping mechanism, I've learned to just go with the flow but I hate it. I hate change, it makes me feel out of control and vulnerable, never knowing what comes next. I'm not very adventurous, although I've done some amazing things. I would never have done them if I hadn't met The King.

He's the adventurous one, the thrill seeker, the one who needs pressure and change and discomfort to function. And that's how we live our lives, always changing something, even if it's as small as the living room furniture. Things never stay the same. As soon as things get easy and comfortable then he sets about a new challenge, a way to get the adrenaline he needs to function optimally. Unfortunately for me that means adjusting to new *all the time* and a new rash or other stress trigger ☺

That's how we ended up here in the US in the first place!

I fight it all the time, I want calm and normal, everything the same… it's safe. The King comes up with hair brain ideas ALL the time, almost daily and I always say no and get cross and fight it, not because I think I can win but because I need to, just to live in the hope that we might have normal lives. It's a funny dance we do. He knows he'll get what he wants. I know he'll get what he wants. He knows I'll fight it to the end, be shitty and refuse to like it. I know he'll do it anyway and I'll live with it, eventually liking it but always holding it against him. It's how we work. It's how we've always worked. I guess we like it in some weird way. It's how it's been for 22 years.

For Christmas we bought ourselves a new tv, the other one was dying but still works as long as you don't turn it off, ever. For the last 4 months it's been on permanently. Now we have a new one, what do we do with the old one? Well I would just throw it

out. It's old, it's tired and needs to go. So you can imagine my horror when the King announces he wants to mount it on the opposite wall and we can have DUAL tv's… OH MY Fucking God , just push the stake straight into my beating heart!

We are NOT having 2 tv's on the wall, that's just stupid. His argument is that we can make it a photo frame running on the computer so we can have our pictures displayed. It's a lie, I *know,* and he knows I know, sure it'll do that too but really it's so you can see a tv from ALL angles of the room, every chair. So that the movie we're watching can be blasted in visual stereo around the room but also so he can bounce his laptop or ipad onto the big screen for better viewing.

I understand his evil plans very well, I just don't wanna live with them.

The battle waged long and hard yesterday…… **I lost**, there was never really any doubt but it had to play out and in that loss I had an epiphany. I understood *why* I fight everything he wants to do. It became clear, right before my eyes and I could explain it.

I fight all change just to feel like I COULD have a normal life.

Funny but I feel like I should be standing in a room with uncomfortable chairs all in a circle saying this. 'Hi my name is Molley and I fight change so I can feel normal.'

It's a mad, mad, world out there but believe me when I say it's madder in here.



Stereo tv's and the odd laptop

2013 — A Mother Life

School is back, Who's ready?

January 2, 2013

Here, today, in this house the scramble for back to school was not so much a scramble as a drag my arse across the floor and cry like a baby. It was dark , it was cold and it sucked. Two young people are at the bench, trying desperately to get more sleep and not go back to school.



Ok so this wasn't todays pic, I wasn't alert enough but the sentiment was the same

Miss Gremlin got ready fastest after her hot chocolate and was waiting to go for about 15 minutes because school wasn't open… Yeah she's a morning person, lucky girl.

Grand Master D, who doesn't like mornings, or school for that matter, is much slower, way slower and moodier. He was still printing his Spanish assignment at 8am, the time that he should have been walking upstairs to class, at school, 5 blocks and 7 minutes walk away.



He left here late but he'll have an ok day, he won't want to go to taekwondo tonight, that I know… He'll be thankful that it's a short week… Actually we all will, staying at home is an easy thing to get used to.

To the left of this shot is the kid asking if I'm gonna post about him being late… ummmm

The first day back is always hard, I understand their pain… as for me, I plan to just hang out for the next couple of hours in my pj's. Perhaps I could snuggle up and have a little morning nap. It's too cold out to do anything else…

Would that be wrong? Is it like I'm cheating on my children?…

Of course not, that's not even a thing!

Happy Holidays…?

January 3, 2013

How is your Christmas vacation going? I mean winter break, heaven forbid we should offend someone and say why we're really having holidays!

Did you go away? Are you reading this from a banana lounge in the Caribbean with a strawberry daiquiri? While the kids are off at kids club? If so, I hate you! No I don't really, in fact good for you!

It's great to really have a break and enjoy some rest before the swing of the new year gets us all tied in knots again.

It's been a huge year, and has ended all so quickly, it really only feels like October… But I guess that what age does, speeds everything up. I know that before we even turn around twice, it will be mid winter break (no we lost that in Sandy) and heading for Easter, I mean spring break. Funny how all the vacations coincide with Christian rituals but we have to be politically correct and all inclusive… I have no issue with other religions or beliefs or people who follows those but they should also be tolerant of us. It is, in fact, Christmas and Merry Christmas should be the greeting, happy holidays is a cop out and I choke on it every time. It makes me sad that our society is getting watered down by what we say for fear of offending.

Everyone has their turn at the important dates, we break for Roshashana and Yom Kippur and schools cater to children following Ramadan, we acknowledge Hanukkah and wish people well, why can't we say Merry Christmas?

I suppose it's regional, where the population is mostly Jewish then they cater to that, where mostly Christians gather it would be dominated by Merry Christmas. It makes me sad that the schools are no longer decorated or that there are no Christmas pageants, it was totally part of the American dream for my kids to be in a Christmas pageant.

Never gonna happen, at least not in New York City, where we have so many days off for different religious observances, that it would make your head spin!

It's all over with now, so I guess it doesn't really matter, until next year when I get to choke on Happy Holidays all over again.

Is there a Secret Sock Party We Don't Know About?

January 4, 2013

Ok so this has bugged me forever… when I do laundry, there are always left over socks… ALWAYS. Why? What happens to them? Is it just reckless abandonment by the wearer? I know when I take my socks off I am very sure to put both into the

basket at the same time… but still even mine go missing.

The three other people in the house are not so careful and truth be told their socks are more often missing than mine but I like to think my socks like to party too! Well they used to …but I digress

At the end of the chore, there are no fewer than 4 single socks in the bottom of the basket waiting patiently for their mate. Do you think they are scared? I imagine I hear them fretting and crying… 'Is that it today? No more laundry loads. Where is my beloved partner?' Ok maybe that's just the pain killers talking today ☺

Maybe… they take turns in going on vacation… maybe there's a secret door at the back of every washer where they escape. I sometimes see stray socks out on the street but I've always just assumed they came from some poor schmo's cart on their way to the laundromat (there's about 3 million schmos in NYC). It never occurred to me it could be an escapee! A sock on his way to a warmer climate, where he can sun himself, free from feet and shoes…

And then, as if by miracle, sometimes they come back! How do they do it? They can be gone for a month, I've had partner socks in the bottom of the basket for months, a year at times and then, without warning the purple stripey toe sock, thats been alone in the basket for months, has a mate and they get folded together and placed on their owners pile, with nary a care and certainly no note of explanation.

It's the strangest thing.

Does this happen in your house too? Or am I the only laundress who can't keep her socks in check…I do try to take my responibilities seriously in the laundry department.

How to Cheat Proof Your Marriage

January 5, 2013



It's a question asked by millions of women in relationships, How do you keep your man happy? How do you stop him from looking elsewhere?

(If you're looking for new age ideas or real help with your marriage, you should leave now)

When the magic wears off and real life takes over… When the kids are screaming and sick and you're so tired you can't think or see straight? …We've all been there… am I right?

How do you keep that spark?

There are countless books on the market, so many perspectives. Date nights, share the load, spend time with each other, …blah blah blah…

Really?! That's gonna fix things? Don't waste your time or money.

You know what, here's what I've learned in the last 22 years, if you want your husband to love you, pay attention to you, not think of anyone else, help out, help with the kids, give you more spending money then there is just one thing you need to do.

HAVE SEX EVERY TIME HE WANTS IT…
Yep that's it…it really is that simple. They have simple needs.

EVERY
DAMN
TIME.

*you don't always have to be good, you just have to be there :P
This has been a public service announcement for women everywhere…

I'm a big boy, I bath myself--Almost

January 7, 2013

Sir Lickalot, for those who don't know, is a *special* dog. He has issues, but luckily taking a bath isn't one of them. Finally, after procrastinating for weeks, *he really needed a bath,* we were up to the task. And by we, I really mean me, but you all know that. So how to complete said task in the winter. We all know how messy washing a dog can be.

I usually save it up until I know the bathroom needs a good clean too because once the dog is washed then the bathroom needs an entire wiping over as the hair gets everywhere!



After much coaxing he steps in

Once in the bathroom, behind closed doors, even though he crouches all the way down the hall, he trusts me enough to just step into the warm bath.



climbing into the warm water

What dog just get in a bath by himself? A brain damaged one…He's even tried to get in with Miss Gremlin before ☺



mmmm nice and warm

There's about 8 inches of warm bubbly inviting water in the bath.



Sir Lickalot will stand still in the warm water to be lathered

This is the part he's the lease fond of, after about 10 minutes he tries to get out but then, when getting out and shaking all that lather around the bathroom isn't an option, he lets me rinse him properly ☺



Nice clean dog, dirty bathroom

Now for the vigorous towel dry followed by the lovely warm hair dryer. The fluff does fly!



He does love a good run around after his bath

Once he's clean and dry, he just must run around and get the blood pumping.



All this activity. I need a nap

And once again we find him in his usual position.
But at least he smells like pomegranates instead of stale pee.

10 Television Shows We loved that our Kids will Never Understand

January 8, 2013

If you're old like me, then you'll remember when tv only had 4 channels and they turned on the test pattern at 11pm. Life was different then, not necessarily better but simpler. We didn't have on demand tv, internet or even video players.

Our lives didn't revolve around tv but we sure knew when things were on for fear of missing our favourite television shows. No Tivo back then!

Sunday night for us was family dinner, picnic style, in the living room watching The Wonderful World of Disney and it was a rare treat when it was a cartoon movie, rather than a Kurt Russell or Herbie the Love Bug or some other Disney movie. At 7:30,



photo credit

the station mascot said ''Goodnight" to the kids and continued the evening with the adult dramas. Reminding parents to put the kids to bed.

This afternoon, we stumbled upon The Knight Rider and started watching, the kids had never seen it and though it was pretty corny but it still entertained them. They couldn't believe that this was what we watched…

So in an endeavour to show my kids what tv used to be here are 10 shows I will be subjecting them to.

1. Obviously, **The Knight Rider**, which they thought was pretty funny, although it was serious drama back then.
2. **Murder, She Wrote**, a personal favourite and not just because Jessica Fletcher looks like my mother in law ☺ I got totally addicted to it at 3am when Grand Master D was a little one and I was late night breast feeding.
3. **Happy Days,** who didn't love the Fonz? I think the kids would like it. We sure loved to watch every week. Especially when Pinkie Tuscadero would make an appearance ☺
4. **Charlie's Angels,** Oh how I wanted desperately to be allowed to watch! I was too young, things were much more controlled back then, and it was on way past my bedtime but I so wanted to watch. I used to pretend to be Kate Jackson, I was blonde but Farrah nor Cheryl did it for me ☺ You always want what you can't have ☺
5. **Mork and Mindy,** Who didn't love Mork? nanu nanu. The kids would flip their lids to see this I just know it…I will have to find some episodes.
6. **The Brady Bunch**, this is an all time favourite and classic tv. Living in Australia we didn't really relate to American life but we sure loved The Brady Bunch. I can't imagine my kids watching this one for long… although they would certainly understand it better than I, now that we live and breathe American life.
7. **Welcome Back Kotter**… Oo, oo oo, Mr Kotter…Epstein was hilarious and hey who didn't have a crush on Vinnie Barbarino. I used to feel so sorry for Mr Kotter …but here I am once again living it all. Who knew… the kids might like it, they're sure relate, especially Grand Master D.
8. **Laverne and Shirley.** It was always on after Happy Days. That just made sense.
9. **M*A*S*H**. I wasn't allowed to watch it but I wanted to and later in life I made sure to watch often ☺ The kids might not be ready for this one yet though
10. **The Love Boat** Love, exciting and new Come Aboard. We're expecting you. Love, life's sweetest reward. Let it flow, it floats back to you.

Love Boat soon will be making another run The Love Boat promises something for everyone Set a course for adventure, Your mind on a new romance…

Come on, you know you sang it instead of reading and you're googling it now to see if there are episodes available… NO? really? Just Me? Oh well …

Others that I loved and think the kids might get a kick out of the corny humour are Bewitched, I dream of Jeannie and The Partridge Family.

Little House on the Praire made me cry every god damned episode, and Oh how I hated Nellie Olsen.

Good Times, which my Dad didn't like much but we kids did, J.J was such a goof ball…

I'm sure I can find them on Netflix or some other source… I really think they would enjoy seeing what we watched as kids …or maybe it's just for me but I'm going to try anyway.

source: http://www.lyricsondemand.com/tvthemes/theloveboatlyrics.html

When News of Home is Bad

January 9, 2013

It's hard to live far from home, I mean far from your roots. NYC is home now but I think you can have more than one home. I know I do.

Right now my home is on fire, and although I'm safe in my physical home 16,000 miles away, I worry about the damage, the loss of property, livestock and human life in my homeland. Of friends and family…

Australia is burning, all over, last count over 140 fires in just one state, many still raging out of control and with the right conditions, weeks worth of fuel and damage ahead of them. Record temperatures are being set, with strong winds recorded, conditions are set to catastrophic…



Catastrophic… you know THAT'S gonna be bad

Some of these fires are being reported as deliberately lit, by teenagers, who have no idea what can happen. There's no accounting for stupidity sometimes but there it is.

The fires in 2009 were the most devastating the country has ever seen, with the highest loss of life on record. Since then rules have changed and hopefully *these* fires, this season, will be contained quickly with minimal damage and loss of life.

She's a dangerous land, it's part of the package…but sometimes Mother Nature is cruel.



How do you fight THIS?

In October, I was worried about a hurricane named Sandy and the impact she'd have on our lives… folks are still homeless from that.

Now, I scramble for news of the fires, of family safety in different areas threatened and pray for milder conditions and minimal damage.

STAY SAFE AUSTRALIA

Hump Day Humour #28

January 9, 2013

In the face of adversity it's good to laugh… right?!



We're just never happy are we.

Sometimes, we women are just nuts…but I'll never admit to it.



Some rivalries are just funny…

This needs no explanation but a good rivalry keeps you on your toes… Of course it's all in fun and our staunch allies would be beside us in a second if we needed them, I'm sure they are already sending teams of firefighters to help…

As we didn't hesitate when Christchurch was destroyed by earthquake…

English isn't English In America

January 10, 2013



I like to think that in the course of 7 years, (yep, 7… time sure flies when you're having …whatever this is…) that I've assimilated to American life. Most days, I know what I'm doing, can find what I want and speak to many and varied folks with nary a hint of bother.

But still, sometimes this language I call English, which is my native and only tongue, lets me know I'm not in Kansas anymore, oh wait, sure I am… I'm not in *England* anymore, or **Australia** to be precise, as I never been to England, although I have relatives and my mum is… oh sorry, squirrel.

Where was I? Oh, Non English, yes, so over the last 7 years of getting my shit together in American culture, I still have moments where, although I'm conversing NOT conversating in a shared language, the meaning is totally misconstrued.

Take for example (ie) the simple act of making coffee for a friend: This really happened, I'm not making it up as an example … The name is changed to protect my embarrassment…k?

Me: Hey Don, the King is still in the shower, can I make you a coffee?
Don: sure!
Making coffee like a good little wifey host for Don…
Me: Hey Don, do you have sugar?
Don: Um, Do I have sugar? I have sugar at home, oh do you mean on me? no …
Me: WTF???? In your coffee, do you have sugar in your coffee? (confused face)
Don: OH, do you mean do I take sugar? Yes 2 please (i forget now but 2 is considered polite) *whatevs it's my reenactment*
Me: Ah, take sugar, so we're being literal here. You have a bath at home but it doesn't mean you take one every day… Ok America I feel you…

Yeah that last bit after the 'take sugar' may have been in my head but you can see my dilemma.

We Aussies say have a bath, have sugar, how are you going?… when I say how are you going to someone, they think I'm literally asking their mode of transportation and then I remind myself to go all Joey on them and say "how you doin'"…

It's a confusing thing… I'm working on it…

Listen…don't even get me started on the difference in what we call things…here's a few just for kicks…

biscuit=cookie
scone=biscuit
g-string=thong
thong=flip flops
doona=comforter
power point=power outlet
petrol=gas
chilli flakes=crushed red peppers
capsicum=peppers
footpath=sidewalk
normal=regular

Oh, FYI if you ever speak to the English don't tell them you sit on your fanny! A fanny is NOT the same as it is here…you're telling them you sit on your vajayjay.

Awkward…

Yeah tis…and rooting for your team, in Australia, sure makes you the most popular girl with said team… but somewhat of a slut…

*I won't mention the spelling, I mentioned the spelling once but I think I got away with it… ☺

Oh and Dan… did you see what I did there? :P

This particular post may have been brought to you by too much coffee on too little sleep…just sayin'

When 'She'll Be Right' Becomes a Life Skill Attitude

January 11, 2013

I come from a long line of 'She'll be right'. Hey, I'm an Aussie, we practically come out of the lady flower screeching it.

Over many generations, because of our heritage and hardship, we've learned to pick ourselves up and dust ourselves off regardless of adversity and say 'She'll be right'.

She'll be right (often followed by a friendly term of address such as mate) is a frequently used idiom in Australian and New Zealand culture that expresses the belief that "whatever is wrong will right itself with time", which is considered to be either an optimistic or apathetic outlook.[1][2][3] The term can also be used to refer to a situation or object which is not perfect but is good enough to fulfil its purpose.

In this usage, "she" represents everything, allowing the phrase to be used both in circumstances of extreme hardship and in casual speech referring to everyday events. Related terms also used with the same meaning include She'll be apples (Australia) and She's good (New Zealand).

In recent years, the term has taken on a less than flattering connotation, with "a she'll-be-right attitude" referring to a willingness to accept a low-quality or makeshift situation rather than seek a more desirable solution.[4]

And it comes through in our parenting… well my age group parenting, ok maybe just mine?

I'm a firm believer in tough love, my kids know that to enlist the swift action of mum or any type of sympathy, you better be bleeding, have bones sticking out or be dead. Harsh? I don't believe so. My kids are pretty grounded, practical,thoughtful realistic thinkers.

We don't make a big deal out of too much, you're sick? Ok let's get the stuff to fix that and get on with our day/evening/whatever. There's plenty of love thrown in, don't fret, my children aren't left to fend for themselves, sure if they vomit in the night on their beds, I'll get a towel to cover it and we'll deal in the morning…blood nose? no problem, let's get the tissue box and some ice for that. I'm not panicky nor am I a helicopter/hover parent. I do my parenting the relaxed way ☺

Kids fall down, they hurt themselves, scrape knees, cut themselves and break bones. Following along to stop those things happening, so they don't get hurt, doesn't teach them anything and they don't learn how to problem solve. You need to be able to problem solve and the sooner you learn it the better off you are.

When I was about Miss Gremlin's age (8), I was hanging posters in my room, now it was an old house and we had 14' ceilings, so to get the desired height and effect, I needed to use a ladder. That's cool, I could swing a ladder like anyone…8' step ladder, hammer, pins, posters … and go…Things were going along well, the ABBA and Bay City Rollers posters were really making my room look awesome. I closed the

ladder to move to a new position, as I'd done a squillion times that afternoon…but this time I forgot to take the hammer off the top …tip, drag, clunk, ARGHHHHH.

Of course the hammer fell off the top of the ladder and clonked me on the head, claw end first. I wasn't knocked out but it hurt like a mother fucker! There was blood, I was 8…

I don't remember crying but I probably did, as I went in search of mum. It was the summer holidays, in Australia, in the 70's, where it's hotter than the Devil's living room and we didn't have airconditioning. My mum was lying on the living room floor trying desperately to stay cool and not kill us because to add to her woes, it was her lady time.

All of this I found out later, of course. My mum wasn't into sharing her cycles with her 8 yo daughter or anything weird like that… so I found her, lying on the living room floor.

I'm holding my head…

Me: mum, mum, MUuummmmmm!

Mum: WHAT!. totally through gritted teeth, you know what I'm talking about ladies…

Me: the hammer fell off the ladder and hit me on the head!…

Mum: You'll be right…(like, what the fuck do you want me to do, I'm lying on the floor bleeding from places you don't even want to know about and it's hot, damn HOT… fuck off)

Me: I'm bleeding…

Mum: Oh…

After that I have no idea what happened, I really can't remember. I think I just wiped the blood off a bit and went back to hanging my posters.

What did I learn? well 2 things… 1. don't leave a hammer on top of a ladder when you move it and 2. My mother wasn't a panicker…

But to this day I remember that incident in my childhood. I also never leave hammers on top of ladders. If I had been told this or watched over incessantly, I may not have learned because mum would have just grabbed the hammer and told me not to leave it… but by having it crash into my skull, I learned that was a dumb thing to do.

You have to allow your kids to fall, make mistakes, learn the hard way, be disappointed, lose, experience loss of pets or relatives. It's what shapes their lives and teaches them things far beyond you telling them.

In the process of course, you must teach them safety and awareness and protect them fiercely when necessary but experience is often the best teacher. If you can get them through childhood, without serious injury but still let them learn valuable lessons, then I believe you are well on the way to growing successful adult children.

This adult gig is hard, teaching our children how to navigate it on their own must be done by letting them experience everything, good and bad. It's hard, we worry, but kids are resilient and if you allow them to do it, "They'll Be Right" too.

Here's where I admit my Child looks like a Homeless Person

January 12, 2013

I'm going to admit right here, that right now, I'm failing as a parent. I didn't realise this until the the other day when Miss Gremlin walked through the door from school.

Her hair was super scruffy and in her eyes, in desperate need of a wash and trim. Her shoes were falling apart, the hem of her pants were ripped and torn like those pants that are too long but nobody bothers to hem… Her white shirt, although still white was stained like New York snow.

Upon closer inspection, she was a bit stinky and the fuzz on her teeth was like a furry peach.

Ok, I know, at this point you're judging me so hard I can feel it. Don't worry I'm judging myself too and I had to give myself a serious talking to. I was trying out the independent parenting track.

She wanted to wash her hair unsupervised, kicking me out of the bathroom these days so I can't help. And I figured at this age she was getting to know what she was doing. Her teeth brushing was another area she wanted to be a big girl. I'll admit I was happy to not be involved with the ablutions… I'm not a fan but turning a blind eye to the truth of the situation must stop … and right now.

Don't even get me started with the disgusting feet, with the whole family gagging every afternoon, she would be sent to the bathroom to wash her feet. I discovered that she wasn't changing her socks everyday. I don't even want to know about the underwear situation…denial is the best option there.

I've been near the stinky kids, and although you try so hard not to let it affect you , you can't help but judge. Why does this kid smell? What's wrong with their parents? How can they not know?

So now I'm *that* parent. I have the stinky kid. The horror of this realisation is an eye opener, what else am I slacking on, how could I have dropped this ball so badly?

She wanted, no insisted, on this independence but she's not ready for it. I have to take the monkey back…

I have lovely white teeth, I'm always tidy and reasonably well kempt. It's how I was brought up… and now I'm failing and failing in epic proportions to pass these skills on, well to Miss Gremlin at least.

First thing I did was have a meaningful discussion with her about the importance of person hygiene. I didn't hold back with the truth of the stink or how people will avoid her… Embarrassment is a tool I'm not afraid to use. Clean socks and underwear are non negotiable, EVERY day, and I'm gonna check.

The next thing was get that hair washed properly, a big mum wash … and complete rinse and comb through. The screaming wasn't too bad thanks to the detangle spray. After the wash and comb through, we trimmed the fringe so she could actually see… she's been complaining of sore eyes… I'm going with the hair in them as a cause.

I'm not frightened to send her back 2 or 3 times to get her teeth right and some mornings I will go in and do it myself…it seems the only thing that works.

I'm gonna be checking on her, every day and making sure she's not the stinky kid and that in the process she learns how to have pride in her appearance, no matter the style.

I hadn't really thought that I'd dropped the ball, I just thought this was independence…It'll come but it's not here yet and so she will just have to let me in the bathroom for a little longer.

Going Tantrum Free… The Toddler Years

January 14, 2013

I wrote a post a while ago about toddler tantrums. In my regular blog readings and on twitter, I see so many women struggling with this shitty toddler stage but those years can be wonderful and fun and tantrum free. Here's what I learned along my journey…



When was the last time your kids had a full on tantrum? Can't remember or was it this morning. Are you one of the lucky ones whose kids don't do that? If you are, well done you, pat yourself on the back because it's not luck, you're doing something right. I don't subscribe to them, don't allow them and firmly believe you can get through toddler-hood and beyond without them.

Really? you say, Is it possible? I say 'Works for me!'

There are some basic principles I learned. First of all you have to be boss, 'no' has to mean no and you have to be consistent and follow through every time. Don't argue with a toddler. You're grown, they're not. I have, on occasion, caught myself doing it and I think ,wait, I'm the adult here, why am I arguing with a 2 yo?

Choices are a big red flag to tantrums, little ones need very few choices because they can't decipher between important and unimportant. In their little minds it's all important. To you, whether you have the red or blue bowl really doesn't matter but stopping when told because there's danger ahead is important. Allowing choices on things comes as they learn to accept whatever they are given, when they can accept that breakfast is cheerios in the blue bowl today then they're probably ready to start choosing.

They're flexing their independence muscles to see how they work and you can help them become age appropriately independent with the right guidance but mum and dad still have to make the rules and make sure the rules are followed every time. There's that consistency thing again!

Clothing is another red flag, we all love our individual style but giving your 4 year old free choice on today's wardrobe will probably do your head in and make you late for preschool when Sally wants to wear the tutu and sandals in the snow!

By 4 years old there should be some choices. Have a couple of outfit choices. Make it part of the bedtime routine to lay the clothes out for the morning. Offer a couple of things to choose from, not 10. That way they feel like they can express themselves but the morning runs smoother and everyone gets out the door on time and not frustrated.

Anything can be achieved with forethought and planning and if you think ahead then you can help to avoid the meltdowns and before long they won't even happen.

I've seen full on meltdowns in the because a child was told to keep their coat on when the temp was 30f (-2c). UMM…Health, safety, parent- trumps child! Or so it should.

On some things there's just no negotiation and you as parent make that call. It might be a safety issue or temperature or you just might be broke on a day the ice cream truck comes crawling by! Who wants to have a scene because you don't have a $1.00 for an ice cream. My kids don't even notice the ice cream truck anymore because it's not an expectation. Sometimes I say would you like one and they are excited and grateful, NOT pouty or stompy because I said no.

*stompy… my word and I like it. Please feel free to use it ☺ *for freeeee*

Don't negotiate. Its like adding fuel to the fire. I have found ignoring or removing the child with no fuss works great. Reinforce why it's unacceptable and move on.

Adults can't think rationally when they're angry so why on earth do we think a child can articulate why they feel the way they feel. Trying to have a discussion is fruitless. If it's something you want to talk about then wait until the child has calmed down and then you can hear their side or discuss the problem.

We've all seen the youtube videos of the little girl throwing a tantrum in front of the parents but when they don't engage she moves into their line of sight again and throws herself down. It's hilarious but you can see that it's just for attention so don't give it. When they realise you're not going to give it any energy it tends to out.

Of course as children get older then a slightly different approach is needed . Although they continue to flex that independence muscle!

Give time warnings, so the kids know what's coming next. ie We are leaving in 5 minutes, so when you say it's time to go there's no meltdown or negotiation, you told them it was time to go, they knew it was coming and had time to prepare.

I can't stand it when a child comes for a play date and there's a scene at my door because the child doesn't want to go home. I make sure that I give verbal warnings so the visiting child knows what to expect. Sometimes I have to leave to do something too so the meltdown makes ME late! It can be very uncomfortable and it's a totally avoidable situation. I'm sure it must be embarrassing for the other parent too.

To date things have run smoothly in our family and we rarely have any tantrums. Occasionally we have to nip one in the bud however the teenage years are coming and that could be a whole other kettle of fish.

I'm confident though, that through *our* consistency, (that word again) guidance and lots of love and patience we'll sail through without too many problems.

How do you cope with your toddler? I'd love to hear from you…

How He tries to make everything I.do into a Money Making Scheme

January 15, 2013

Over the last 22 years, The King has come up with some seriously hare-brained schemes…He's entrepreneurial and has ADD and OCD. Yes I know, my medal is on it's way…must be lost in the mail cos it's been coming for years, YEARS, I tell you!

Anyway, enough about him this is about me…actually no it's about him… It's always about him.



I have hobbies, things I like to do for enjoyment and I'm good at them. Once upon a time, well before kids, I made all my own clothes. All of them, suits, skirts, pants, shirts, t shirts sweaters etc, even lingerie. I love to sew and over the years have made many, many things. When I met the King I started making clothes for him, vests, shirts, costumes for stage and then he progressed into colourful pants. To start with they were just elastic waisted pants to hang out in, glorified sweat pants, but then he decided he wanted tailored suit pants that he could wear for business.

So for the next several years I would chose crazy material with beer labels, dinosaurs, frogs, roosters or any other fun and often kid friendly print to make these pants. They were wildly popular and people commented on them all the time. They were his signature thing. He even put Lord of the Pants on his business cards…THEN, just as I was good at it, could make a pair in a one hour sitting, he decided we could make money out of this and decided that I was gonna go into production of pants and he was gonna sell them.

Now if you know me at all, you'll understand I love something until it's work, then I don't love it anymore. So my favourite, hobby/leisure time was just about to become a full fledged money making business with deadlines and pressure and all the things you DON'T want in a hobby. Hobbies are to get away from all that. So I resisted, he pushed, I pushed back and it never really happened.



Different fabrics used

I loved to sew, I still enjoy it but the convenience is gone now, there's no easily accessible fabric stores here, and I don't have a dedicated sewing space, which means I have to pack up every day and those of you who sew know, that sucks. You want your project out and available when the mood strikes and then when you're done you can walk away, shut the door on the mess until the mood strikes again.

My creativity has always come in spurts. I'll go and spend a couple of hundred dollars at the fabric store on fabric, come home, cut everything out and have it ready to go, make a couple of things and say I'm bored with this and it might sit there ready to go again for 3 months. When the mood strikes once again, I will go in and sew again for a solid week and the desire is sated and I can walk away until the next time. I've always got projects cut and ready.

Once the kids came along I made all their little clothes too. Grand Master D was in matching pants and vests all the time! Miss Gremlin had the cutest, most way out little dresses.

SO this is how my hobbies work. Always have always will. And knowing this, the King still sees me as a money making venture and wants to tap into what I want as a hobby.

So now I'm writing a blog and I have a couple of things in some collaborative books thanks to the Life Well Blogged girls. He decides the other day I should write my own book, 100 or so things about blogging or what ever, just start writing he says. I wrote one last night so you can too. I want it Monday!

Well you can imagine my reaction. I hate it when he does that. To him, it's an awesome idea, to him there's money to be made, it's easy and quick. To me there's pressure! AND I HATE PRESSURE. I can't function under pressure, I wither and die, shrivel in the corner waiting for the pressure to go away. HE loves it, thrives on it. It feeds his personality and his way of working…

We butt heads on this stuff all the time. I'm writing a blog, getting that going, which was his idea too, everyday, even when I have no inspiration, now he wants me to write a book too? I'm not ADD or OCD and I can't function like him. The book he wrote on the '100 or so things', he did in one sitting, one night … but that's just how he works, I can't work like that.

So we continue our dance, he trying to make money out of the things I like to do for fun…which just ruins it all but he still tries. Bless his heart ☺

Luckily I'm no nympho or I'd be on the corner in fishnets!

As for the '100 or So things about Blogging'… So far I have 6…I started Saturday… It's a work in progress ☺

Today I Stepped Out…

January 16, 2013

Today I am over at The Epistolarians… It's a group of super cool blogger chicks keeping it real…



So please head over and check out my letter. I express my frustrations at trying to cross the street safely in New York City. It's not an easy task. I get a little expressive but that's what traffic can do…so grab you coffee and head on over.

Edging toward Homeschool- Somebody please Stop me!

January 17, 2013

Homeschooling is the current buzz word. But it's a scary word…It conjures up Laura Ingalls dress wearing, husband sharing, religious freak images…Doesn't it? It's for people on the fringe of society, those who think mainstream isn't for them. And for the most part they are teased, the brunt of jokes and ostracised by society…I'm guilty of it. No doubt.

But then …

The school starts to suck just that little bit more each year. The funding is decreased, just that little bit more. The curriculum is steered towards the tests, just that little bit more, societal pressures and bullying creep in, just a little bit more and now, since Newtown, safety is a huge debate. Politics becomes the battle and the kids are left to suffer.

Do we send our children to school with armed guards? Will a crazed, semi automatic gun wielding fiend enter *our* school this time… or next time? Will the children go through metal detectors and learn behind razor wire?

Will they be traumatised by the constant lockdown drills and talk of possible threat.

That was my cut off… my "If that happens to our children, we leave" point… My image of American life before living it…My fear for my children before joining the school system.

So far, we've been fine, although there's been bumps along the way, mostly for Grand Master D who is the front runner. We're making the mistakes together, he and I. We don't know this system. I didn't experience this system, state tests, summer school, middle school, regents, high school, LSAT's, SAT's, Varsity, tracking… You might as well be speaking Greek.

Things are getting harder, the pressure is being increased. But for what? The things we did in 9th grade are now being taught in 6th but kids are still not college ready. It's ever changing, evolving because it was broken, so very broken but it's changing faster than the system can change. This year, in NewYork, they're introducing common core standards, those skills which students must master as the core of their learning. The tests will reflect this but the kids haven't learned it. And it's not being implemented from the ground up over time… it's a 'throw them in the deep end and let 'em swim like hell' type implementation.

It's setting kids up to fail. And teachers too! You can't all of a sudden teach grammar to 7th graders if grammar has never been taught and expect them to understand it all. Grammar needs to go hand in hand with writing and word study from kindergarten.

It's not getting easier, it's not getting better and it frightens me. This year is the critical year for my son to get the best grades to get the best school for him… in 2 years! This year the curriculum is changing on the fly but he has to be across it all to impact his future. But the things they miss along the way, the real life skills required to function as an adult get missed.

Learn to balance a check book, calculate interest and money… when will he ever need integers? Will they help him fill out his taxes? or pay his mortgage and car loan?

Every time something new gets thrown at us, I step a little closer to thinking about home schooling, I've met some pretty cool people who home school, they don't even have 2 heads or anything!

It all scares me, the school situation, the pressure, but also that if they were at home ALL day, every day and I was in charge of their education, what would that look like? How would they cope? How would I cope? Would I be better or worse than what they have now? Where would I start?

There are so many questions and so many hurdles but I have to admit it has been in my thinking more than I would like. I want what's best for my kids, they are very intelligent and do really well but they learn a little differently, they're creatives and Grand Master D cannot understand why he's learning some things, doesn't see the point, so he chooses not to.

It's so very frustrating. If I had a squillion dollars I'd hire the best damn tutor in the land and they'd be schooling from home …but at this point I'm still waiting for that squillion, so for now school is the best place, even when it's not and I get to freak out that little bit more each week.

Do you home school? Are you glad you do? Are you happy with the result? Is it worth it? If you had your time again would make the same decisions? I am really interested in your stories…

It's Award Time…

January 18, 2013

It's always so lovely when what you do is appreciated. I've been at this blogging thing for less than a year and I'm still amazed that people want to read what I have to say… I love writing it but sometimes all the self promotion and putting yourself out there goes against my very nature…So it always with genuine surprise and excitement that I receive awards.



This one is the Very Inspiring Blogger Award and it was bequeathed me by my sista wife Sleepybard at The Insomniac's Dream. We have grown very close in a short space of time, so much so that she married me and will be whisking me off to her island of sista wives very soon…

Ok so with every award comes rules and this one is no different, so here they are:

1. Explain seven things about yourself. Yeah ok self promotion again…
2. Pass it onto other bloggers. Sleepybard was a bit vague with this part but she's just turned Vampire and is still getting all her bats in a row. So I'll just find some bloggers who inspire me and let you see for yourself.

7 Things About Me:

1. I'm an Aussie expat, trying to navigate American life in New York City. Mostly successfully, sometimes not. Being the die hard country girl I am, this busy place sometimes does my head in.
2. I have OCD tendencies but control them because if the King knew then …yeah moving on!
3. I HATE ironing with a passion, I know how to do it but I have no need. Nothing I own requires it… The King has an entire dry cleaner downstairs… He doesn't need me to do it.
4. I love my children with all my being but I need a break often. That's what school is for…but school isn't what it's cracked up to be and I contemplate homeschooling at least 3 times a week and kick myself because then I'd have them home ALL DAY.
5. It should be illegal to get up before the sun. Schedules should change in the winter to accommodate my needs. I'd be way nicer to be around.
6. I love old movies, black and whites and old tv show which remind me of my childhood.
7. I miss being in Australia and around my close knit extended family. Yep we're that raise a barn kinda family…You want a job done you just say beer and bbq and the family is there…

Ok so now to my inspirations:

Life Well Blogged: Ah hello… THESE chicks inspired me to submit material which became part of a book! They got me published. I'm awesome because of ***them***!!!

Momaical: This chick, Tracy, blows my mind every single day. BOOM … no mind. She just did it again. Not only is she the funniest chick ever but she gets her stuff published everywhere AND gets her head on all sorts of media…

My Life as Lucille: Lady Lucy did the most amazing thing over Christmas, she was part of a group who did this for a friend. Although Sleepybard started it…Lucy helped. That was awesome.

DeBie Hive: Her story about loss the other day was truly amazing…And she's awesome at pimping out us newbies… I know I'm on her list to pimp out soon☺ She got this award when I did but she still inspires me…

Diapers Or Wine?: This crazy homeschooling mama with 5 kids has awesome stories of life inside her world… And trust me when I tell you not to read her blog while drinking anything … your computer WILL be covered in spit.

First Time Mom and Dad: This chick, I swear, I wanna smack nearly every morning through the phone with her chipper attitude and happy banta on twitter…buuuttt she gets me going and makes me laugh at myself… AND she's married to an Aussie so I have to love her.

Sleepybard, my sista wife…I love you and am proud of you but I'm not giving you the award back, that would just be weird.

Awards like this are fun but also work…so if you wish to just be loved and not forward it on that's ok with me ☺

These are my current inspirations. Please go and give them some love.

Mum, Mum, Mummy, Mum, Mother, Mum, Mummy…

January 20, 2013

WHAT…!!!!!!!!!…

HI ☺

Oh. My. God… haven't we all seen that stupid Family Guy add where the dog Stewy does this to Lois. Just kill me now! (I can't bring myself to watch the show)

Miss Gremlin just talks and talks and talks at the moment. It's an attention thing I know, Dad's been a bit hard on her lately and she's pretty sensitive, so she's trying to get extra attention from me but seriously, I'm ready to flip! I'm channelling Linda Blair and at any moment my head is gonna spin around and I'm about to spew green scary shit just everywhere!

It's so very hard to not hurt her feelings when she's like this and so like the Earth Mother swathed in motherly patience, I endure this like a rope to the balls, as poor James did in Casino Royale. I cringe but smile.

I give her the attention because I know she needs it but eventually even I get to a point where I just…can't … take … it … anymore.

That's when she has to go to bed, or go do homework or read or just go away… I'm holding on and I think I can make it until 8pm… but I might have to have a drink… Yep I just might.

A Letter To Kim Kardashian

January 21, 2013

Once again I have popped over to The Epistolarians, we're continuing our theme of open letters to celebs and people who inspire us or make us cringe…



So grab a coffee, head on over and check out the funny… but don't spit your coffee ☺

Watching the Inauguration as a Foreigner

January 22, 2013



National Mall Inauguration Day 2013

As I sit here watching the second Inauguration of Barack Obama as President of The United States… or POTUS* as he's affectionately known, I wonder what he'll be able to achieve this term. Last term didn't bear as much fruit as promised.



Sunday's Official Inauguration

Knowing that it's his last chance to make a difference, he can go big or go home. Either way he'll go down in history. He is the first Black President after all. I hope he goes big and makes key issues like gun control and health care his mandate and uses as many of those executive orders that he can to help this great country take care of it's own. He's got 'em , he should use 'em.

America has some big problems, it's a country in social crisis. So many homeless people, mentally ill people, issues of public safety and moral issues…We need a strong leader, one who can lead the country back to prosperity.

I hope he can convince the congress, who are partly funded by the crazies, to move forward for the benefit of the entire country and not just the selected few who make the most noise.

It must be very difficult at times. He's aged so much in these last 4 years. His life is changed forever. His family must have their challenges, living a complete public life, with a percentage of the country hating on you. It must be a strain.

The constant harassment by those who insist he's not legally holding office. The recent campaign by those crazies we won't mention or promote here, and their nasty, vitriolic ad campaign must take their toll.



The First Family

The First Family carry it off very well though. The FLOTUS* is doing a great job teaching the girls grace and poise. It's a wonderful opportunity for them. They will have a head start many only dream of. They may be too young to realise it but those around them are sure to guide them through.

It's lovely to see Grandma has embraced the office and it's duties, to be with her grand daughters and be part of the show.

Regardless of politics, it was quite nice to watch the pageantry, which is the closest thing to Royalty America will ever know. It came off without a hitch, although Obama stumbled on his swearing in. The entertainment was fitting and the Vice President looked very official ☺

I'm a sucker for a good parade and ceremony…and this one sure satisfied.

Tomorrow he has to roll up his sleeves and get shit done…

*POTUS-All Presidents have this as their moniker…President of The United States

*FLOTUS-First Lady of The United States

Our Weekend Projects are not Like Your Weekend Projects… Hump Day Humour #30

January 23, 2013

On the weekends we do projects…but not home improvement projects… more like kid improvement projects,

like this…

Is it safe to let your children loose in Central Park?

I've heard strange things happen there.

I see a career ahead of them…What do you think?

Making Space

January 24, 2013

When you buy appliances, you have to really commit to using them. I have so many gadgets and over the years I've used them a lot.



When we left Australia I had to leave everything. There was no point bringing anything electrical because the power is different. While America runs on Dunkin', I mean 110volts, which if you put a knife in the socket you'd probably live, we Aussies run on 240volts. Now that shit will kill you right dead if you stick a knife in the toaster,… I've heard.

But don't fear, we invented this little thing called a power switch on our electrical outlets …so you don't have live electricity coursing through the place every 8-10 feet.

Well looky here we can turn then on and off

Genius right? We're thinkers… don't let the easy going, heavy drinking reputation fool ya.

Anyway I digress… So when we got here I had to replace all of the appliances I just couldn't live without. You know juicer, sandwich maker, toaster, electric kettle, bread maker, pie maker, blender, food processor, mixer… The list goes on and on. So in the last 7 years I have accumulated a large amount of shit! But now I come to discover, I actually don't use them all that often anymore.

Having gone Paleo means I no longer make nice warm crusty bread, or hot toasty sandwiches with delicious fillings. Occasionally I make pies still for the children, but for me pastry is out, therefore no more chicken pies :(.

The wheatgrass juicer, well that was a fad thing. Wheatgrass juice tastes like ass, looks like cow vomit and although they rave about the benefits… There's no wheat in the paleo diet… bah bowwww.

So here I am in my Manhatttan apartment, with limited space and cupboards full of electrical shit I'm never gonna use again in my life. I'm sick of trying to fit everything in and jiggling and wiggling and manoeuvring stuff just to get a casserole dish out.

It's time to just let it go.

But the next dilemma is this, do I just chuck it out? Do I try to clean it up and sell it on amazon, knowing that whomever buys it will love it but I might have to pay more to ship the shit than what I'm making… OR do I see if any or my friends wants any of it? Are they going through the fads I've already been through, and can I easily dump pass these appliances on, which are still in excellent condition, to a new kitchen, one where the family will get to enjoy fresh, homemade crusty warm bread or beautifully fresh squeezed wheat grass. (Ok, sorry that was the longest sentence ever, take a breath… ok continue)

I have no idea… but I will clean them up and make a decision then.



Breadman bread maker



Omega Juicer

If you want any of these… let me know… You gotta come get it or pay your own shipping though… Otherwise I could put it in the Harlem local…AKA put it on the street with a please take sign on it. That shit'll be gone in 3.5 minutes…

This is Where it's Nice to Be Part of A Community of Awesomeness…

January 25, 2013



Becoming a blogger has been an amazing journey, I've met so many really great people, some who have taken a chance on me and coaxed me into the collabrative project, The Epistolarians , which you have seen me featured on recently. It has given me a place to write differently and to a different audience.

During this time I also met an awesome Lady, who blogs about her Life on Peanut Layne. The peanuts in her life get up to all manner of antics and reading about them make me laugh out loud, cry, nod in agreement and shake my head… Sometimes all in the same post!

So when she announced her recent diagnosis and told us all she would have to step back for a while, we all worried how we would live without her posts to read… That's when Karen from Baking in A Tornado swooped in and would have none of it!

She's has taken on the task of rallying the blogging family we have formed, to begin guest posting for Peanut, to keep her blog going for her readers.

We all work very hard to increase readership and keep those readers coming back, so needing to take a break and watching our readers leave is a sad thing and something we refuse for Peanut to have to deal with…

So far, 10 bloggers have submitted posts and today is my turn… So please head over to Life on Peanut Layne, enjoy the change of scenery, tell her I sent ya and give Peanut some love…

Happy 'Straya Day Peeps… Drink Up.

January 26, 2013



It's here! The day we wait for every year to celebrate our Great Southern Land. The 26th January…Our Official Day, and the unofficial last day of summer… the long weekend to end the long summer break. The day we all get outside and get ourselves painted in Aussie colours, drink til we fall down, play beach cricket, watch the real cricket on tv, BBQ some snags on the barby… That's sausages, NOT Shrimp, we eat prawns people, prawns…Damn you Paul Hogan…

We party hard, we're proud of our country, we're no different to any other country.



Aussie girls in Aussie colours

Australia Day is important to honour:

It is the day we celebrate the arrival of the First Fleet , Commanded by Captain Arthur Phillip from England in 1788, to start a new colony, with free men and convicts working side by side. The Birth of a new Nation.

On Australia Day there are citizenship ceremonies all over the country to welcome all newly naturalised citizens. It's a very special day, The Order of Australia is given to people who have given great service to our country and many large public celebrations go on all over.

Here for us, in American, we celebrate it, by quietly having a few beers and maybe a pie or a sausage roll… And the kids and I will probably make some Anzac biscuits ☺



Anzac Biscuits

You can get your Aussie on too…let me know if you need some tips ☺

The New ME…

January 27, 2013

Hey Welcome Back… No wait it's ok, you're still in the right place, I've just had a facelift. Actually more like reconstructive surgery. It was quite a task and we did it live, so if you came by yesterday at any point you would have seen changes going on…

Yesterday was like…let's see, you know when you go to the hairdresser for a trim, just to get the split ends off. That's all you planned and you were going to be out in 20 minutes?

Then some how, without even knowing how it started and whose idea it was, you leave 3 hours later, with an entirely different look, colour and style…?

That's what happened to A Mother Life but I'm still the same me underneath, I promise .

I've been annoying as shit too because I got to watch , A LOT ☺ and I wanted this and that and how about…But I couldn't help it, it's exciting to get new things and I didn't even know I wanted this one…

So without further rambling ado… grab a coffee or some breakfast and take a cruise around. There's things all over to discover… And I should know, I'm still discovering them myself.

I can't wait for you to tell me how much you love the new me…

and remember to vote today ☺

Spell Check makes me Doubt my English Abilities

January 28, 2013

I'm a grown woman, educated in Australia in the 70's- 80's, an excellent speller and proud of it. English was always my best subject. I didn't need to try too hard. I always got high marks even when I just threw something together the night before it was due, even though I had 2 weeks. It was how I wrote most of my essays. I was a math dumb dumb but English was my bitch…Obviously the reason I started this little venture.

Grammar was fun and I understood all the rules and know the difference between tricky things like their, there and they're… to and too, and even this toughy, who's and whose. Where to place commas, how to never end a sentence with at…'Where you at?' kills me ever so slowly, every time I hear it.

Then I moved to America and spell check has ruined my life and made me doubt myself where I never have before. All the rules are out the window, run over by the bus or dead in the water. Well not ALL 'i before e except after c' still remains but adding an extra letter before -ing or -ed doesn't work any more for travelling or travelled, fuelling or fuelled. It's correct english but not correct american english and therefore it gets those horrid squiggly red lines underneath. Then you have the 'er or re' debate as in theatre or theater, centre or center, metre or meter and litre or liter.

However those last two are kind of superfluous as there is no metric here.

Not to mention changing all ise words and making them ize… realise realize, chastise, chastize etc…

ae is feeling rather neglected also… how can you spell gynaecology , encyclopaedia, paediatrician without ae…Why? Was it too hard to learn? Did you feel so challenged you needed to change it? Was it your little 'Fuck you' to the English after the war?

I write a post and all over it there are these crazy squiggly lines challenging all I know in the world of language. It hurts my happy little spelling heart.

Why people, why did you take a language and change it? I'm so unsure now. Do I spell the way I learned, which is correct English or do I conform because those reading me may think I can't spell and therefore my fragile spelling ego suffers further criticism. It's a fine line I walk every time I put fingers to keyboard. It depends on the day …

I want to be right. I strive to use my native language to show off her abilities and intricacies but I feel she's been brutalised, beaten like a pretty girl in Gaol (jail) so the skanks don't feel too bad about themselves.

I wanna make my 8th Grade English teacher proud, she still sees all, so for the most part I stick to what I know and when in doubt I google it and go with the English version ☺

Here's a link to learning the differences



For the Love of Saint Valentine

January 29, 2013

This year is screaming along at a pace I wasn't expecting. Here it is the last week of January. How did we get here?

Next week is February, the month of love.

Do you partake in the Valentine tradition? Are you all gushy and need to show your Valentine you love them on February 14? Don't get me wrong, I love affection and gushy stuff but we don't need to spend money for that, even though the stores sure want you to!

Valentine's Day, the day where a dozen red roses costs $100 instead of $10 and a $2 Walmart bear costs $35 cos it's holding a red heart. A day when you can't get a table at a restaurant to save yourself and the babysitting rates are sky high, *if* you can get one. The only day that rivals it is New Years Eve.

If you're lucky enough to be with the one you love, if you share your life with your soul mate, isn't every day Valentine's Day? Isn't everything you do together a gesture of love? The packing of the dishwasher, the offer to put the kids to bed, the passing comment of sex later, which may or may not transpire but the thought of it shows love and connection…

Sure Valentine's day is fun, it's goofy and and a great big money making venture but those who are in love, been in love for a while, don't need overpriced dead flowers to prove it. ☺

It's for young lovers, dates and teenagers. Right?!

I can tell you right now, I'm not getting any flowers… unless I buy them myself :P I might get take out though ☺

SO here's what I don't understand, why are the kids in elementary school giving their whole class Valentine's Day cards? Is this how it's supposed to be? Am I wrong? Does this seem appropriate?

He's the Patron Saint of courtly love… well according to wikipedia , so does it seem appropriate that little children profess their undying, courtly love to their teacher? Or their 8 yo friends? It's a little creepy and sending a totally mixed message. Especially with all the inappropriate behaviour these days. Teachers aren't supposed to even touch their young charges. I just find it all a bit odd.

When I was a kid, clearly eons ago, Valentine's day was for the Lovers, no one gave me a Valentine's day card, we didn't hand out gifts… It wasn't a child celebration. End of story.

But of course how can the retail sector make a shitillion dollars if they don't rope the children in, or the parents, who feel the need to have the children be part of this…

Do your children participate? Am I out of step? Am I the mean parent?…It wouldn't be the first time.

Hump Day Humour #31
The Flood Zone

January 30, 2013

Once again the home land has been inundated by water. It sure is a land of contrast… Raging bush fires in the South and flooding and cyclones in the North. Not a funny topic, people's home are destroyed, crops, livestock…

But we're Aussies and we laugh in the face of adversity… In that spirit I give you some flood funnies ☺

Happy Hump Day…



At the Ark Stop



Back a bit more!



And winning the 'NO shit Sherlock' picture competition…

Stay safe, keeping smiling …

I'm a Victim of my Own Advice

January 31, 2013

There's nothing like having your own words thrown back in your face… especially when they're written.

This morning's conversation …

King: Wanna give me one…
Me: NO, child home sick!
King: We can go upstairs…
Me: Ah no…
King: You said any time they want in a post, not following your own advice now?
Me: Yeah whatever…I'm going to the post office and then I'll make you breakfast.
King: SO no sex?
Me: bingo!

Just because I give advice doesn't mean I follow it … HELLO…double standards rule!

He got breakfast…

Secret Subject Swap

February 1, 2013



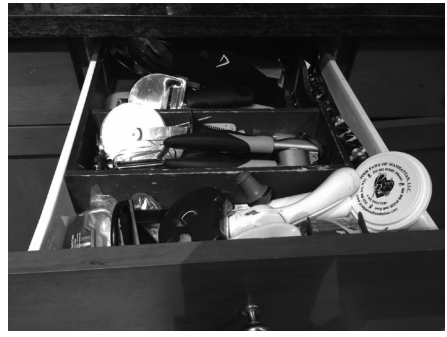
Welcome to Take One of February's Secret Subject Swap. This week, 15 brave bloggers picked a secret subject for someone else and were assigned a secret subject to interpret in their own style. Today we are all simultaneously divulging our topics and submitting our posts.

My "Secret Subject" is:

Describe what we would find in your junk drawer/ cabinet/closet…

It was submitted by: http://mybrainonkids.net/

Ok, now the formalities are out of the way, this is my first secret subject swap, so be nice, I'm a little nervous… but imagine my joy when I got this subject. I almost did a little dance…



I have an awesome 'junk' drawer… although I prefer to call it 'utilities drawer' thank you very much!… Yeah that's crap too… it's really just known as the second drawer…

Where's the bottle opener?

'How can so much stuff fit into such a tiny space?'

'And how the hell do you find anything?'

'I hate this damn drawer…Grrr'

These words come out of the King's mouth at surprisingly regular intervals. He HATES this drawer and tries to throw things away all the time…

It gets stuck, things get caught on the top edge and you can't open it. All I can do is shake it and rattle the drawer, because the long skewer things you use to push the stuck things down are INSIDE the stuck drawer.

This is NOT a drawer for the faint hearted.



Hold on … I'm going in!

But believe me when I tell you I can make anything with it…I'm like the McGyver of the kitchen drawer world. There's tape and wire and chopstick and rubber stoppers and glasses screws…Miss Gremlin could make a working robot with that shit…



You want it? I got it…

There's so many sharp things in this drawer that if I ever get attacked by zombies in the kitchen I'm going there instead of the knife block… Everyone knows you can't kill zombies with knives… Actually I have no idea, I don't know anything about zombies but I'm hoping a coffee thermometer to the eye socket will do the trick.

So there it is, that's my drawer. I'm covered if I need a robot built or to defend myself against zombies… Can't find the fucking bottle opener though… Screw top anyone?

Here are links to all the sites now featuring Secret Subject Swap posts. Sit back, grab a cup, and check them all out. See you there:

www.BakingInATornado.com

http://dinoheromommy.com/
http://smn0409.blogspot.com/
http://menopausalmother.blogspot.com/
http://www.quirkychrissy.com
http://www.momaical.com
http://lifeonthesonnyside.blogspot.com/
http://www.chewylicious.com
http://hypnoticbard.blogspot.com/
http://followmehome.shellybean.com
http://www.100lbCountdown.com
http://www.somethingclever2point0.com/
http://www.justalittlenutty.com/
http://mybrainonkids.net/

The Crazy Questions Post

February 2, 2013

Mama Pants over at The Family Pants tagged me in her post, she's on a 20 or so questions kick. It's fun she says, I'll send you the questions she says, you'll love it, she says.



Yeah I'm calling bullshit but in the spirit of learning more about each other I'm gonna play…My questions could be influenced by vodka, you've been warned.

When did your last hug take place?
I was hugged this evening by Grand master D, several times actually. he's a hugger. At the moment he's hugging so much it borders on weird. I'm loving it though and he says "I know I'm hugging you a lot but I just feel like it'. I'm thinking it's a hormonal thing and I imagine one day not too soon he'll be too cool to hug me for a while, so I'll take it.

Are you a jealous person?
Nope.

Are you tired right now?
Right now, before, yesterday, the other day… JUST yes.

Do you chew on your straws?
Straws are for drugs not drinks

Have you ever been awake for 48 hours straight?
Yep, once on a drive from Sydney to Melbourne then back again. I also slept for 24 hr straight after that one.

Do you cry easily?
Yes, I'm a sooky lala. You love me anyway.

What should you be doing right now?
I'm doing it… Writing, I'm a writer now, you know.

Are you a heavy sleeper?

Medium sleeper but heavy when exhausted. I always feel the dog or a child's presence beside the bed though

Are you mad at someone right now?
Well I could say Mama Pants … but no.

Do you believe in love?

Believe in it, subscribe to it, crave it, need it, own it.

What makes you laugh no matter what?
Sir Lickalot our spastic dog. He's special in a brain damaged kinda way.

Who was the last person you talked to?

On line or in person? Well online, Tracy from Momaical, the crazy chick from LA. In person Miss Gremlin, whose tooth was giving her grief…

When was the last time you smiled?

I smile all the time but probably the last time I checked twitter, don't judge me, the people in there are fun.
Does anyone like you?

Like? or Like like? Dumb question… my kids like me, The king like likes me, the dog likes me. I hope my friends like me… you get it.

Do you secretly like someone?
I secretly like The King… but I think he might know

Who was the first person you talked to today?

Oh person? That would be the children… but I talked to the dog first, oh and myself in the mirror.
Who do you feel most comfortable talking to about anything?
hmm. I'm pretty comfortable talking about anything to anyone really. Person stuff? close friends.
What are you NOT looking forward to?
The rest of these damn questions… for real

What ARE you looking forward to?
The end of these questions. But really … I'm looking forward to my adult children, I want to see who they become. I'm excited to develop adult relationships with them.

Are you a forgiving person?
Yes.

How many TRUE friends do you have?
Enough, they know…

Do you fall for people easily?
No way! I'm the secret weapon on seeking out the bad eggs. I have a very sensitive bullshit meter…

What's the last thing you put in your mouth?
water

Who was the last person you drove with?
wow. I can't remember the last time I was in a car.

How late did you stay up last night and why?
too fucking late…2am

If you could move somewhere else, would you?
Well I want to live in Italy but I'd always move back to Australia… sigh, one day.

Who was the last person you took a picture of?



Them…
Can you live a day without TV?
yes but I don't see the need.

When was the last time you were extremely disappointed?
nothing comes to mind… sorry… disappointed? :P
Three names you go by…
Mum, Molley, My Love
What is your all-time favorite romance movie?
Pretty Woman
Do you believe that everyone has a soul-mate?

I think I do but I also believe that it takes work no matter who you're with.
What's your current problem?

I've been sitting on this couch too long and my neck and back hurt. We need a new couch.
Have you ever had your heart broken?
Every time I lose someone I love.

OH MY GOD! That was looooooonnnnngggg. Do you know enough now?

Ok who wants to play? Motha Kim, Kelly Debie HIve, April at 1st Time Mom and Dad, Roshni, Sleepybard and Mommy Unmuted.? … Don't blame me, go smack Mama. I totally understand if you don't wanna play ladies…But it might be fun.

The Judgey McJudgeson's came out Today-Oops

February 4, 2013

As a rule I'm pretty cool, Ha, that rhymes… pretty cool with whatever anyone chooses to do with their lives. Not for me to say, I have enough of my own stuff to deal with …but right now, just for a minute I'm putting on the Judgey McJudgeson shoes… Hey don't roll your eyes we all have them.

Most of the time they hide in the back of the closet but sometime we put them on… Because we're human, because we know better and shit needs to be said.

Scrolling through the local community website, I came across this posting…

"Inexpensive venue for 2 yo birthday party"

Let's break this sentence down… We have *venue*, *2 yo* and *birthday party*… we also have *inexpensive*.

All these things separately are fine but when you put them together, it makes my head spin. Why the fuck would you want to rent a venue for a irthday party for a 2 year old?

You know you're thinking it. And if you're not then I guess you had a big 2yo birthday party and all power to ya but it's not for me.

The kid won't remember it, you know there'll be a meltdown or six and a room full of 'hopped up on kiddie crack' kids ranging in age from 2 to maybe 10.

It'll be loud and messy and there'll be parents wanting you to relight the cake because their child won't stop screaming til they can blow the candles out…at least 5 times… No one's eating that spat on germ fest… which you probably paid half an arm for!

This is fun? Really? In what universe?

This my friends, is the stuff nightmares are made of. I don't begrudge any kid a birthday party but it seems to get more out of control every year. Why must we have a full blown extravaganza? Can't we celebrate with a nice family cake, a few gifts and a little song? You know, this is gonna happen every year… Pick the milestone birthdays, 1, 5, 10, 13, 16 18, 21…

When you start with the bar so high, you leave no room for growth. If you're renting a venue at 2, where do you go from there? An entire nightclub at 18? Private island for the 21st bash?

It's ok to say no, it's ok not to have a 'party'every year. I haven't done it, my kids don't expect it and they still have awesome birthdays and are grateful for the love they get on their special day. That's what counts. Right?!

Everyone loves their children and wants to spoil them but overindulgence of kids makes me a little nuts, please forgive me… I'll put the Judgey McJudgeson's away now.

Of Course We Have the Temple Grandin of Dogs

February 5, 2013

My dog is special, like Temple Grandin special. I've talked about him being brain damaged before. What I may have failed to mention is he likes small spaces and that's where the Temple Grandin theory comes in. I understand the difference between autism and brain damage, before you get you knickers in a twist, moving on…This is about my dog's specialness. He must be touching something wherever he lays. You can find him lying against something like this



or this



he's always got some part of his body touching me or another family member or a piece of furniture



This is his current favourite spot, squished between the table and the couch with his feet tucked under the carpet.



I don't even understand what this is about… Why the hell does he want to hide his head under there?



I've never seen a dog NEED to be laying against something all the time…
But when he's not … he's doing this…



Our lapdog is bigger than your lapdog!

Hump Day Humour #32

February 6, 2013

In Honour of King Richard 111 being found in a carpark in Leicester, I thought perhaps we should cast our minds back to those times, just for fun…

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be.



Here are some facts about the 1500's…

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, And they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children, last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!"

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs." There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house.

This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "Dirt Poor." The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery In the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing… As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, It would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way. Hence: a thresh hold.

(Getting quite an education, aren't you?)

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old." Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special.

When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status… Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days… Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom; "holding a wake."

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell.

Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be,"saved by the bell" or was "considered a dead ringer."

And that's the truth.

Happy Hump Day…

The Original Vajazzling…

February 7, 2013

I had to go and open my big mouth on Twitter didn't I!

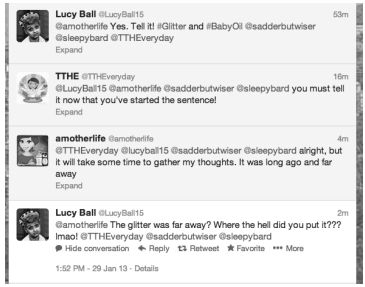


Seriously, some days it's just better to shut your mouth. Of course, I didn't because why would I? That wouldn't be any fun at all. Noooooooo, Twitter is for fun and being inappropriate and saying whatever you want. Right?! Please tell me you're agreeing right now.



Now I've put my foot right in it. I'm all blah blah, glitter and baby oil… all over the place…and they're like, you have to tell it and I'm like, hmmm, well…should I?





And then …somebody always mentions 'band camp', all stories are ok until someone says 'band camp'…

So now I have to decide if I'm gonna let it go or tell the story from my deep, dark past, where it should stay because, well because as Rafiki said, and who doesn't trust a talking baboon with a shaky stick, Not me! I trust whatever he says… the past is the past…

Keep the past in the past? Apparently not!

And so to answer Lucy's question… The best way I can…

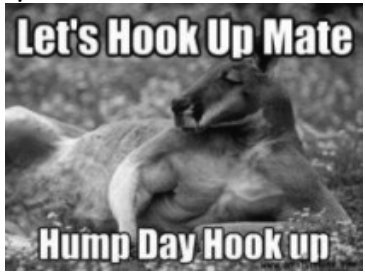
It was long ago and it was far away…we were on the road…like 'band camp' but for grown ups and somehow, I'm not saying how, to protect the innocent , there was a hotel room and in that hotel room there was a bag and in that bag there was stolen glitter.

Stolen glitter you say? Who steals glitter? Again, being in the past, I must refrain, however packed in that bag with the stolen glitter was legally purchased baby oil. Baby oil, for those of you younger than the moon, was the sunscreen of choice for all good 80's sunbakers and this theory lived on into their adulthood.

But those poor sun worshippers could no long lay out in the sun, for fear of rebuke from the suntan nazis and so like all good 80's children, they took their baby oil to bed.

A bed, in a hotel room, on the road, like 'band camp'…An idea was hatched and plan was set and that baby oil was used.

But the glitter you see, felt left out, lonely, so it popped out of the bag to see what was going on. And that glitter was shocked, cos the baby oil rocked and he wanted to be in that action.



Ever so slowly and timidly, the glitter joined the fun and before they all knew it, the damage was done. The glitter exploded in too much excitement and stuck to the baby oil everywhere!

Laughter insued, well, what else could they do? T'was a hotel room for fairies to come…

And that my dear friends, brings my story to an end, of the original vajazzled vajajay.

I'm Inspiring… Didn't You Know?

February 8, 2013



It's the months of Awards… The Golden Globes, The Screen Actors Guild ,The Oscars…and this,

These awards are always so much fun but they are work too. It has been said they're a little like herpes in the blogging world. Sleepybard from The Insomniac's Dream, who loves me dearly, and I her, passed on this particular strain … Some shun them because of the work involved. Still, regardless of the work involved and the

trying to find other bloggers to pass them onto, I love receiving them. It's a kind of validation of what we do. I'm good with that.

This award requires me to be inspired by 15, yep FIFTEEN… The main problem with this is that more often than not we all move in the same circles and so those who inspire me have been given the award already. That's the part that sucks… However in the spirit of inventiveness I will try to stretch my horizons and find 15 new others.

But first the 7 inspiring things about me:

1. I am a realist. Not sure if that's inspiring but you know where you stand with me.
2. I am extremely patient. I find this inspiring because it saves many from certain death with the amount of bullshit I put up with on a regular basis.
3. I am honest and upfront. If you know me, then you know, I say it like I see it. I won't gloss over stuff. Inspiring? who knows, I'm inspired to call you on your shit. Who doesn't want a friend like that :P
4. This is hard! Ok, I write words on a page that inspire people to smile, cry, yell, agree, disagree, and some even tell me about it in the comments.
5. I hope I inspire my children to stand up for themselves by seeing me do the same for them. I inspire them to behave on threat of pain and punishment. They, in turn, inspire me to be a better mother, to be more patient and to learn from them while teaching them all I know.
6. I inspire my husband…well I must. He's still here and very much in love with me… or he's an excellent actor :P
7. This is a lot of 'all about me' stuff. I hope I inspire you to come back and read more and to check out the people I find inspiring.
8. And this is extra… have I inspired you to vote yet, with all my begging on circle of moms?

Ok enough silliness, These people inspire me often and you should just go see for yourself.

Momspirational : Hello Mom + inspirational… Duh!

Peanut Layne: This lady is down but not out… What an inspiration. She laughs at her illness and helps us by making us laugh too.

Karen at Baking In a Tornado: This lady rallied when Peanut got ill. The power of the internet helping others.

Cloudy with A Chance of Wine: This lady inspires me to be funnier. Just that.

The Next Step Blog: Lori, Lori, Lori… it's inspiring I don't wet my pants every time I read her stuff. Just go see.

Molly Field Grass Oil : I found Molly on a day I thought was never gonna end and I was going insane. It was her post that talked me down and made me see that I'm not alone in my crazed pre menopausal psychoness (it's a word ok)

Cranky Mom of Two: funny, makes me laugh but I'm mostly inspired by her journey with her son's illness and she's a cancer survivor so BOOM!

Snarkfest: This woman is not afraid to tell it like it is. She also makes up songs when her kids make or miss the bus on facebook… Funny.

Diapers Or Wine: Sue Diamond Phillips (not her real name… bummer right) Just talks like you're having coffee with her pouring our your soul to each other. Love her for that.

Buried with Children: This chick, I professed my undying love and promised to tell her she's funny and I love her every day on twitter. I fail but I sometimes remember.

FiveDownUnder: I found this awesome blog only last week. I must have spend an

hour on it. It was so interesting to see someone doing exactly what I'm doing but in reverse. An American in Australia.

Selfish Mom: A super big blogger who's probably rolling her eyes for getting this but she inspired me by allowing me to stalk her and helped where she could when I was just learning. Thank you Amy.

That's only 11 but that's plenty of reading for you guys anyway, and I'm all inspired out …

Is it a Fish or a Snow Storm?…#NEMO

February 9, 2013



The internet is funny.

It's winter and we've been waiting for this storm since the beginning of the season. So far this year we've hardly had any snow. Just a few coatings. Nothing worth sledding on and we're itching to get out to sled. School won't closed because it's New York City and they're really good at getting the roads cleared and keeping the transportation going.

We will be fine, we always are. The power never goes out so we don't need to plan for that. I will get some supplies in for the duration, just so we don't need to go outside.

I'm not worried that The King is in California. I know we'll be safe.



This is what it looked like when I went out for supplies this morning.

Heres the list of things I got this morning.

beer, chocolate, hotwings, pizza, water, mac and cheese

Hey wait, this looks like a super bowl list.

Did I miss anything?

I'm cooking up a storm… ha no pun intended, because if we do lose power at least we'll have food. Turkey chili and butternut squash soup.



12 hours later-8pm

The morning after…

Here's how we faired. No loss of power. No damage anywhere. Now to can go play and make a snow man ☺



Nemo has gone but look what he left



Looking out on the white



I see shoveling in someone's future

How did you fair in the storm? Do you love or hate the snow?

And So We Spent the Afternoon in the ER

February 11, 2013

WARNING: If you get queasy or squeamish at the site of injuries, don't look. There are pictures of the wound

My little Miss Gremlin is a mover, she can't sit still, she's a wriggler and a wiggler and a leg shaker. She gets this from her father. Sitting on the couch with her drives me nuts. I can't deal with the jiggling and shaking but she tries to sit still so she can sit next to me. Sweet right?

With this habit comes the energy of a rabbit on crack, she's a boisterous child. It's just the way she is.

Usually this isn't a big problem but when she decides to push her arms up between two desks and swing her legs in the library, shit goes wrong! She told me she's done this a million times but this time, somehow she lost her balance and fell, face planting into the floor. According to the teacher, she cried alot-there was quite a bit of blood.

Luckily I was at the school for half day pick up and immediately on the scene. Upon seeing her in the nurses office I could see it was pretty serious but I wanted to get out of there. I got her straight home where I could assess properly. Upon closer inspection it was clear we needed to go to the ER.



A hole to be sure

We took a cab to the hospital, cos I'm fancy like that and luckily we got in pretty quickly, she was seen and assessed. It was deemed stitches would be required… I felt pleased I'd made the right call. They put on some numbing cream and sent us off to xray to check her jaw wasn't seriously damaged.



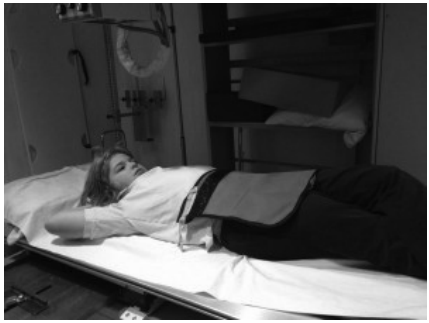
Numbing cream, it's good for the soul too

Now in our 7 years living here in this fine country, this is only my second trip to the ER. I'm not fond of them, they're usually filled with the scary side of humanity. I don't understand why this is but it's true in both countries that I've resided. People go to the ER for the strangest reasons, the day we were there, there was a toddler who it was suspected had swallowed a penny, a lady had broken her toe kicking her baby daddy's car, and a young mom couldn't make her baby poop. And they were only the people we saw waiting for xray!

Miss Gremlin was very friendly by this time, she had lignocaine on her chin and a

big plastic bandage holding it all together. Kids are so innocent. I just wanted to get the hell outta scary dodge, she's chatting with the broken toe lady with no teeth!

After what seemed like forever but was only an hour we were whisked upstairs to a different xray dept and we were seen straight away. I guess they felt my pain. ☺



Cover up there's radiation around.

Xray was quick, she was so good, staying in the positions the radiologist put her. During this I had to explain why she had a lead apron, why we left her and hid behind the wall and what xray does. I'm a realist and honest and I'm not afraid to explain to my kids what's happening. I always feel it's better to be armed with the truth of a situation and know what's going on. There's less chance for panic that way. They're people, regardless of their age, they deserve to know and be treated with respect.

After our happy snaps we were escorted back down to paediatric ER, just as the friendly doctor was looking for us. Miss Gremlin said" You're totally blogging this aren't you mum" SHe knows me well.

He took us into a treatment room and asked Miss Gremlin to change into a gown, just in case he got blood on her. You can see her face has been bleeding alot by this stage by the pooling of the plastic wrap.



Not a Ball gown

We had plenty of time just hanging out that afternoon and we were getting to the business end of our trip. She was so good, so patient. I didn't want her getting anxious for what comes next so I decided to tell her what the doctor would do and showed her a scar above my eyebrow where I had stitches many years before.



This is the hole after it stopped bleeding.

Our friendly Dr came back and it was down to business. Needles and stitches…



This is not a pretty site

I've mentioned before I'm not a panicker, and I can handle plenty of gross stuff but there's something about seeing the meat and fat inside your child's chin that started to upset me. As I was watching and clicking (because everything is blogworthy) I felt an unfamiliar feeling, that feeling of warmth and queasiness, unsure if you wanna pass out or vomit. The Doctor looked at me just as I started to lean against the wall. The common question passed through his lips 'Are you ok?' I was ok. I had to be ok, my baby needed me but I wasn't. I wisely decided to sit and hold her hand and take a few deep breaths.

The Doc kept on with his job, the needle going in a little here and in a little there, dispensing it's analgesics so everything was suitably numb.

She was so brave, I'm so very proud. That shit hurts. I remember it well.

All the while we chatted, the Doctor, Miss Gremlin and I. He nearly went to Australia, he was dating an Aussie girl but she turned into a rabbit cooker and they were history. I told him he should still go. It's amazing how many people you come across with a connection to Australia.

The numbing needles done, it was time for the stitching. I watched, feeling better that the hole in her face was closing back together.



Surgical stitches are clever things



Getting closed up

In the end the hole needed 4 stitches.



4 stitches to close the wound

There's nothing fun about getting injured, it hurts. But I'm confident she'll heal well and there won't be a terrible scar.

After she was all sewn up, a band-aid was placed over the stitches. Then it was sign out time.

We were there fore 3 1/2 hours but for the last hour we were both starving as I hadn't eaten yet that day and she fell just before her lunch. While waiting to be discharged we discussed our food options. We decided the food van around the corner was the best and fastest place and she ordered 3 hotdogs with ketchup and mustard. We laughed a bit when she couldn't open her mouth to get the hot dog in. She eventually worked it out and felt much better. We strolled back home through the park to rest at home after our ordeal.

I'm very proud of my baby, she was very brave, patient and handled herself extremely well. She said to me later on that night, 'I sure won't do what caused this again mum.'

And I'm confident she won't.

The Week We Fended for Ourselves. Let's Not Do That Again

February 12, 2013

Things have ramped up in the business and now The King has to travel a bit. That's fine. I'm used to it, He used to travel all the time. I have been spoilt over the last few years though as he hasn't been away for a while.

Wednesday he had to fly out to LA for a week. He had meetings booked back to back and then he was going to stay in a Malibu beach house. He asked to join him. I decided not to because of the kids commitments. As it turned out THAT decision was super lucky.

The morning of the flight began like any other morning, the rush and hurry of kids getting ready for school, Miss Gremlin left, feeling proud that she was nominated as Student of the Month and she would be presented at the ceremony Thursday. She was scheduled to have a half day. The boy child, Grand Master D, got out the door relatively on time, feeling poorly but he went anyway.

9am: The King left for the airport, everything he needed packed neatly in a small bag and briefcase. I took the dog for a walk and got into the morning with my second coffee.

10am: I get a txt from Grand Master D requesting I bring him lunch as I was coming to the school anyway and school lunch sucks. We had a little banter about me being his slave ☺ but I agreed. I showered and got ready.

10:45: I left the house, planning to get the boys lunch on the way to pick up Miss Gremlin from school. Just as I was about to reach the school I got a txt from the King, his passport wasn't in his bag, the airline had printed the wrong name on his boarding pass and he probably wouldn't make the flight.

He does this to me all the time. It heightens my anxiety levels and there's nothing I can do. He used to call me at 3am to tell me he left his coat on the train with the car keys in it,drunk of course … as if I can do something about it! I was in the cottage 50 miles away with 2 sleeping children and no car. He does it to share the problem, I know. A problem shared is a problem halved and all that shit but all it does is stress me out ☺

Anyway, there's nothing I can do about the missing passport or the misprinted boarding pass. Even if I knew where it was it's a 90 minute ride out to the airport on the train. I suggested he use his license as ID and told him I hope he makes the flight.

I'm still shaking my head at all this, crossing the road to school, when I get the txt from the teacher about Miss Gremlin injuring herself. The King hadn't even left yet and things were turning to shit fast.

By 11:30 we were at the ER.

As luck would have it, all was rectified at the airport and they held the plane for him.

That was just the first few hours of day 1… yep we're totally fucked. Grand master D got his lunch, in case you were wondering.

Thursday was mostly uneventful. Miss Gremlin chose school so she could attend her award ceremony. I drugged her well and walked with her so I could explain to teachers what I didn't want her doing. We met again at 1:30 for the ceremony and I was a super proud Mama of the injured student of the month ☺

Friday, as you know was the beginning of winter storm #Nemo, seriously who names a storm after a fish? Although, I believe they were going for Capt. Nemo of

20,000 leagues? Who knows. Anyway Friday morning came and both kids felt like shit, so I said stay home, we'll cook and watch the storm. I shopped for survival supplies and we enjoyed the quiet day inside. I wasn't really worried about the storm but the way the media whips itself into a frenzy I did feel a little nervous that I was facing it without my protector.

Of course we were fine. We didn't lose power and Saturday morning we woke to 11 inches of snow on the terrace.

Saturday we had a quick sled, just because there was snow but I was worried about Miss Gremlin's face and Grand Master D wasn't feeling the hill with all the people. We played with the dog on the roof and then stayed inside.

Sunday was uneventful because we stayed inside where it was safe. I did enjoy watching Downton Abbey in the living room for a change … so there's that!

Monday went ok. Nobody was injured. I even cleaned without injuring myself or breaking anything.

The King boarded his plane at 1:20am LA time this morning and should be home around lunchtime… I refuse for anything else to happen.

Hopefully the next time he goes away we won't be tested so much because THAT shit sucks!

Hump Day Humour #33
The Snow Edition

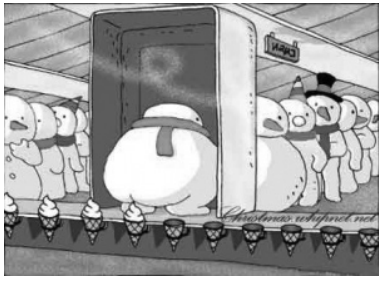
February 13, 2013

Everyone knows what's still happening here regarding the snow in the North East. It's still dominating the News. The city is mostly back to normal but people on Long Island and other areas like Connecticut and Upstate are still digging out. There's another storm on the way but will pass by to the south, sparing upstate and Connecticut however Long Island is under the pump again. Wednesday night will see 1-3 inches and then saturday will bring another storm… details on that one are still developing. So in the spirit of fun and hoping to cheer some folks up I will dedicate this post to all the folks still digging out.



Happy Hump Day





And finally one for the boys ☺



An Example to Live by…
A Real Valentine's Story.

February 14, 2013



Young love

January 27th was my parents' 45th Wedding Anniversary. A lifetime spent together. More than half their lives spent in each others company. This is the second year my mum sits by a graveside…

It's less common now than ever before. Life is different. People marry and divorce for so many reasons. It's not for me to say whether their choices are right or wrong. It's not my road to travel nor my place to judge. It is simply a bi-product of our era.

This is not a story of our era, this is a story of a time gone by, of two people who chose to spend their lives together, build a life and a family and the influence it had on my life and the way I look at love, life and togetherness.

On January 27th 1968… Two people stood at the alter before God and their families and promised to love each other through sickness and in health, he to love honour and cherish and she to love, honour and obey! It was the 60's that's how it was… she had her fingers crossed behind her back ☺ And so they began…

Times were different from today, very different. A routine was set to homemaking, a house was purchased and life as a couple began. I don't know a lot about those days… I wasn't there yet, sure I've heard stories, but I imagine it was two young people from different worlds trying to work out how to live together, which is a difficult task. Ask any married couple about the early years, the arguments about things

done differently and whiskers in the sink and milk left out and snappy mornings. Living as a couple is something you must learn. It doesn't just happen.

As time went on, inevitably there was a pregnancy, which became a child and that child was me. The first born, the child that you make the mistakes on, the one who tests your resolve, who makes you wonder what the fuck you've done? How do you make it stop crying? That first child who changes you from a couple to a family. The one to whom you pin your hopes and dreams of the future and vow to give that child everything you didn't have… in every way.

There are many stories of me and what an easy child I was and how beautiful I was and how wonderful it all was… I'm calling bullshit!

Times were tough, Dad worked 2 jobs, mum was home alone with a baby all day, up with a baby at night. It was those times. There must have been strain, there must have been frustration and fights but they loved each other.



And then there were two-1971

By 1971, with the arrival of my brother, we were a family complete. A young couple with two children, a mortgage and a family business. An extended family business. With brothers and Parents and wives involved… The business had been successful for a long time. They had a fleet of ice cream trucks, the mister whippie kind…but staff are arseholes, they steal from you, they're unreliable, machinery breaks down…and by the end of '72 the business was done. My parents decided to make a break for it. Get away from the city, away from family too I guess, for a while. Time for a clean start.

Always the planner, my dad wrote letters to towns around the country, asking about facilities, employment and lifestyle. He went on reconnaissance trips, scouting ahead, looking for the perfect place to take his young family. A decision was made about a progressive area with great opportunities in housing and employment and so they set off on their new adventure.

Back in 1972, the trip from Sydney to Albury was 8 hours, long and hard in a car with no air con on a single lane highway which was the major road between state capitals Sydney and Melbourne. It was hard but I don't remember it, I was 4 and my 16mth old brother stopped talking… he clammed up. The story goes that a couple months after the move he started to talk again… Of course at that age he was just learning so the stress of the long trip must have been too much.

Here's where my life has followed theirs almost identically… We moved across the world when our kids were 4 and 16mth. It was the hardest thing we'd ever done. Away from family and support and everything we knew.

Things have a way of working out and I can see back into that time as an adult and know what they went through, all the adjustments, making friends, finding work and a home and setting up life. I know the stress it placed on our marriage and I can only imagine their stresses were the same.



We built a house-1974

They got to building a house and then the market crashed, they sold that and moved out of town to a small farmlet. My dad always wanted to be on the land anyway. A country boy at heart. They took a loss. Financial pressure can hurt a marriage…but still they soldiered on.

I remember those years fondly but I heard the stories too, how the pressure was all to much and one night when chopping wood for the fire in the dark, freezing cold in the rain, because Dad worked full time, a stick flew up and smacked him in the face… he sat down and cried. Kids don't know those pressures, and they shouldn't. My parents restored that old house and poured money into making it a home. They both worked. We were at school so mum went back to work.

In 1978, just after their 10th anniversary, the house burnt down, everything was gone. We had to start again. That was a pretty stressful time, I remember it well, losing everything is rough.



1979

In 1980 we moved to the new place where Mum still is today. Farm life was great, we learned about life and death and nature. I long for that for my kids but that's another post…

My parent poured their souls into that place on the hill. We all did. Up early before work, then outside until after dark. All weekend, every weekend. They fenced and built sheds and planted trees and shrubs. They worked the stock and made good money. We kids had it pretty good up there on that hill. The first year I got a horse and my brother got a motorbike.



His and Hers log chairs-1984

They went through the normal life struggles, being short of money, raising teens, disappointments. Losing parents, and then the empty nest…



All grown up 1992

In the early 90's, around their 20th anniversary and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of my Grand parents, my mother's siblings and partners all got together and decided it would be fun to renew their vows. Only one couple couldn't make it. It was a grand celebration of love and commitment and made the local papers. It was also an example to all the children and grandchildren who are part of the family. The longevity of love.



So happy they did it again-1995

Years rolled by and milestones came and went. Retirement, the first grandchild, weddings and big birthdays. Learning to live together after children must be hard. Things change over those years and so many couples struggle to reconnect.



1996



1999

My parents were no different, with the children gone and married with their own lives, it was time to settle into the new normal. They worked the flowers together, sheep farming wasn't making the money anymore. They travelled, experienced the things having a young family often prohibits. They found new hobbies and outlets and grew together as a couple again. They had a great circle of friends of similar age and being in the same community for many years, knew many people and had a fulfilling life. 90% of the family had followed them south a few year after their intial escape, so now in their retirement, they shared the closeness of family again.

They left the country together for the first time in 2007 to come and visit us. A huge undertaking for people of advanced years with not a lot of travel experience. It was a great 3 weeks. They travelled around America too, knowing this would probably be their only trip.

We travelled back in 2008 to surprise Dad for his 70th birthday. That was so awesome, it has always been important to me to be close to family and my children are learning that too. I make a point of taking the kids every year so they know where they come from and get to spend time with their Aussie family. It disrupted their lives to no end when we'd roll in like a tornado but the joy on their faces spending time with the grandkids was worth the chaos.



Pa and his family-2008

After a lifetime of struggle, they were enjoying the fruits of their labours and the love of their family.

In March 2011, I make another sneaky surprise trip, this time on my own, for Mum's 60th. It was such a nice few days. No kid pressure, just a time to spend with my folks. They were so happy, so together…Such an example to me of a good marriage, with it's trials of course because nobody can be perfect or live together for decades without rocky times but they were leading the way.

It's interesting to note that of all my extended family (and there's lots of them) on both my mother and father's sides there has only been two divorces. That's pretty spectacular. Aunts, Uncles and cousins all committing to a life with their partners through whatever struggles they face. It adds up to centuries of marriage!

In the climate where nearly every second marriage ends in divorce, I think what they all have is so very special.

Upon leaving that trip, I knew things wouldn't be like that the next time I came. Sometime being perceptive sucks, for 3 months later I was racing the clock across the world to say my goodbyes.

A life together, a marriage, to death do us part, a partnership of 43 years, over in July 2011.

A widow must go on, every anniversary, birthday, Christmas, Valentine's Day… EVERY DAY, alone, one day at a time, learning to live again without a partner, the love of her life. Sitting graveside instead of side by side.

This Valentine's Day I'm inspired by their love, their commitment to each other and of a love everyone should experience but few people will.

I appreciate what they taught me, how to stay together because they loved each other, despite the hard times, despite the problems, they knew nothing was bigger than their love and they could get through it all.



A life spent together-2008



Flowers they grew together adorned his coffin-2011



Things a Daughter Should know but a Mum Can't Tell

February 15, 2013

We've all had the talk right? Well I hope so, especially if you're getting on in years. Nobody wants surprises like how to get a baby out without preparation…

This is a part of a mother's job, to tell her daughter about the facts of life. Do you remember how your mum told you?



photo credit

Was she embarrassed, did she throw a packet of pads at you and tell you to figure it out? Or was she the kind of mum who explained what would go on and maybe went a little too far? Were you grossed out?

If you're lucky you had a mum who shot straight down the middle, just the right information so you knew what the hell was happening but not so much that you swore never to have children in your whole entire life and nothing would change your mind. I had that mum. But still there's things she left out that might have been good to know.

So as a public service I'm going to list some things we need to know that our mother's probably didn't/won't tell us and that we really should make sure our daughters know …

Giving Birth

Alright, this is the big one… The number one thing mothers should really fess up about. Women tend to not talk about birth until you've done it, then they're all about sharing their birth stories… FUCK THAT! Why didn't you say it was gonna feel like

you were shitting a football? I mean really? You had to go all "It was so beautiful to see you, I forgot about the pain". BULLSHIT! I still remember every damn second and it was a decade ago. And what's with the not sharing about bleeding a fuckton of blood for weeks… weeks. This is information that's useful.

Sex * disclaimer* I've done none of the following. These are all stories I've heard ☺

Ok this one's pretty broad so let's do sub categories.

a) Don't have sex after eating really spicy pizza, especially if you decide to get adventurous… WASH you hands AND lips beforehand because let me tell you, trying to scrub the burnies out of your hoohaa in the hotel room sink doesn't really work!

b) Be careful how weird you get, you might get something stuck or you might get a little too creative with craft supplies. It's best to leave the kinky stuff to the porn movies.

c) Don't get so drunk that you don't know what you're doing. Waking up to having sex isn't pleasant. Your body might have been saying 'yes' but now you're conscious you're like HELL NO! This is how rapes happen. Learn how to drink responsibly. It's important.

d) Sex isn't always fulfilling. Sometimes it's a chore but withholding it will *never* get you what you want. Work on it, be available…

Marriage is Rough, tough and hard work

Experience life before you get married. I'm not saying go whore around but certainly find out who you are before you become a couple with someone. You're never prepared for what marriage will throw at you, no matter what you think. Look beyond the infatuation and see the man for who he is. Is he responsible, hardworking, decent? Does he care about the same things you? If your parents don't approve, look at that honestly, outsiders can often see what you can't. Make sure you're not doing it just because your parents disapprove. Make sure you really know who you're marrying. When the sweat dries you have to live a life with this person. It's easier to cut and run BEFORE you get married or have children. It has to be right for YOU.

Look After Yourself First

This seems like a simple thing right? But we get so caught up in being good wives and mothers and proving ourselves to whomever we feel the need, that we forget to be kind to ourselves first. Women are very guilty of this. Go out with your girlfriends, get pissed, have fun. Don't lose yourself in the dynamic of the family.

The relationship between a mother and daughter can be complicated. Not everyone has a good relationship. Some are beautiful, some are fraught with jealousy and resentment.

As a mother try to remember what it was like to be your daughter's age and accept them no matter what… As a daughter, try to understand how it must be for your mother, the struggles she's going through. Life has a funny way of making things turn full circle. Love and acceptance from both sides will help you through so much better than anger and bitterness.

Stood Up For Lunch… And Not for the First Time.

February 18, 2013

Yesterday was Sunday, my only real sleep in, do nothing day. Being such I really guard my relaxation day. I don't like to share. This week however The King invited some church friends for lunch. They're not what you'd call close friends but more friendly acquaintances. It has been trying to happen for a while he said, this coming from the man who forgets guests are coming until the doorbell rings or brings them home with him on the subway without a heads up. I'm used to it. I get pissy but I manage to work though it quickly and be the gracious hostess. (Even if only in my head sometimes)

It was Sunday, my rest day, which I'm mentioning again because, why not! The laundry pile was up to the light switch again. The floors had that nice fluffy sheen to them. So like a good hostess does, I got up at 7:30 and began the task of getting everything set. The King mentioned 1pm as the luncheon time the night before but he's loose with time, using it as only a suggestion for anything he does. He never even adheres to his own timings. The man would be late to his own funeral. How he catches planes astounds me.

Anyway I had my work cut out. Clean the house, fold the clothes, shop and cook something fabulous. I plowed through the morning before anyone was even up. On my second cup by the time the kids surfaced, my third when the King came looking for breakfast. Which he wisely made himself.

During this time I received a txt form a visiting Aussie girl, a friend of the family, who is working in the US for a year. She was in town and wanted to stop by say Hi. Naturally, the thing to do was invite her for lunch, we were already having guests, one more wouldn't matter. It was set, now there'd be 7 for lunch.

I chose something simple yet yummy in the way of chicken schnitzel, garlic roasted potatoes and steamed broccoli. Quickly, I crumbed the chicken, cut the potatoes and got it all in the oven. With time to spare I vacuumed the floors and put the last of the clothes away.

Our young Aussie friend arrived on time.We chatted, had another coffee and waited for the other guests.

I really turned it on! Sunday lunch, lace tablecloth, napkins…extra panels in the table… the works!

As the food got closer to being ready and the time passed 1 o'clock, I asked the King did he think they'd be long? This is where he confessed they didn't make a fast time, he just assumed 1pm to be a good lunch time and that church finished at 12:30 so it made sense. (Insert eye roll here) Ok then, so we waited, the food in the warmer and the table all set. Then it was 2pm and we were all getting hungry, it was then I remembered I didn't have breakfast so I was really hungry. We waited a little longer and looked for their phone number to check what was happening. By 2:30 we decided to go ahead and eat, there was plenty of food and surely they weren't far away but perhaps something went array.

I felt a little strange eating lunch without our guests but we had one guest and that was going well. I was expecting to get caught and felt embarrassed that we started without them.

But then it happened. Half way through the meal, around 3 o'clock, the King received a txt…

Oops! We just got home… totally forgot.

And that was that! We laughed a little, felt weird a little and tried to wonder what happened. The King went through the conversation they'd had *THE NIGHT BEFORE*. They were coming because he needed the King's some help with something. It was arranged the day before, not a week out where you might forget.

As things go in this house, that's by no means the worst that's ever happened and we're pretty liquid with our plans, there was enough food for all and we had a lovely Sunday lunch albeit 2 guests short. We got extra cinnamon rolls each so that was a bonus.

It's not the first time we've been stood up and it really didn't matter, the food was good the house was clean and we walked in the park after lunch with the Aussie. Who could ask for a better day and to top it off there's left overs for breakfast. And I love left overs!

Cruise Ship… What Cruise Ship?

February 19, 2013

Do a simple google search for cruise ship incidents and the pages light up like a Christmas tree. They're everywhere. From people being lost overboard to last year's Costa Concordia tragedy and this week's stranded Carnival cruise in the Gulf of Mexico. They happen all the time. These floating buckets of death are proving all too regularly that you should spend you money elsewhere.

The industry has had a resurgence in the last couple of decades. Gone are the days of old folks spending their sunset years cruising on the high seas. Now they are party boats for the young affluent set. Bachelor parties, girls trips away. 18-25 cruises. It seems that the idea of a cruise is to get on a boat, check your morals at the door and party like you 've never partied before. The stories that come back are mind boggling.



The Pacific Sky

Not wanting to miss out, in 2003 we went on a cruise. Not for pleasure but as a part of a National Radio Network Conference. The King and his partner were the conference entertainment. 500 guests of the radio network were treated to a cruise for

loyalty as advertisers and to entice them to spend more. The King has done many of these conferences, sometimes in Bali and this time on a boat… a motherfucking boat!

As a part of the company I was invited to attend and decided why not. Never having been on a cruise before why not take advantage of the free trip. Oh if I'd only known…

We were cruising from Sydney, Australia to Noumea, New Caledonia and the Isle of Pines in the South Pacific. The cruise length was 8 days. My mum came up to look after a very young Grand Master D and we headed off. At this time I had just discovered I was pregnant and the day before the cruise went for a scan to check everything. I was recovering from a miscarriage a few months before and I was obviously panicked about the viability of this one. At 6 weeks you can see a heartbeat, at 5 weeks, not so much and apparently I was in that grey area. Not a good place to be when you're worried about the safety of a pregnancy. I was cleared to cruise but told to take it easy.

So armed with the knowledge that I had no idea if this baby was alive, we boarded a plane for our adventure. I've never cruised. I get car sick, I was pregnant. Oh what a ride we were about to take.

Throughout our lives together we have come to understand that we shouldn't be involved in water. Through a series of mishaps ranging from minor incidents to almost killing someone, our relationship with water has been sketchy at best. Every house we've lived in leaked and we've come to decide we don't love water.

But at the time of the cruise we hadn't solidified this idea and were still open to try.

Cruising is a strange experience indeed. Leaving Sydney Harbour was exhilarating and spectacular, cruising through the Heads and out to sea, a celebration. Once out there, as land began to diminish on the horizon so did my comfort and fear began to seep in slowly to my mind. My sea legs didn't come easily, my equilibrium tainted by the alien residing in my stomach, live status unknown but making sure my body knew it was there.

In my pregnant life, and I've had a bit of experience with this, my body is an ass. Foreign bodies must be expelled from any and all available orifices. At times violently. Pair this with being on a motherfucking boat bobbing up and down in the big blue sea like a cork in a bathtub.

I was miserable. Everything I ate, I threw up, when I didn't eat I wanted to throw up. I couldn't walk without holding on to something and that makes for slow navigation around a cruise ship. For the first few days we had a lowly cabin down below the water line but it became acutely obvious I would not survive the trip and we were graciously placed in a state room up top. The state room was grand BUT it was at the top of the boat, which evidently makes the roll of the sea more violent! I couldn't catch a break but at least I could fully close the bathroom door to vomit instead of hanging out into the cabin below decks.

The ships doctor could do nothing for me. Being pregnant I couldn't take the qwells they offer passengers for seasickness. The smelling thing they gave me made me gag, which in turn made me throw up.

So there I was in a floating hell for 8 days, with no escape not knowing if the thing trying to kill from inside was even alive!



The Isle Of Pines

We stopped for a day at the Isle of Pines. A day on land, spent wandering the small but beautiful island was a relief. It had to end of course, a schedule had to be kept and back to my floating hell we went.

The next day we docked again for an entire day at Noumea, a French ruled pacific Island of poor economic status, whose residents rely on tourism to survive. If you venture deeper into the island beyond the touristy fringes, as of course we did, you will find falling down humpies and locals semi dressed in rags. We spent the day on an adventure. We rented a car and set about seeing the island. Small unsealed windy roads did not help my sickness and the car stopped at regular intervals for my heaving.

We got ourselves lost and were in danger of missing the ship. All passengers were to be back on board at 10pm at the latest. During our day and evening of exploring we got ourselves very deep inland and with half an hour to the ship sailing we were more than half an hour from port. With some swift navigating and mild panic from the girls, we made it, screaming full speed into town, dumping the rental car, muddied and over our allotted miles, we found ourselves literally running for the ship.

Of course we made it. Of course the ship wasn't really sailing until midnight but I imagine by experience, they knew to lie to the passengers, to scare them into being back on their death boat for fear of being left behind in a third world country. It sure worked on us.

While we were lost, just on dusk we came across a little church in the middle of nowhere. There were cars around and the lights were on. Music was coming from within and being Christians we thought we'd have a look. As we got to the door they opened and people started filing out. What we saw freaked us out! There were painted faces and strange looking things that we'd never seen. It felt very wrong, and they didn't like us looking in on them at all. As we turned to head for the car, some of them started to follow us. The feeling of foreboding was thick in the air. In fact we were feeling down right freaked out and couldn't get the car started fast enough. We don't know what they were doing but there's a fair chance there was some sort of sacrificing involved. It certainly coloured the conversation on the way back to the boat.



Noumea Aug03

There is nothing scarier than being lost inland on an island and hearing the ship blow it's warning horn to come home to heighten your senses and cause panic. Especially after narrowly avoiding a sacrificial island ritual. You can't make this stuff up!

The 3 days sail home was mostly uneventful. It's all a bit foggy now but the memory of every ship bathroom is etched in my mind. I was never more pleased to sail back through Sydney Heads , sight land and touch Terra Firma. With a flight later that day, we arrived home that evening, very happy to be there, vowing to never cruise again.

The aftermath of the cruise left me with that sea legs feeling for 3 weeks, making me dizzy and unable to stop the world rocking like the ocean. Whether it was due to the pregnancy or not I'll never know because I will never get on a cruise again to test the theory.

That alien, by the way, made it through and is described in these pages as the lovely Miss Gremlin. :P

*As a footnote to this story, the next week a friend of ours cruised on the same ship and someone fell overboard. Luckily for us there were no incidents like that on our trip.

The Stitches Came Out Today-A Not So Humourous Hump Day Post

February 20, 2013



In lieu of a humour picture or some funny quotes, today I'm going to show you Miss Gremlin getting her stitches out. Less funny, a little more gruesome but still interesting. Can you believe it's been 2 weeks? It's amazing how fast life goes. In case you were under a rock 2 weeks ago here's a link to her accident.

You should be pleased I'm taking her back to the hospital at all!

When the King had his snip, I took his stitches out for him. We're cool like that. ☺

We headed to the hospital at 8:30am so as to avoid the rush… They made us wait. I wore a low cut top and all but all the nurses were chicks today so it may have actually hindered us.

We were clearly not on the urgent list . The only bodies we saw were the cleaner emptying trash and the aide restocking the gown closet. The ER wasn't busy. I guess it was morning tea time.



Mum, seriously, don't blog this!

Eventually a Doctor came by and the stitches were removed.



It feels weird… like tugging my brain



Just a few more snips



Snip, snip, snip



I'm keeping this one on all day!



MUM, stop!



Walking to school in the sunshine

An hour and 40 minutes later her face was all clear.
That's the last of the hospital trips…until next time.
Happy Hump Day.

Who Knew I Had Hoarder Tendencies…

February 21, 2013

I have never thought of myself a a hoarder. Sure I have things from years ago but I still use them, wear them, need them. That's not a problem. I can throw stuff out, I do it all the time. I regularly go through closets and cupboards and clean out clothing and kitchen appliances.

So imagine my shock to find I am hoarding in the medicine cupboard. You all know my perspective on healthcare, for a hospital trip the requirement is bones sticking out, bleeding profusely or death! The kids recite this while rolling their eyes if they hurt themselves. ☺ I'm not the gushy, worrywart parent, of course I check if a child gets hurt but for the most part I can repair it, cure it or nurse the victim back to health. There are exceptions, like our recent ER trip, but they are few and far between, thankfully.

I have a very extensive medicine cupboard. Don't judge me. I have all manner of pain killers, cold remedies and wart remover, remedies for pink eye and UTI's. You

name it, I got it. It all gets used but there's one thing I have an over abundance of … medicine cups.

It's ridiculous. Both the kids have been sick over the weekend, so I have been giving them doses of every kind of cold medicine, coloidal silver and echinacea. I didn't need to wash a medicine cup all weekend. They each had their own set.

I might have a problem:



Yup I have a problem



10 Medicine cups

I blame the drug companies. They're the enablers, selling those little plastics cup strapped to the top of every bottle of Tylenol, Ibuprofen and every other cough/cold medicine on the market.

It's all their fault. I should sue!

I Prefer My Xrays In a Healthcare Facility with a Lead Apron, Thanks

February 22, 2013

Remember the uproar about the new xray scanners at airports that the TSA was slowly rolling out across the country 18 months or so ago? People were crying foul everywhere. The TSA was going too far. It's an invasion of privacy. Of course being a free country, you could opt out but then you had to submit to a junk grope. What a way to fly friends, oh the choices… allow some purvy purvyson in a room above getting to ogle your curves or some slimy slime touching you all over instead. Fuck you, Mister Shoe bomber and Mr Underwear bomber, Fuck you! It's your fault we have to be demoralised before we can enter an aircraft. Shuffling through airport screening holding our pants up like a prisoner and barefoot like a slave.



I've been through it, a few times now but it never gets any nicer. It's such an invasion of privacy. I find it repulsive actually. How do we know those people watching are behaving professionally? Treating us with respect and honour. Well I would bet you anything they don't … You can't tell me they're not joking around, gaffawing like sweaty adolescents over a playboy magazine.

We have to put up with this crap. We have no choice. It sucks.

On a trip to Australia on my own, I fell victim…It never occurred to me that morning when I took a shower, the last one I'd have for 36 hours, that I would be treated like anything other than a lowly traveller being corralled and jostled through the airport. I lined up like all the other sheep, shoes in hand (flipflops of course) yoga pants and hoodie (I'm a seasoned traveller. I wear no belts or shoes… and no jewellery.) Waiting patiently for my turn.

First the purse, then shoes and sweater and lastly the laptop and carry on bag head through the xray screening. Ignoring the huffs from behind because all this stuff needs 3 blue plastic tubs, I got to assume the position… for the first time… feet on the blue marks, look straight ahead, hands on your head.

Ew, that was gross. What can they really see? Anyway, it's over, put the flipflops on, collect the stuff, let'shead to gate. I was making great time… in my head, but then it happened…

'Excuse me Madam, can you step aside please. Is this your bag?' Of course your brain totally goes into overload… what the fuck is in my bag? I took my computer out. The ipad is off. What's wrong?

And they don't tell you anything, those TSA fucks, it's part of their training… Don't tell the passenger, hold them, annoy them, detain them, make them nervous and watch what happens. Standard procedure. Body language is a hard thing to control, reading it is part of their job. If you're smuggling a bomb up your arse you're already fucked so being detained is just making your butt hole twitch cos your plane won't wait.

They inform me they want to put a bag back through, it's a stall tactic but they're in charge. Then they ask me what time my flight is. I ask a few more questions which they evade expertly, now I'm worried. Why are they holding me? The radio contact begins, then they tell me they're waiting for another agent. Holy Moly… What's going on? Waiting for another agent? You can just imagine my panic beginning to rise. At this point I should add this is my first solo trip home… ever. I am totally alone, at the mercy of the TSA. I feel sick all over again, just recalling the story or maybe that's the ice cream I just had before dinner…Hard to tell.

Eventually, after what felt like hours but was really about 15 minutes a female agent turns up and they escort me to the little room. The little ROOM! That's it I'm dead. I'm not gonna make the flight. I can't call the King. I'm so going to jail for some trumped up something. OMG…

Of course I'm internalising all of this while remaining totally calm on the outside cos you just don't piss the TSA off, they are little dicks with BIG powers.

They close me into the opaque glass cubicle off to the side of the screening area.

They explain to me that they saw something and they will now need to proceed to search me. One large woman blocks the exit in case I try to bolt. Like I'm gonna take that 300lbs on… I don't think so. The TSA lady in charge asks me to remove my top and she wants to search my bra. WTF? It's a bra, sure I've used them to store all manner of things over the years. Money, dummies (pacifiers) for the baby, car keys, phones… ok they may have a point. But this day I was carrying nothing but boobage. So she has a good old grope. Nice, not even a drink first, it is almost cocktail hour, it's the least they

can do… All clear naturally because I told them I was only packing boobage. Then they go further and ask all sorts of deeply personal questions. Extremely inappropriate for lunchtime in an airport. But I've had kids, I've been poked before, so I'll play your fucking game. 'I'm sorry ma'am but the xray showed something in your underwear, are you on your period? ' OH MY GOD!

My mind is reeling by this point, how can this be happening? What are they gonna do now? Think woman what do you do ? So I said the first thing that came to mind. 'Um yes'.

I wasn't at all but if I didn't want Mrs 300lbs elbow deep inside me, I was gonna make damn sure it was an undesirable option for them too.

The fact is I was just flying that day, for 20 hours, without a shower and I've had babies and I have weak pelvic muscles and sneezing isn't my friend.

Ok I'll tell you, we're all friends here, I was wearing a pantyliner, an average, common, store bought pantyliner. Can you imagine it? I'm in my bra and yoga pants in the middle of the fucking airport narrowly avoiding a cavity search from Bubba Gump's sister because I have weak pelvic floor muscles. It's abhorrent. Utterly disgusting. They thought I was smuggling something in my bra and panties because I had a padded bra and a pantyliner… You fucking arseholes THAT'S JUST KIDS!

And then it was over, that was it, just like that!

They said 'Thank you Ma'am, you can go.'

I was shocked… what, no cigarette? No explanation, no apology, nothing.

So I did what any normal, just violated woman would do, I put my clothes back on, gathered my wits and my possessions and went to my gate lounge. Horrified, but safe and ready for my flight.

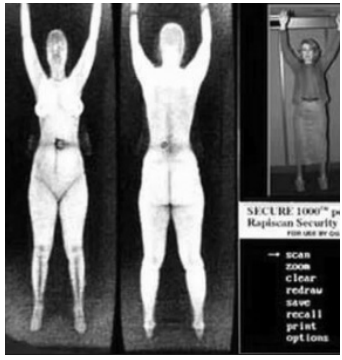
How many women must go through this same embarrassment? Persecuted for saggy boobs and leaky woosas. Unacceptable and very bad form. It must stop.

Last week I heard a news report that all the xray machine were being removed from airports. Finally some sense. The Civil libertarians get a win this time. And it's the right thing. It's too invasive and nobody should be subjected to what I went through. By the time I fly next they'll be gone and we'll be back to metal detectors and pat downs. And I not ashamed to say that works for my padded bra, pantyliner and me.

Happy Air Travel America.



Smile, your pointy bits are showing!



Do you feel safe or violated?

Have you ever had an airport xray experience? Please share, I know I'm not the only one.

No Choice, It's Ingrained…The Path to a Future Defined

February 25, 2013

When you're young, your life is laid out in front of you. You can achieve anything you set your mind to or so you think. Your dreams are of firemen or policemen. The question "What do you want to be when you grow up?' allows for outlandish thoughts and imagination from any child asked.

But what happens when the path is clear, marked out as if pre ordained. That's how it is for Grand Master D, He's going to be a director. Probably an actor too but behind the camera is really where his interest lies.

Ever since he could talk, even before, he was fascinated by movies. He would watch Toy Story, Monsters Inc, Nemo and many other Disney movies over and over! Not unusual you might say, and you'd be right, except he also acted them out.

It was like Halloween everyday…

At the age of 3 he stayed in character as Captain Hook for 3 weeks. Now that's dedication. Speaking in a husky voice only using the types of phrase Captain Hook would use, we started to worry he would damage his throat! "Cast of you mangey dogs" was his go to phrase. Such delivery and self control doesn't exist in many adults but this kid has had it from the first.



Hans Solo



Dash, and yes I used eyeliner as the mask…



Spiderman saving the day



Batman… where's Robin?



The Cat in the Hat



As 'The Crocodile Hunter' Steve Irwin

Writing movie scripts in his spare time, he dodges homework and reading to follow his dream. I wish he could hand them in at school. If they had any idea of his creativity it would go a long way to understanding why he resists jumping through their silly hoops.

He recently signed a deal with a production company who want to help him develop a script and bring it to film. They're offering to fund the trailer, help him raise the funding for the full film, while passing on their expertise. This is a real company, with real clients and they see his potential and want on that train.

Did I mention he's 12? OH yeah, he's 12.

The passion is real, he knows things I have no idea about, and will never know. He talks about directors and ALL their films and how they changed their genres. He knows when films are coming out way before they're even advertised. This kid spends his own money buying screen plays from Amazon to read. Who does that? My boy does.



It's exciting to watch, it really is. He just knows what he wants and is walking towards it every day. What really grates on me now though, is that he has to waste so much time on subjects at school he's never gonna need.

Having a conversation last week with his principal, I realised our high school choice is gonna be rough. I wish there were specialised acting/director high schools :P

But in all seriousness we are going to have to look very carefully and chose wisely to help support him on the path he's obviously headed down.

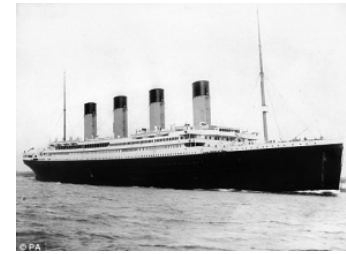
Last night it wasn't even a question whether he could stay up and watch the Oscars. It was Sunday night I know, and this morning was tough to handle but he'll be there one day, I know it. He was totally into it too. He had his choices for all the categories and was keeping track of his wins and losses on his ipad. While we saw it as entertainment, he was watching as part of his future. His passion is profound, while many his age are just starting on a track of thinking for their future, he is half way down his path.

He's chosen a difficult industry, full of crooks and slime balls but there are a few good ones too, he'll find his way through and one day we'll be in that audience watching our son receive an award, maybe more than once.

In the Director's chair editing his latest creation…

Where We Get to Experience the Titanic… You can too but Not Yet.

February 26, 2013



How is it with my fancy life, I've managed to never attend a black tie function. I know, it positively smacks of scandal. I can't believe either. However all that is about to change and what a fancy event to have as my first. None other than a $1000 a plate function on board the USS Intrepid for the project launch of building an exact replica of the Titanic. Billionaire mining magnate, Clive Palmer, a colourful Australian has decided he needs to build the Titanic, exactly as it was and sail it on the exact route her predecessor sailed across the Atlantic from Southampton to New York on that fateful April in 1912 . Nothing can go wrong… right?

Well, we won't find out until 2016 but we will get to spend an evening among New York society. It reeks of a Cinderella story or the downstairs staff coming upstairs in a modern Downton Abbey. Mixing with the elite. I'm positively tingling. With all the preparation emails the organisers have sent, they sure know how to build excitement…

Even though the ship won't sail until 2016 and it's not even built yet, 40,000 people have booked passage on this new Titanic. It's amazing that so many want to experience it. But I guess, stepping into a bygone era and having an experience like sailing on the Titanic would be very cool.

As preparation for this special event, I've had to buy a formal dress, shoes and have my hair done. I feel like a movie star getting ready for the Oscars. The Long car has been booked and we will be travelling the 100 blocks in style.

The evening will include the exact 11 course menu served in the first class dining room of the original Titanic. I have no real clue what else to expect but I'm really looking forward to it. I've heard the Intrepid knows how to put on a function. I am imagining that we will step back into the Titanic tonight… A modern day Leo and Kate. Yeah maybe not but we'll feel like them, well I will…I'm sure the King won't, that's not his thing.

Tomorrow I will be able to tell you all about it.

We heard from our friend, that Clive is here in New York already and the Australian 60 Minutes team have been following him around everywhere, so if the angle is right and we don't end up on the cutting room floor, we could be on 60 Minutes in Australia. I just hope it's not at the end of the Conga line…

Be sure to come back tomorrow to see all the pictures, the dress, the fancy couple and all the other paraphernalia I manage to swipe.

You know I will, but just for you…

Hump Day Humour- The Titanic Edition

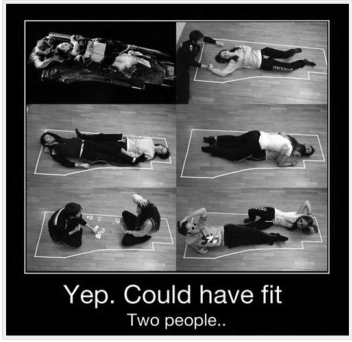
February 27, 2013

This week will be all things Titanic because we attended the launch party of Titanic 2 last night and there's so much to tell you it needs more than one post. While I get my posts together so you may take the journey with me… and it was quite a journey, here are some Titanic themed funnies…

Happy Hump Day



Poor Jack, if only Rose had moved over…

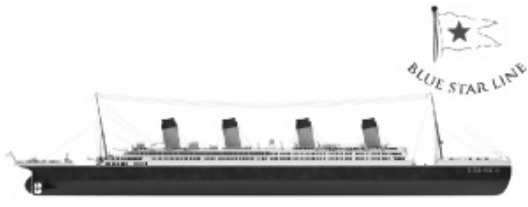


But then they would have got married and had a few kids and then probably hated each other …because mixed class marriages never work, right?!

Back to Titanic II

February 28, 2013

February 26th 2013…



The launch of the project Titanic II was the most well planned event I have ever been to. It was on the Intrepid, floating in the Hudson River on the West side of Manhattan. An excellent place to launch another boat, rescheduled from October due to the devastation of Hurricane Sandy.

We were invited guests on a VIP table. It was a great honour and when that happens you have to get fancy…We both spent some time finding the right attire.



The obligatory picture before the event

Not sure what my malfunction was at the point of capture but I promise I loosened up when the time was right :P

See!



Martini's at The Waldorf… as one does

We arrived to the sound of a four piece band playing classical tunes… I guess they were the ones going down with the ship. I asked the Irish band playing inside which it would be and they agreed it was the guys out front.



Music to sink by…hopefully not this time

A few further steps in we were met by the NYPD marching Bagpipes band…

That sure gets you in the mood, right?! Nothing like bagpipes to get you ready for a drink!

Once inside we began the evening with hors d'oeuvres and drinks for some fancy mingling and seeking out friends we knew. As I mentioned, 60 minutes were following Clive Palmer and presenting a story and we discovered it was in fact Australian 60 minutes, Simon never said and I had just assumed. (It was a thing but I was actually right) um doesn't matter, moving on…

We met and chatted with Ray Martin, Australian Celebrity Journalist and traded phone numbers. He texted these photos this morning and promised to catch up next trip!

He probably will, he's that kind of guy ☺



Ray Martin and I



Living it up with the celebs

All of this excitement and not even inside the function room yet. The atmosphere was electric. So many people dressed in their ball gowns waiting for something special.

Upon entering the area it was quickly apparent it was going to be special, a full orchestra was playing on stage, while ushers showed us to our seats.

The evening began with the standard formalities followed quickly by entertaining acts, one after the other. There were skits about being on a ship, all in period dress, they did the hokey pokey in life preservers but called it the 'Life vest party' and pulled random guests from the crowd and wrapped them in those cumbersome life preservers.



The volunteers

Then the Captain came on and sang… all the while the food kept coming, and coming and coming… but that's for another day.

There were skits of the first class passengers and that of the working class maids, all quite hilarious…



The Captain



Shouting Orders



The Maids

Of course these events are nothing if not fund raisers and the obligatory auction was set. Two large framed blueprint overlays of the original and new design on the Titanic were on offer. They sold for $12,000. The money going to a worthy cause, the Spousal Fund of the NYPD and FDNY, for the families of fallen officers and fire fighters.

Dinner continued, and the wine was like a steady stream…

Clive came on and lead us through his dream and his inspiration for the project

and we were treated to a slideshow of the project, from the shipyards of China to Jack and Rose and that Grand Staircase.



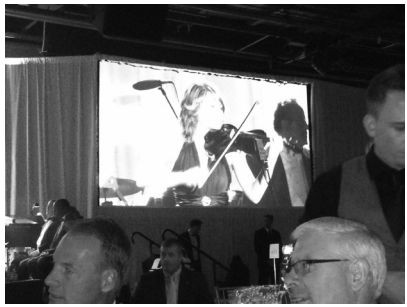
Clive Palmer sharing his passion



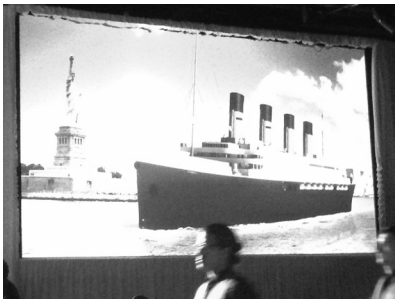
The Titanic



Rose



Our Hearts will Go On



Titanic II



Top of the World

During the 10 minute slideshow, after Clive spoke, a haunting rendition of Our Hearts will Go On was played on the violin.

And then it was sung… A very moving part of the evening.

The Unsinkable Molly Brown's great, great, grand daughter was there, along with other descendants of survivors and those who perished in the North Atlantic on that fateful April night.

After the presentation, the fun really began with great entertainment from Glenn Shorrock, an Australian rock legend and the Bella Electric Strings.

And still the food did come…11 courses takes a very long time!



Bella Electric Strings



More strings



Glenn Shorrock



More Glenn Shorrock

By midnight we were Titaniced out and the evening came to an end, we left on the high of an elegant evening and rode home in style to our not so elegant lives, vowing to do more fun things like this in the future…

And the food… well that's another story…

Abnormal is the New Normal…Right?!

March 1, 2013

My life is nothing if not abnormal. We're not your average family, we don't have average needs and we're certainly not average people. If you've been here before, this is not news. Oh how I wish we were …

The normalcy I crave is nowhere to be found. I suppose it's an odd complaint and people will say 'What are you talking about, I'd kill for your life' and this may be true but isn't it human nature to want what you don't have?

So call me human, it's been said before :P

I am the wife of a serial entrepreneur, so much so that I don't even know what he does because it's so fluid, I don't think he really knows either. Sure he knows what projects he's working on and the direction we're headed but that can change in an instant and often does.

Here's today's example…

I left this morning at 8:30 to do the last Pre-k School tour, it's that time of year for parents to find schools, the King was up today but he's not always.It's a trade off, late nights=late mornings.

Upon walking back in at 11am, the King is in the kitchen cooking,

me: hey is this breakfast or lunch?

King: breakfast, I've been busy…

me: OK

King: I have to go to Spain

me: when?

King: immediately… I think.

me: oh ok.

Does this seem normal to you? No? …See, it does to me… and that's what makes us so *NOT* normal. No questions, no long discussion, just the sharing of information and acceptance.

So I guess I'm playing single mum next week ☺

Safar, So Good

March 2, 2013



As all regular readers know, my life is anything but mundane. In fact not at all normal and sometimes not even believable.

Living with the King is a never ending, anxiety invoking, edge of your seat thrill ride that is usually (but not always) all that thrilling from my perspective.

Being woken up at 4 am by a 300 pound, partially intoxicated (or what he likes to call residual happiness) 7 year old jumping on the bed, saying we just bought a bank may be exciting to some but when you have lived through some of these adventures, you get to be a little more wary than your first walk down "pathologically optimistic" entrepreneur's lane.

Now I must admit that the last 4 years have seen the King diligently working on the launch of a real estate search technology that monetizes media traffic (whatever that means).

He has finally got the last stage funded and is rolling it out, so he is by no means a scatterbrain jumping from project to project but let me assure you there has also been plenty of other activity during those years while building the infrastructure and raising capital.

One of those, of course, has been the development of a global coffee franchise empire designed by a South African entrepreneur named Wilhelm Liebenberg.

Wilhelm and the King met at the Core club over a year ago where Wilhelm had launched a pop-up version of the new coffee brand and couture patisserie named Coco Safar. Since that time the King has been actively raising capital for the brand and has now informed me that we own a reasonable percentage of an international third wave coffee brand. That's what they call it, third wave. Starbucks, I assume, was second wave but then people realized that for virtually the same amount of money they could have a much higher level of quality and generally a better experience.

The first flagship storefront is set to open in Manhattan in the coming months and then William Liebenberg and the King, along with an entire entourage, are scouting locations all over the city including Harlem because the King has declared he would like a Coco Safar within walking distance. The brand and the store finishes are amazing as you can see from these images.

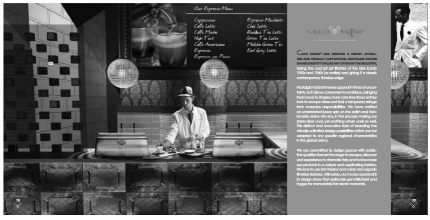


















Wilhelm and his wife Caroline speak passionately about the brand which they have spent years perfecting. They compare it to the highest end luxury brands, calling it the Hermиs of coffee and patisserie.

I must say it is extremely impressive and we now have Coco Safar coffee beans at home and of course the precise espresso machine that Wilhelm fanatically recommended. I am still not sure if it was a good thing they met but here we go on yet another adventure.

I do recall the King talking about launching a coffee chain in Australia, when he wrote his book in 2003 entitled 'How To Steal From Banks'.

Then we moved to America and he got too distracted, thank God.

But alas espresso was in our stars regardless and now there is talk of thousands of these things popping up all over China, Israel, Dubai in fact all over the middle east and the rest of the world.



So when people ask what it is the King actually does, I now answer "well he's kind of a digital media, real estate, technology, author, artist, coffee baron but that could change at any moment'.

I think in future I shall just say savant and add the word idiot in front of it, depending on how he's behaving.

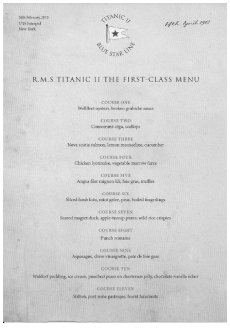
From here on in, "let's catch up for coffee" could mean anything from the corner to the other side of the planet.

I am thinking I am going to need a vacation pretty soon but I just can't think where to send him.

Back to Titanic-The Food Edition

March 4, 2013

The post earlier this week was all about the function, today is all about the food. When you go to an event that serves an 11 course meal it's worth talking about.

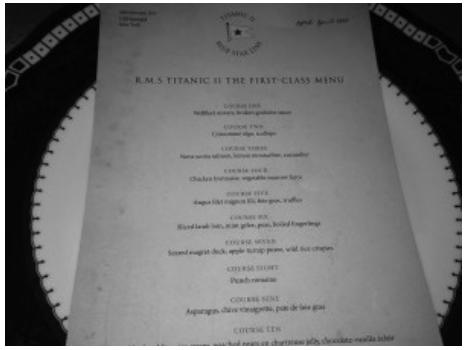

R.M.S TITANIC II THE FIRST-CLASS MENU

This meal was exquisite and it just kept coming with the precision of synchronised swimmers. There must have been 200 hundred waiters in black pants and grey vests. It was like a floor show in itself.

The evening's menu was beautiful, inspired by the original 1st class menu.

When we got to our table, it was quite striking! It was a table of glass, there were glasses everywhere. With 11 courses to serve there was quite a selection of wine.

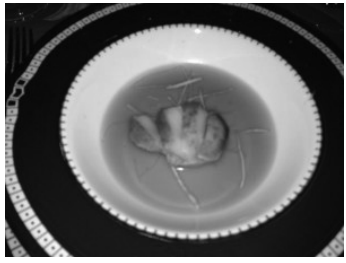




The china was beautiful and a replica from the original Titanic china.



Our courses came swiftly and regularly.



There was beef and salmon and lamb and duck…



We had oysters and scallops and soup…



At the end they brought us poached pears, profiteroles and cheese.

There was so much food that came continuously. The waiters looked like the broomsticks from the Sorcerer's Apprentice, moving simultaneously and constantly…

There were a couple of courses we didn't capture, I forgot ok…but they were just as exquisite.

The wines complimented all dishes and every glass on the table was used, they served several white wines and reds, then port and coffee to finish off the meal…

The waiters were excellent at keeping up with the wine consumption, usually when we're out I order every wine, even if I'm not going to drink it, just so the King will have enough wine until the waiters come back. This has always been a thing…but these guys were so on the ball I didn't relinquish my glass once.

We totally felt so fancy … the portions were small but there were many, so we thought it should be enough to satisfy our hunger.

There were 11 courses after all.

It wasn't.

Where's the midnight slice?

He's Getting a Pirate Patch…

March 5, 2013

For all you folks who've heard about Sir Lickalot, this news will come as no surprise, well surprise perhaps but it will totally help you make more sense of some of his quirks.

We're going away this week, last minute naturally, and needed to put him in a kennel while we were gone. It is for longer than a few days and having someone drop in and feed him wasn't really good enough for his needs. So because of this, he

needed to be updated on his vaccinations, yeah I've been bad, we were broke ok, and food was more important than Sir Lickalot contracting rabies from some fucked up squirrel in the park, which I felt pretty sure I could kick away with my foot.

But now to get a kennel place one must spend money and get his rabies and distemper and kennel cough shots…My vet, bless their hearts (which really means fuck them cos they wouldn't fit me in) couldn't help me and as we're going in a couple of days I needed to find someone else.

This lead to several phone calls and an appointment within the hour…great!

You know we fly by the seat of our pants here at AML headquarters so Friday afternoon is the perfect time to need an immediate vet visit. Whatever…the vet was a 40 block walk, no problem he hadn't had his walk for the day so Miss Gremlin and I set off.

We arrived in time but due to unforeseen circumstances we spent over an hour waiting. I was treated with a beer for my trouble… You know Friday drinkies.

When he finally got in to see the vet, I explained all his issues, which as we know are quite extensive. Then the vet did his own examination.

He's been to at least 2 vets that I know of. Maybe more but this vet is the first person to ever say he's blind.

What a shock, I was flabbergasted!

How can you own a dog for 5 years and not know he's blind in his left eye.Um? I always thought the normal one was a sleepy eye. It never occurred to me it could be the other way around. His left eye is almost twice the size it should be.

Apparently he has glaucoma too… what the FUCK…as if he doesn't have enough issues without having to munch on some 'special' doggie cookies for that disease.

The pressure on that eyeball is twice what it should be and the vet said he wanted to shrink the eye. That procedure would require a needle into his eye to basically pop it. We're not sure we wanna do that, we don't really know if it bothers him. And how will he look poor darlin', so we're going to think on it and decide.

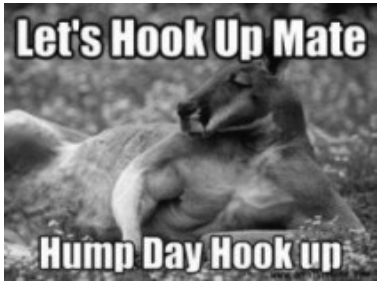
There is a silver lining, because when you're faced with these decisions you need that right?!

He will get the wear an eye patch. Like a pirate! And we totally want a badass pirate patch wearing brain damaged dog. Even if we don't get the procedure done.

Are you jealous? You should be.



Does this eye patch make me Badass?



Hola…

March 6, 2013

After our conversation friday afternoon, where the King was headed to Spain, we decided to all go. I felt so naughty pulling the kids out of school. The last time I did it to go home to Oz when Grand Master D was 6, it was such an issue that I've never done it again. Only traveling in the summer break which isn't ideal for an Aussie break. But this time, after losing our winter break days due to ridiculous bureaucrats I was totally ready for a break. Fuck it, a trip to Spain is a totally better learning experience than sitting in any classroom.

We're going for a week, Monday to Monday.

And as I write this from the plane already we've had incident. Feel free to roll your eyes because you totally know whats coming……

I suffer from travel anxiety. To the point of feeling sick and not wanting to eat for the whole day of travel. I'm a basket case, yep it's true. You can just imagine how this plays with the King… Mr. Empathy. He just laughs at me and can't understand what the fuss is about, but then again he just barrels through life knocking everything out of his way.

Anyway, we managed to get through security unscathed and because I had the kids, I didn't have to flash my bits to the purvies in the room upstairs via the X-ray. I got to go through the good old fashioned metal detector, panty liner and padded bra in tact.

Then it was time to eat but naturally the airport wants you to go through duty free and so we spent time looking and purchasing a gift for our hosts in Spain.

The kids were starving, as was I but we only had about 40 minutes to boarding. So of course we sat in a nice restaurant /bar and began to decide what we wanted.

Here's where we have huge travel differences. The King likes to be the last and I mean the very last person on the plane, whereas I like to get on first, get seated without the pressure of all the people and settle in to go. That's when my anxiety subsides. I can fly for hours and hours no trouble, it's the getting to the plane causes the panic.

You have no idea how crazy I get when we travel together and he wants to wait… and I mean wait until even the late people are running for the gate. We've had huge fights over the years because it throws me into serious turmoil.

But it's been a very long time since we've travelled together and he hasn't travelled with the kids since we arrived in the US 7 years ago. He goes on his own, I go with

the kids and a couple of times I've travelled on my own.

You get the picture, Ok, so back to the restaurant, the waiter seats us, gives us menus and leaves, vowing to come back in a couple of minutes…we waited and waited and waited. I said a couple of times I don't think we have time for this but nothing happened. Knowing how long it takes for a burger to come and knowing we had less than an hour to boarding my anxiety took flight like a helium balloon on a summer's day.

And then I said it, the moment it came out I knew… "I think this is a mistake", was all I said, well that was it, he was up and out of his seat and blustering about not going through this and blah blah blah and out of the place he strode. We all followed like meek little lambs, because that's just the easiest way.

Once outside I said, 'I just think we wouldn't have got served', but I was speaking to the wind. With the two kids in tow, one almost fainting from heat and hunger (the airport was so hot!) we found food, ate it and got to the gate in time.

Lord Give Me strength.

Secret Subject Swap-March

March 8, 2013



Welcome to Take One of March's Secret Subject Swaps. This week, 15 brave bloggers picked a secret subject for someone else and were assigned a secret subject to interpret in their own style. Today we are all simultaneously divulging our topics and submitting our posts.

My subject is:

The qualities that make your BFF your BFF.

It was submitted by http://stacysewsandschools.wordpress.com/.

Here goes:

I can't say I have one particular BFF, I'm sure that's breaking some fundamental girl rule and my card may be revoked, but I have several I would call my BFF's. I like the think I have a BFF for every occasion, like coats ☺ but in reality when crunch time comes and I need help, my BFF turns out to be the King!

WTF? Oh I know, I never would have thought that either. I do need my girls to talk about the stuff that men don't wanna hear that's for sure.

I have the girls to go out and have drinkies with and shop with. Then I have the girls who know my secrets and I pour my soul out to. Although I tend not to do that much but they're there if I need them. I think when you're looking for friends, you need to find someone who you like to be around, who gets you and accepts you even with all your quirks. I'm an Aussie and therefore a little crazy, so you have like that or at least be able to cope… Also, I tend to say what I feel so if you can't handle that, then we can't be friends.

I've had some fun nights drinking with Siri, just saying she gets me, aways willing to go the extra mile, how many friends will research where to actually hide the body for you? This is a valuable quality indeed. What does that say? I find the qualities of a device

appealing as a BFF? I could have issues. Anyone out there wanna be my therapy BFF?

Anyway, here are links to all the sites featuring Secret Subject Swap posts today. It's best I stop talking now, lest I drive any remaining friends away ☺

So sit back, grab a cup, and check them all out. They like me, for now. Hope to see you there:

http://www.BakingInATornado.com
http://chewylicious.wordpress.com/
http://smn0409.blogspot.com/
http://dinoheromommy.com/
http://www.justalittlenutty.com/
http://followmehome.shellybean.com
http://stacysewsandschools.wordpress.com/
http://lifeonthesonnyside.blogspot.com/
dates2diapers2.blogspot.com
http://www.tinystepsmommy.com
http://menopausalmother.blogspot.com/
www.amotherlife.com
http://sadderbutwiser.wordpress.com/
http://mybrainonkids.net/
http://hypnoticbard.blogspot.com/

Where My Kid Clears the Plane… and not in a Good Way

March 9, 2013



I think I've mentioned before, Miss Gremlin has sketchy personal hygiene at best. I try, I really do but she's just a grub.

As these things often go we were on the plane, nicely settled in… but then I could smell someone's feet. The stench wasn't too bad but it was starting to waft in our direction. That creepy foul smell that moves slowly but very persistently. I recognised it immediately. I hoped beyond all hope it wasn't any of us, that the stench wasn't emanating from our row. I asked Grand Master D if he had his shoes off and the I asked Miss Gremlin. It was her, I knew it, deep in my heart of hearts,the kind of thing a mother just knows. She had taken her shoes off.

My God this kid can produce smells the likes you've never seen, I mean smelled. I know now I should have, but I didn't even think about making her shower and change her socks before we left home. I guess that's the travel anxiety, I was focused on other things when I should have been worried about the stinky kid ☺ She had been at school all day and had decided to remove her odour eaters unbeknownst to me. Those things are miracle workers I swear! I have no idea how they work but I don't question it. Some things just are… right?!

The picture is blurry because of the **smell**. Even the camera couldn't cope.

There we were stuck in a plane about to take off for 7 hours and this… the smell was beginning to spread. Panic was setting in, what to do? Think woman, think…

And then it came to me, like a sign from the febreeze gods. As soon as we leveled out and the seatbelt signs went off we headed to the bathroom. I made her sit on the toilet while I washed her feet in the sink with soap. I'll let that sink in, so you can get a mental picture, got it? Ok let's continue…She protested naturally. It's quite a difficult task. If any of you have flown with babies you know how hard it is to change your baby in the airplane bathroom. Imagine trying to wash an 8 year olds feet in the sink! Too many legs and not enough room. 8 years olds are big. How do people even have sex in those bathrooms? Oh sorry, I got distracted, my bad.

I think I may have even stretched her a bit. She was upset and embarrassed too but what else could I do? We couldn't sit with that smell for the 7 hour journey.

After the bathroom stretchercise, when we got back to our seat I put her socks in a plastic bag, although I seriously contemplated throwing them away. But remembering that we packed light and I didn't want the same thing to continue to ruin our vacation, I wrapped them up. Crisis averted, no need for the plane to turn back to the airport, and I appeased neighbouring passengers. I am totally related to MacGyver.

I told the King when we got back to our seats… he rolled his eyes and laughed, explaining to me that he was getting the blame and had received 'looks' so he had put his shoes back on.

We managed the remainder of the flight unscathed.

Have you ever had a hygiene issue on a flight? Was it you or someone else?

Madrid by Iphone and the train to Barcelona…

March 11, 2013

We spent a couple of days looking around Madrid while the King did the business. It rained the whole time but we still enjoyed the sites. The kids even tried Spanish McDonald's… verdict? It's the same.



Changing of the Guard



The Kings Palace, as in the real King of Spain ☺



The Oldest Hotel in Madrid



Nuns go in and none come out

This building was home to Juana De Austria, princess of Portugal from 1536, it was transformed into a monastery in 1559. It is still in use today. When nuns take their vows they go into the building to live and never leave it's walls for the rest of their lives.

And then a train ride

After spending 4 days in Madrid sightseeing, eating Tapas and having many siestas, we are now traveling by high speed train to Barcelona. A 3 hour trip through the country side from the middle of Spain to the coast. Our host Angeles dropped us at the train station and it was time to fend for ourselves. We have been learning words and picking things up but Jorge and Angeles were speaking for us on many occasions. Navigating the station and buying tickets for the AVE (Ally Velocidad Espana) in English was quite easy, with the ticket agent speaking English. We headed for food with 30 mins to departure. The waitress didn't speak as much english but we were able to order dos pizza y dos espresso y fanta limon.

Waiting, we realized this was gonna be bad so we got the waitress' attention and asked for it to go and the check. We were signing the receipt, standing up with our bags ready to roll. She brought the pizzas out wrapped in foil in a plastic bag. No cutlery and no napkins.



That's pretty fast for a train

On the trains you have to go through X-ray so we bolted upstairs, got through security and pretty much ran for the train….Within 2 minutes of finding our seats we were off. We have a table seat, which is great, we ate our pizza like cavemen, just ripping it apart.

Every one has something to do. Miss Gremlin is playing games on the iPad, The King and Grand Master D are editing video they shot this morning.

Watching the scenery change from granite cuts, which look like some sort of mining, to crops and back to the granite cut is interest.

The train is beautiful, very modern and clean. We're traveling at 300kmh which is approx 185mph. This same trip by road is between5-7 hours depending on how you drive and how often you stop.

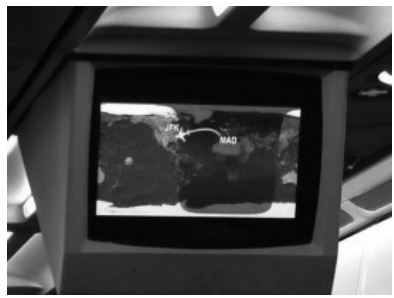
There are movies and music. It's just like a lateral airplane. Can you imagine how nice it would be to travel in America like this? Everything is so clean and new.

Next update from Barcelona…

Viva Espana…
A Perfect Place for an Educational Vacation

March 12, 2013

Our Spanish vacation is over, we're heading home at 500 miles per hour. Racing the darkness, traveling against the rotation of the earth. It's funny that every time you return from anywhere to the USA, you time travel backwards. If only you could get a little younger or a little thinner in the process.



The darkness just kept coming



Leaving Spain and watching the darkness follow us home

It was a wonderful break. The kids really enjoyed themselves and it was fun trying to speak and be understood. Most people in Barcelona spoke English, some better than others but they all wanted to practice and were certainly better at English than we were at Spanish.

I was quite surprised at my actual knowledge of so many words. I guess those hours of Rosetta Stone paid off. Of course the only way to really learn is full immersion, however having someone who speaks English to guide you in the intricacies of the language is beneficial. We all learned the bad words of course. Our hosts in Madrid weren't scared of the odd shit or fuck here and there…actually all the time. Learning the phrase 'Puta madre', loosely translated as 'fucking great' was fun and silly. The kids learned what mierda (shit) meant because when driving it's what you constantly say.

We missed the clock change this weekend, which really isn't a bad thing. Adjustment for us will take a few more days. I guess readjusting to a 5 hour difference compared to a 6 hour difference is negligible at best. I'm hoping we're not back to getting up in the dark. I hate that more than anything, well I hate ironing more but that's another story.

Barcelona was the most wonderful place, with tiny little cobbled streets. Some streets were wide enough for two way traffic but most were one way. There was a really cool thing, where the street was single lane but two way. You came up to the entrance, pushed a button and the steel pole would move down into the road to allow you to pass when the light turned green for you to go. The street somehow knew if it was clear. They were all over. Cars and bikes and pedestrians shared most of the lane way with out incident. The cars drove slowly enough for you to get out of the way and the bikes, well they just weaved their way through.



A Panoramic view of The little streets

All the little alleys and lanes would open out to squares where they would have restaurant and weekend markets. It was alive and bustling well into the late evening hours. It's not a city for early rising. Most stores open around 10am unless its a breakfast

place. We spent 2 sold days walking and discovering the sights. We went places I imagine not may tourists would. We found ourselves right in the middle of the hooker area by mistake one evening and although I was quite concerned, there were several policias around tending to some disturbance, that I felt safe enough to get the fuck out of there by continuing through. Grand Master D noticed where we were around the same time as myself. We both saw her, in her blue sequined dress and her black velvet shoes. She was haggard in her made up appearance, a life on the street will do that. The question was, was she a she or a he or maybe even a he/she… Whatever she was we were glad to be gone and fast. As we travelled down that 100 metres of alley we came across several more ladies of the night, more the worse for wear the further in we walked. We were never more pleased to turn the corner back into the realm of tourist civilization only to stumble upon this gem.



The Happiest Place on Earth?

It was locked up for the night behind a graffiti-ed roller shutter and we have no idea what it was. Could it have been a place to sell the smoking paraphernalia or perhaps seeds? Maybe it was a smoking bar? We don't know the rules on such things in Spain. The kids and I did come across a guy smoking openly out in the street at midday in Madrid. I guess the Spanish are more relaxed about such matters.

We ended up back in La Ramblas where we found a great little place to eat and laughed about our stroll though the seamy side of life… I knew it would be more educational for the kids than a week in the classroom. Who needs fractions and essays when you can have hookers and weed? Miss Gremlin certainly had many questions about hookers and why they would do that and who even buys sex anyway? Ah the innocence of youth ☺ We're such good parents.

I thoroughly recommend this free form 'travel the world experience' for your children… At least once ☺

I was Given Blogging Awards with Love…

March 13, 2013

Recently I had a spate of awards come in and while I truly love them and they validate me and make me think people actually write what I read, wait… that's not right. Read what I write, yes that's better, they come with rules and work and effort. I love all the

beautiful friends who've bestowed them on me and I am humbled and grateful. Sound convincing? No? I was using my bestest convincing voice. I was truly being humble and sweet. For fear of getting in trouble for Miss Gremlin, I'll try to do more betterer this time. Poor cherub gets so upset when I say that. 'Mum there's no such word as more betterer!' I do like to tease her so.



Roshni over at BigAlittlea sang to me… so heartfelt, 'You are my Sunshine'. Well I think she did cos she gave me the Sunshine Award. I must be her sunshine, she can be mine too so it evens out.



Then Sleepybard and Jenn 2.0 ganged up on me and said I was Epically Awesome ! Epically Awesome at what though? I think it's a plot, a conspiracy… I'm pretty epically awesome at forgetting I got these awards. Not so epically awesome now am I ? I think they're both Epically Awesome Awesomeness and you should go meet them.



And finally my lovely Menopausal Mother friend told me I had an inspiring blog. I'm so proud to be inspiring but inspiring what? Illness, inadequacy, jealousy due to my sunshine singing epicness? Oh, I know just for being me and saying stupid shit that people think is funny. Well why not!

So my dear friends, I thank each and every one of you for spreading the blogging herpes which we all love to hate but still secretly ***LOVE*** to receive. (that's the most important part.)

There's a bunch of things I'm supposed to tell you and another bunch of questions I'm supposed to ask and pass it all on but I'm still on Spanish time and it's my siesta now so go do the work yourself. Or if you're also in a lazy mood, here's stuff about me, and then you can go answer these questions about yourselves.

What part of pop culture do you wish would just go away?
What is your favorite salty snack?
What song do you love to dance to?
What was your most embarrassing hair style?
If you could have a drink with someone from history who would it be?
What is the furthest west you have traveled?
What is the funniest thing you have heard a child say?
What vegetable do you hate?
Have you ever been mentioned in the newspaper?
If you could live in any other country for 2 years where would you go?

Or Not ☺ Either way I think you're all Sunshine and Lollypops and rainbows and everything anyway…

But this Epically Awesome, Sunshine, Inspirational Blogger needs her rest. Adios Muchachas!

I'm Not Changing Much, Just Turning Slightly…

March 14, 2013

As with all things fluid, I find my direction changing again ever so slightly. When I started this blog I was hell bent on imparting all the knowledge I had on raising kids. I was always getting compliments on how well behaved our kids were and asked how we did it. The King was encouraging me to write a book. We were gonna call it "We were wrong, Smack 'Em' but writing a full book seemed like too much commitment and so this blog was born less than a year ago. As I went along, I began realising that I didn't really have that voice, sure I had great kids and I knew plenty about breastfeeding and teaching toddlers to behave and not be out of control asssholes. That was always super important to me, probably to a fault. But I was determined that my children would not wreck my home, draw on walls, have tantrums and be the kind of children that anyone would be willing to spend time with.

To that end and for the most part I succeeded. What I missed out on in the process I'll never know because that was my whole focus. They slept through by 3 months, they ate solids by 4 months and were potty trained well before 3. I guess I was strict and I'm sure along the way I made tactical errors and could've bent and flowed a little

more and enjoyed their younger years more. All this to say, I am very proud of my children and they are very well behaved and we still get awesome compliments about them as tweens now and their ability to reach beyond the expected level of their age group.

But the voice of the blog changed in the process , it became more about my struggles and everyday life and depression and how to live in a foreign country and less about advice and all the preachy shit that goes with it, which I was so convinced I needed to spew onto the blogosphere. It's all still there in the beginning and in all honesty, I do have some good ideas, if you care to look.

But now again, I find myself evolving, this time I'm asking for your assistance. I have joined the EXPAT world and seeing as we've lived here for 7 years and certainly have stories to tell, I believe I can weave those stories into the fabric of this blog so that although the voice changes, it also stays the same. SO many things happen to people who move continents that others should be aware of, even if it 's as simple as foods being called different things. Sharing knowledge is what this interweb thing is really for right?

But I can't do it without your help, and so I ask if you could help me gain some traction in this area and give some feed back.

Expat Blogs has me as a new featured blog and I need comments, so I humbly ask you to spare a few minutes and write something awesome about me and my little blog so others may come to know how much fun we have everyday just shooting the breeze about all the things we talk about…here is the link *Just tell them something nice about me.*

And this second link,

All I need are votes. I know, another popularity contest but this is a one and done deal. And who knows, your input might help some poor unsuspecting Aussie some heartache moving to America…

Thanks Guys, I couldn't do any of this without you.

You Know You're Firmly in the Next Stage of Life When Your Baby Turns 9

March 15, 2013



On this day 9 years ago, my little Miss Gremlin came into the world. One would say in the usual way but then again not so much. I was enormous. She was even more enormous! The birth went as most births do but then I stalled and she got a bit stuck. This kid had shoulders the size of a footballer's. Her head came out but those shoulders were just too wide and then to make matters worse the cord was around

her neck, not uncommon but super dangerous. With some careful manoeuvring the midwife managed to get her free.



What are you saying Dad?



Little Miss on day 2



Look how proud that big brother is

In the meantime they knew there was an issue but as is standard procedure they don't tell the parents so they don't panic. But we knew something was up when they wheeled in a full blown infant crash kit and had a paediatrician waiting in the wings. She came out, was placed on my chest and by the time my brain registered she was there, she was gone. She was the colour of an old white sheet, you know that grey colour they get and she wasn't breathing. They whipped her into the apparatus and started working on her. There were 4 people working on her at once, we have it on video. The nurse kept telling the King to turn it off but he didn't. After what seemed like a thousand years but was really about 7 minutes we finally heard a tiny whimper. No lusty cry but a sound, it was so strange to see her colour change from grey to pink. After that, she was fine and went off to get weighed and The King came back to tell me she was 10 lbs, I was shocked! That's a whole lotta baby. No wonder there were difficulties.



You seriously put me in pink didn't you!



Winter Girl



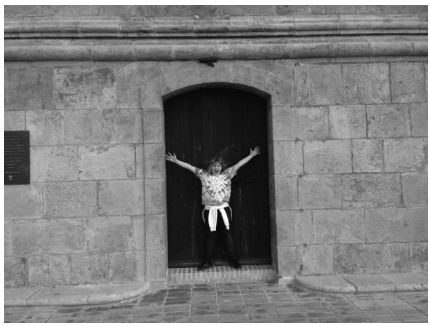
Summer Babe!

As she grew she was a joy but a challenge. A very strong willed child, just like her dad. It's hard to parent a child who is different from you. Grand Master D was a breeze because he was just like me but Miss Gremlin…so not like me and everything I knew I had to relearn in a way that worked for her.

Breaksfast video

We moved here to America before she learned the speak. She's grown up like a little American but still an Aussie too. She's the light of my life and the pep in my step. It's always what's she doing now ☺ She's full of surprises but such a sweet, precious sensitive, beautiful little girl.

I wish for her a wonderful day of fun and happiness but more than that I wish her love and happiness beyond today and always. Happy, Happy Birthday Miss Gremlin, we think you ROCK!



Look how awesome I am



Digging in the Barcelona Sand



beating Up the Butcher



She caught a tree



Cheeky Monkeys…



My beautiful Girl

Just Your Average Saturday on our Planet

March 16, 2013

Saturdays are quiet around here…

Today we just hung out and recovered from the birthday awesomeness.

It wasn't really very different from any other Saturday because we usually do the same thing…

It snowed…








There was monopoly… or dogopoly…



And then someone said…snow AND walk in the same sentence…

Barcelona -Exploring Montijuic

March 18, 2013

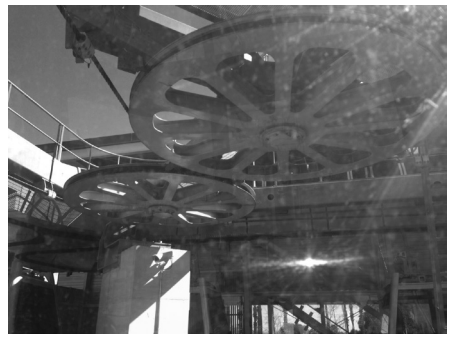


On our second day in Barcelona, we decided to visit Monitjuic. We discovered a cable car on the first day which goes all the way up from the pier but that was too busy and only takes cash. How dumb is that? Why be a tourist attraction that only take cash? Especially when it's almost 100 euros for 4 people. Anyway, when we got back to the hotel on the first night, we worked out another way which was cheaper and discovered the tram up the side of the mountain.

After breakfast on Sunday we walked through the streets for about a mile and found the tram, navigated the ticket system and jumped on. We didn't know this was all the tram did, so when everyone got off we thought it wasn't our stop, then we saw the wall. That tram was not going anywhere else baby! So off we jumped and followed the crowd out. We arrived right at the entrance to another cable car which takes you the rest of the way up to the Castle. This one was much more reasonable in price and so, for 30 Euros the 4 of us were off on our way to see the castle. The weather was beautiful and the day was so clear we could see forever!



Waiting for our very own cable car



The wheels that make it work



Barcelona by Cable car

Once we got to the top we headed in the castle. It's a free attraction. I love these kind of places. I'm an avid history novel reader and so these places help me imagine life back when Kings and Queens roamed the halls.The only thing it lacked was actual people dressed in period costume walking around. That would have been way cool.



Guns at the entrance



A view from the front



The entrance



The stairs to the top deck



The Back Wall above the Garden



The view out



The mediterranean behind them



A building in the Gardens on top of the rear of the castle



The sundlal



The side walls



The Gardens with very Old fruit treees

We spent several hours just wandering around, taking in the views and imagining a bygone era. We slowly worked our way down the Mountain, through picnic gardens, satellite bars and lunch spots. The kids had a great time running through the trees. At the bottom of the mountain we came across the Estadio Olimpic where the 1992 Barcelona Olympics were held.

We continued walking into the city and found the centre and stopped off for a drink and some Tapas at the Arenas de Barcelona which was once the venue of the Bullfights. It has been restored for sporting events and concert, with Restaurants and viewing on the top deck. When we arrived there was a beer festival going on. It was a huge day of walking. We finally arrived home for a rest around 6pm after 12 kms walking from the Montijuic to La Ramblas. We had another spectacular day adventuring.



The Arenas before renovation



The Arenas de Barcelona



Great spot for some beer and tapas

Neuticles for your Cuticle-This is not a Manicure Post

March 19, 2013

When you have a dog, there are many things you need to think about, if you're a responsible owner you get your pet spayed or neutered… right? Of course, there are so many stray animals and the best way to stop unwanted animals is to fix them. It's a simple procedure. However so many people don't want to do this to their dogs, mainly male dogs because they feel that altering the dog will cause distress. Nuh Aah

May I dare put forth that it's men who feel this way and not the dog at all. May I also suggest, the fact that a dog can lick his dick regardless of whether his balls are in tact or not closes the argument.



It's these very inadequacies of the male owner's psyche and the need for all things masculine and ball scratching, and not the dog, that has brought about the invention of Neuticles, prosthetic testicles for the neutered dog or cat…

WHAT THE FUCK PEOPLE!

Seriously? Who in their right mind would do this? What happened? You woke up one morning and said 'Man I wish I didn't take my dogs balls, I'm gonna invent some fake ones for him.'

Because dogs have self esteem issues when they lose parts of their body, according to the website:

Neuticles allows your pet to retain his natural look, self esteem and aids in the trauma associated with altering. With Neuticles®-»It›s like nothing ever *changed"sm*

As Natural As Nature Intended… *The texture and firmness of NeuticlesNatural were crafted based on the firmness of actual animal testicles.*

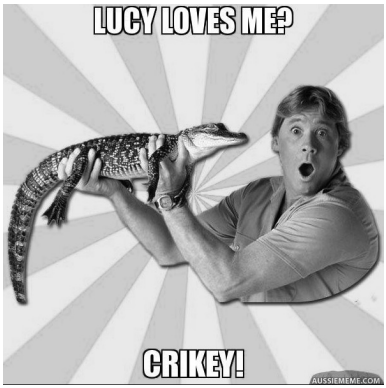
Ok, let's pretend for a second that this is legit and dogs really do miss their dangly bits… Of course we want to be humane to our animals and keep their natural look while being responsible owners. This is important for our best friends right? I can almost see the merit, almost… but then I saw this and I just couldn't anymore.

And for all you weirdos… here's the procedure on video. I didn't even push play… but because it's the internet and we can always learn more, I will offer it to you. I know, I'm thoughtful like that.

The One Where Someone Wants to Interview Me…

March 19, 2013

Did you see? I was interviewed today… everyone loves an Aussie ☺ Head on over to My Life as Lucille and see what it's all about…



20 Things You Might Hear If Your Husband Works from Home.

March 20, 2013



If you're super lucky, your husband works from home and you get to spend some real quality time with him. Here are some things you might hear during a typical day at home in no particular order and sometimes more than once ☺

1. Good Morning My Love, are you making coffee?
2. I have a meeting but I have time for breakfast.
3. How You Doin'?
4. Wanna come up here? I got something for you.
5. Are you watching daytime television? I totally don't anymore.
6. Do you have to vacuum right now? Can't you wait until I leave?

To which I answer , sure when are you going out? He answers Thursday!

7. Wanna see something? (possibly has pants down)
8. Wanna hop in the bedroom for a minute?
9. Are you making lunch?
10. Can I have a coffee, please?

11. Hey why don't you come up here before the kids get home? so while we were waiting for the kids we played a little at foxybingo.com ☺ not kinky at all right?
12. *doorbell rings* 'Oh …is coming for a meeting.' while I'm still sitting on the couch in my pj's ☺ Love that one!
13. It'd be ok if you made me a coffee… I'd like that!
14. So wanna have sex?
15. How about you come have sex with me…
16. Are you going out? I need… (the man hasn't left the apt for days)
17. Are you making food? I'm a bit hungry.
18. Wanna hop in the bath?
19. Well if the kids will be home soon you better get your pants off! This one *really* gets my eye roll going.
20. Can you mail this when you go out?

So as you can see, having a husband at home can be awesome, if you want to have sex 5 times a day, make breakfast and lunch like a short order cook and practice your barista skills!

What more could a girl want?

The Battle of Sex and What is NOT OK…

March 21, 2013



Sex is a powerful thing, it sells, as advertisers have proven time and again.It's all over our world, in movies, in magazines. It's targeted to younger and younger audiences every year. Men and women everywhere are all out for the feel good of sex. Casual sex, paid for sex, married sex, adulterous sex. We all want it right?

But what if you don't? Every one's having it! We all get off all the time. But what if you're not or you don't? Something must be wrong with you right? Because society has been conditioned to think we MUST have sex, think about sex and talk about sex all the time. There's no argument from me that sex is fun. I'm as kinky as the next chicken, wait, what? Um, ok, so I know how to have a good time. My past kinda proves that.

But there's a big white elephant in the room. Behind the closed doors of relationships what's really going on? If you have kids then you know how hard it is to juggle intimacy with sleep and breast feeding, sleep schedules, co sleeping/crying it out, work and so many other pressures. As women we develop headaches to get out of it. Why do we do this? Probably because by the time it comes to sex, you have nothing left. You've spent the day negotiating with a toddler not to put smarties up his nose, your 6 month old refused to sleep at all and wanted to nurse ALL day. You didn't get a shower and you feel like a blob.

So many women need help. The pressure placed on women is unfair. Unrealistic expectations by society, the media and those movie stars who can snap back into shape before their abdominal muscles have even closed over, bitches. For the rest of us we feel like big, fat, smelly failures.

We want it but we need the foreplay first and I'm not talking about the five minutes of groping before penetration. I'm talking about the hours before when he helps and understands you've had a rough day, so he orders in or cooks fried eggs for dinner. He does the dishes or deals with the kids while you have a shower. That's the real foreplay.

What happens to men when they don't get it?

Men are physical, nearly every man I've ever met has trouble getting in touch with their emotions. It's a crippling thing. They think they have to be tough all the time. That letting their guard down and showing emotion is weakness. From day one they've been told boys don't cry. Little girls fall over and they get scooped up and smooched and kissed better, little boys? Well they get told, get up you're ok, you're tough, boys don't cry. As parents we don't even realise we're doing it. So the conditioning starts at the beginning. Then as adults they're expected to forget all that and be soft and sensitive and in touch with the exact emotions they spent a lifetime suppressing! How's that for fucked up!

No wonder books are published about being from different planets. It's tough to relate to what you don't understand. As a general rule, men see sex as the way to show love and affection. It's just how they do it. We as women have to learn to understand that. So then when we reject sex because we're tired, we're rejecting them. Of course we're not but that's what they think. If you get rejected enough then you give up and look elsewhere. It's a fact, a man's mood is connected to his dick. Happy dick, happy man!

But when do we compromise, when do we give it up just to make them happy and when is it abuse or worse yet rape. No should mean no. 'I don't feel like it' should be the end of the discussion but is it? Mostly not. If you have a horny husband, he's gonna try all his tricks to get into the hole. It's what they do. They pester, cajole, and downright harass to get a piece of the furry magnet. They can't help it. They have a physical need. But there's a selfish streak there too. They don't really care if you're too tired or you have a headache, they will pester until they get it. If you finally give in and they get what they want, they're usually snoring within a minute while you lay there wondering how you let it happen, again. If you are forced, physically or emotionally, then it's against your will. If you are hounded and harassed until you relinquish your body for their use, you've been violated. Sometimes you get into it. Sometimes you really did want it but didn't realise, sometimes you're so pissed off ,you use it as a release for your aggression but sometimes you just feel used.

Nobody talks about marital rape. If you said no and still had sex then by definition that's what just happened. Sure you make excuses. It 's not a nice thought at all. Especially with the definition of rape and the thought and feelings is conjures. Being raped by a stranger would be terrible, scary, probably the horrifying thing anyone could go through. I am so very lucky to never have experienced it. The total lack of control and personal violation would be so very hard to get over.

The current case where those two high school football kids have been convicted is a classic example though, of how we treat the victims. Not a single mention by the media of how it ruined her life, how awful it would have been for her, its all about the tragedy of their young lives and how they have ruined their chances… that's fucked! Our society is more concerned about two arsehole kids, who got drunk, saw a girl who was not in a clear state of mind and took advantage of her. It's unforgivable. Women are not objects but we continue to be looked upon as such. Little girls are becoming more sexualised at an early age, advertising gets into the heads of children. The

message we are sending is wrong. Even movies are becoming more violent sexually. It's never ok to force a woman to have sex against her will. Be it a stranger or your wife. How do we teach boys and men to honour this?

How do we fix it?

What are we doing as a society that makes rape something that is tolerated and the victim feels like it was her fault. It's NEVER her fault, even if you think she was asking for it. Nobody asks for that. So many rapes go unreported because the woman knew the attacker or it was a date rape, she may have been drugged or just too drunk. Just because you have a vagina doesn't make it free to whomever so ever may desire it. Date rate, stranger rape or marital rape is a violation of our bodies which we need to fight against from the time a little boy is born. Teach them to respect women all the time. It doesn't matter if we're passed out drunk or walking home for school, work or in our own beds. No means NO, it does not mean keep trying until I say yes, or force me or violate and leave me… or maybe kill me. Why is this horrid act getting more prevalent? Every woman who is raped is someone's mother, daughter , sister or friend. We need to protect every single one.

We need to stand up as a society against sexual assault, tell the world we won't tolerate it under any circumstance. Teach our children both boys and girls about it. Teach young girls to be more careful, so they don't find themselves passed out at a party with the boys all having a turn. Teach boys not to lear at a woman and decide she'll be nice and attack. Even in your own home, in your loving relationship, with the partner you married for better or for worse. If you have a headache all the time then you might need to seek counselling. You can't deny him ALL the time, that's not fair.

Sex is a part of marriage and something to be lovingly shared but it's for both partners to mutually agree on, not for one partner to feel coerced or worse…

A woman has a right to decide EVERY time she wants to have sex. Let's make that happen…somehow, for all our daughter's sakes…

Less Chocolate, More Fun This Easter

March 22, 2013



With Easter almost upon us, the stores are filled with chocolate bunnies, Easter eggs and baskets and all manner of other teeth rotting rubbish. As parents we want to give our children the fun stuff but we also worry with the ever increasing rates of obesity in this country, right?!

That the kids might be getting too much junk. Everything is done to excess here. It's the American way ☺ So what can we do to still give them something fun without going over board on chocolate and candy?

That's where my friend Fern comes to the rescue, she's written an Easter album of fun kids songs. It's something more substantial than some chocolate eggs don't you think?

So while you're shopping for all the children in your lives this Easter, why not pop a cd in their baskets, which they can enjoy the whole year long and remember Easter a little longer than just a day for chocolate eggs and bunnies.

Twitter-Where you get to be a Smart Arse and People Actually Like It.

March 23, 2013

Twitter turned 7 this week. I was late to the party. Oh sure I had an account about 4 years ago but I never did anything with it. I didn't really understand it. A bit like my new nemesis, Pinterest. But over the last year, since I started blogging, twitter has become my friend. It's where my friends are, my other friends ☺ Not my IRL (In Real Life, *well not everyone will know*) friends, although some of those are on there too.

When you do this social media thing for a gig, then you pay attention to who follows you and when someone big follows then it's exciting. I.mean really exciting…

This happened a little while ago:



THIS IS SERIOUS SHIT YO! There's a happy dance involved ok don't judge.

Then this little bugger follower me too. That was a happy, happy day! I was in the hairdresser and he was being a naughty little turd and so I told him off. Next thing…



The Hairdresser didn't understand… Whatevs.

And today I was minding my own twitterbusiness, nah I wasn't, I was being a super smart arse! …It was one of those days, you know when you're on fire and smartarsery just spills out.

I woke the kids up singing and bouncing stuffed toys on their heads. Someone must have put something in my coffee, or I'm over tired… or both.

And this happened!



This chick was one of the top 25 Circle of Moms… #3. That's huge… and she's following me!

I got so excited, did another happy dance (it's a thing) and spouted out some more smartarsery and then she said…



I can give up now and my life would be complete…

So see ya tomorrow then?

Paleo Meatballs and a Secret Way to Feed the Kids Vegetables

March 25, 2013

If your house is anything like my house, you're still finding ways to make sure the kids eat enough vegies. My kids aren't too bad. They don't love them but they'll eat them if I insist. But I'm always looking for ways to trick them. You may think that's bad but why have the fight if you can avoid it. There are plenty of battles you'll fight with your kids, food doesn't have to be one of them *every day*. Kids love meatballs right? Most kids like pasta sauce too, so why not make meatball and pasta sauce for them? Now of course I've put paleo in the title so I'm not going to tell you to feed them pasta but if you do the dish would still work.

So here's the deal. I used turkey this time but you can use beef or veal or mix it. There's no rules with meatballs. I make them with plenty of herbs, garlic powder pepper, spices and eggs. There's plenty of meatball recipes around so just make whatever works for you. This dish is about the hidden vegies.

Line the bottom of a casserole dish with chopped cabbage and cover with grated carrots…



Season with salt and pepper. Place the meatballs on top of the base.



Meanwhile make the pasta sauce. You can do it fresh or you can use bottled sauce. Either would work fine. In fact I used both, spicing up the bottled sauce with some bacon, pepperoni, garlic and onions and a little extra tomato paste and some fire roasted tomatoes.



Once the sauce is cooked pour it over the meatballs and put in a slow oven for about 1 1/2 hours. That way the veges and meatballs will cook through nicely ☺



After it's cooked pull it out of the oven and let in sit for about 15 minutes otherwise it'll be too hot for the kiddies. While it's cooling you can sprinkle some cheese on it to melt in…

You can serve it with some crusty bread, if you're not paleo or with a salad.



Enjoy and remember to smile after every bite the kids take of those vegies on the bottom!

Our Dinner Conversations are Weirder Than Yours…

March 26, 2013



Our Dinner conversations are weird…but it's great to be able to talk about things in an open way with your children, regardless of the subject. The other night we were talking about genetics. I don't now how we started it, I probably did because my family had these same conversations when I was a kid and it seemed normal to me, but then my dad butchered lambs on the kitchen floor while mum bagged them and put them in the freezer, so what do I know?

Anyway we were talking about how you get the traits you get, and how you're half mum and half dad but also quarter all your grandparents, and how both kids, Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D are combinations of both parents, the King and I . How the blood lines become too close and where

defects come from. I was trying to explain that you can breed with animals down to the grand generation before you need to cross breed with a new blood line. They weren't getting it so I changed tact. I said it was like if you two had a kid…I prefaced it of course with, *which is illegal because society frowns upon it*… but the kids stopped listening cos they were all **eww** and **gross** and **MUM!**

The King was just watching me go… He loves to watch me dig myself into holes like this. Then after the 'ick' died down and I said "Well you wouldn't, because it's your sister, but if you were an animal you could… Then as the thought entered my head I said 'But hey you could totally breed with the Princess because she is only half the same as you cos she has dad and her mum!"… WELL that was the end of that! They just lost it and everyone laughed so hard that my genetics lesson was over.

My family just doesn't understand me.

* No siblings had to breed with each other for this post.That would be 1. illegal, 2. weird and 3. icky… I was just making a point in a way they could understand… I may have failed. They are still laughing at me. but it made sense when my dad explained it. ☺

* Don't marry a city boy and raise city kids and expect them to understanding farm stuff.

A Family Who Eats Together, Walks Together.

March 27, 2013

New York is a walking town. If you don't like to walk, seriously don't come here, you'll be miserable. Trust me I know. The first time I came I was 16 weeks pregnant with Miss Gremlin. Grand Master D was 3 and we walked everywhere! I was pissed about it though because I wasn't used to it, I was pregnant, my feet hurt and I was dragging a toddler. Not to mention the fact that the King walks way faster than I do on a normal day, something about leg length and persistence and getting a v12 going.blah blah I don't even know… But what happens is, I end up at least 20 feet behind.



I have no problem with other religions at all but I told him I refuse to walk behind him like a muslim wife. It's bad enough I have to call him the King! (insert eye roll)

Today the kids and I went out. Yesterday it was terrible, rainy and snowy so we stayed in and tved it up! Today they needed some exercise so we decided that a day in Central Park would be lovely. The plan was to catch the train to 72nd st, walk in the park for a bit, kick the footy atround and have a pie from pie face for lunch. We achieved all this and then Grand Master D convinced us to go to Times Square… We all hate times square, except him. This kid seriously loves it. He **always** wants to go there…

So there we ended up… elbow to elbow with all the tourists and Hello Kitty, the Naked cowboy, Batman, the Smurfs and Elmo. It was actually the first time I 've been out with the kids and not been worried, looking everywhere and checking. I just knew they were there, we all know how to cross the road and stick together. We had a nice time. I felt relaxed for a change. I think it was that we walked at my pace… .but I'll never admit that to the King or Grand Master D ☺ .

Then we decided it was a good thing to get some new shoes, these kids are both growing like weeds and needed bigger shoes. We stumbled across a friend who suggested a store up on Broadway, a train ride away, so we jumped on the train and bought the shoes just like that. Some nice converse each.(I shan't bore you with those details)

The weather began to turn so we headed home via the park. After about an hour we realised we weren't gonna make it, the sky was too black, so we caught the train the last 4 stops home. About 20 blocks. As we came out of the subway it started to rain… so we had timed it all perfectly. We all flopped on the couch, too tired to move after about 5 hours out walking aorund.

But then the King suggested we go out to dinner. Fine with me, I was too tired to cook anyway. So we jumped onthe train again and went back down to almost the exact same place we were at lunch time. We dined on the most exqusite meal and decided to get our dessert on the way home. We often do that. Getting a street treat on the walk home. Yep you heard right… the WALK home. This is something we do quite often, walk through the park after dinner. It's a great way for the kids to stretch their legs and run off any sugar or soda consumed and it's nice for us to walk and talk and hold hands while exercising at the same time … Makes drinking that last beer ok.

Now to get a perspective on how long we walked. The restaurant was on 57th. We live on 115th … that's 50 blocks. 20 blocks is a mile. Put that on top of the 40 blocks we walked today and we have totally exercised our arses off. Tonight near the reservoir we saw some raccoons out eating.(I took pictures but they were too dark) In almost the same place we saw Larry David this afternoon! This city never ceases to amaze me. But that's enough walking for one day. Tomorrow they can go to the movies and I will stay home ☺



Was This SO Bad, Are We Too Paranoid?

March 28, 2013

This article popped up on the radar this week and I thought it worthy of discussion. A New Zealand mother left her baby in the car while she went into the supermarket. He looked happy and cozy in the picture and had a note with a phone number. Some passers by we're not impressed, called her and the police. She was not charged. I'm not condoning this but it's worthy of discussion.



Once this was common practice. If only for a moment while you ducked into the store. Why is it so scandalous to leave a sleeping child in a car if it's not too hot, for a few minutes. We all know how much crap you have to carry around with a baby. Sometimes we all just want to duck in the store. Who are we to judge? We don't know her story, maybe that child had colic and had been up screaming all night and this was the first time he slept and the mother knew that if she took him out of his carseat he'd be awake and screaming again. Maybe she needed something desperately from the supermarket.

I remember as kids we ALWAYS sat in the car while my parents went to bank meetings or ran into the supermarket or whatever. It wasn't a big deal. In some cultures it's still not. This New Zealand mother obviously thought it was ok to leave her child safely strapped in the car, on what was obviously a rainy and miserable day. She was supposedly gone for only moments. Is it wrong?

For a while in Australia there was a controversy, the Japanese tourists used to park in the casino carpark and leave their children sleeping while they went gambling, it was happening so often that the casino had to put up signs in the carparks not to leave children unattended when entering the casino. So are the Japanese a selfish culture? Were they all so addicted to gambling they were prepared to leave their kids all night in the car? I have no idea. I have never lived in Japan or study their ways with children but so many of them did it that it must have been a cultural thing.

When we still lived in Australia, I was guilty of leaving Grand Master D in the car a few times but it was outside the bank, the car was always parked right at the door and I could see him the whole time! He was asleep and I was going to be 2 minutes, less. Does that make it wrong? I never left him where I couldn't see.

Later, when we first arrived in the US, my kids were 5 and 17 mths. We obviously didn't know anyone we could leave the kids with and we needed to do so many things regarding licenses and immigration paperwork. The kids had to stand around with us for hours on end. On one occasion after we'd been at the DMV for several hours, we were nearly done, they were totally done. You try going and standing in line with little kids for 3 hours. The public service really needs to look at it's efficiency. We knew we were going to be done soon. I was actually done because they wouldn't give me my license that day, I didn't have the right paperwork to make 100 points! Oh my, that was so annoying but a story for another day, so the kids and I went out to the car, we

had dvd players hooked to the seats and they were happier in the car. I sat out there with them for about 45 minutes and finally I needed to see how much longer the King was gonna be. So I asked them if they were happy to stay there while I checked on daddy for 1 minute and they were both quite happy to stay in the warm car with a movie and snacks. I got out, walked 50 feet into the building and was literally in there 1 minute, asked him how long and came straight back out to the kids. Upon my return I was abused by a strange man, telling me he was going to call the police and have me arrested. I was stunned! What the hell did I do so wrong? I knew I was gone for 1 minute, the kids prefered to stay in the car, it was locked, they were safe. No one was distressed. It upset me. I clearly didn't understand that America is different. My children weren't in any danger, this stranger had no idea I was gone for such a short amount of time. Who was he to abuse me? But I learned a valuable lesson that day.

I totally understand that we need to protect children, that there are people out there who to do harm to their own children and others, which is disgusting but in this particular case I don't believe this poor woman endangered her child. I know she'll never do it again as I never did it again. Not because she thinks it's wrong but because society deems it wrong.

What do you think? Have you ever left your children? Is she wrong, was I wrong? I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Why Isn't the Entree at the Beginning? And Other Culinary Things We Don't Understand

March 29, 2013

I had a question from a reader on my new EXPAT journey:



Question: What was the strangest food item or most difficult culinary challenges you faced when you moved here? Good question Lucy and a really easy one to answer.

When we came here for the first time, before moving here, I was pregnant with Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D was 3. We walked all over the city, I vomited in all the best hotel bathrooms. It was a great trip… well as great as you can feel when you're 16 weeks pregnant and dragging a toddler everywhere.

It wasn't the Kings first trip, he came all the time, setting up business and trying to get things moving for our move over here. I was oblivious or stupid or in that river in Egypt. I had no clue his real intention was to live here and I would never have agreed, wait, I didn't agree! But here we are so I guess at some point he wore me down…As usual.

Anyway the thing that struck me as different, well weird and kinda stupid actually and for the first few meals I got pretty confused. The entree part of the meal. Now don't get me wrong I studied high school French, I know a French word when I see

one and I can pretty much work out the root and what it might mean. This word, the entree thing was a no brainer. We used that word in Australia all the time. Entree, entrance, beginning of meal… right?

*An **entrée** (/ˈɑːntreɪ/ **ahn**-tray; French "entrance") is a dish served before the main course, or between two principal courses of a meal.[1][2][3]*

The disappearance in the early 20th century of a large communal main course such as a roast as a standard part of the meal in the English-speaking world has led to the term being used to describe the main course itself in some areas.[4] This usage is largely confined to North America and it is unusual in most English speaking countries. However, this use is given by some British dictionaries[1][5][6] but not others.[7]

The term entrée is rarely used for an hors d'oeuvre, also called a "first course", "appetizer" or "starter". In France, however, the term "entrée", a French word which means an entrance or beginning, always describes a first course, not the main course. In modern Australian usage, "entree" describes a starter, not a main course.

But we learned pretty quickly, not in America and ordered accordingly but I still to this day laugh about it every time we go out.

There are other differences, in Australia the humble coriander herb is just that, dried, crushed, seeds, fresh… All of it is coriander but not here. Here it's cilantro when fresh and coriander when powdered or seeds. Huh?

Chilli is in a bowl and it's meat with beans and mexican spices. In Australia chilli is the spicy pepper, like, you know Red Hot Chilli Peppers! Chopped chilli in jars, chilli flakes for your pizza. Chilli is chilli is chilli. Here it's crushed red pepper flakes, spicy thai chilli, habernao or jalepeno peppers. All so very confusing. And that chilli dish? That's Chilli Con Carne.

The supermarket is frought with challenges.Whatever you do, don't ask fot the cordial for the kids unless you want ACS on your doorstep. Cordial in America is an alcoholic liqueur mixer, in Australia it's a liquid concentrate sugary kids drink which we dilute with water, not unlike tang or crystal lite powders.

All the cheddar or tasty cheeses are yellow/orange. Its hard to fine sharp cheddar that's white. How do they make that anyway? milk/cream is white… and making it into cheese doesn't make it go yellow. What is that stuff? I try to stay away from it.

And the bread has sugar in it. You can taste it. It's too sweet, you can get used to it but it's not the same as nice bread from an Aussie bakery. And it never ever grows mold… Hmmm makes you wonder about that wonder bread doesn't it.

A Scone is a biscuit is a cookie …How's that for confusing…

Our tastes are evolving and we need less and less from the homeland but we are still often surprised by the things that go on here. It's a perplexing place.

Got a question? Something you've always wanted to know? A secret desire to learn more about Aussies?

Nothing's too silly, I'll answer anything, I promise not to laugh much… nah I can't promise that but ask anyway ☺ What have you got to lose? You might just learn something.

Easter is Quiet Around these parts this Year…

March 31, 2013

Easter with little kids is a lot like Christmas, the anticipation of the Easter bunny's impending visit and the egg hunt and the chocolate haze we find ourselves in by noon. But this year, the Easter bunny got a last minute memo to say that Grand Master

D and Miss Gremlin would be sleeping at their sister's place. Miss Gremlin was most excited to stay with The Princess, having missed her terribly in her absence. It is a good influence for her girly side ☺

This is how the evening unfolded for us left here at home, watching all the kids have fun on facebook.



Aussie Monopoly is a must when the kids get together, board games instead of electronics… Winning



This morning, this is how The Princess handled sleeping in with excited children and the Easter Bunny…Ingenious plan.



Happy Easter everyone. May you have a blessed day with your family and friends however you celebrate.

So This Might Be It!

March 31, 2013

Guys! I am writing this with shaky hands and I have no idea what happens next. I've been searching all day for paperwork, The King has just found out and we've met with officials. This is BULLSHIT. No more can be done until tomorrow. I can't focus. I will be posting sporadically on my facebook page and my darling friend Lucy will try to keep you filled in. Lucy will be updating

Gotta go, we're working on a strategy…I've got to remember to breathe

So This Might Be It- The Update

April 1, 2013

You know a couple of weeks ago when I had my 15 minutes of fame? When I was the 'go to' person for news of the explosion here in Harlem? I did several interviews and my name was all over the tv and media around the world were contacting me… They say all exposure is good, right? Even bad press is good press. Well unfortunately that's not the case. That little social escapade caught the attention of Homeland Security. You see we are not citizens, we are here by the good Grace's of the USA.

We are permanent residents but that doesn't give us real permanence. If you do something wrong they can boot you out. It's a way of keeping the immigrants in line I suppose.

I received a letter yesterday saying I am under investigation, my paperwork is incomplete. Somehow the 30k we spent to gain our status wasn't enough. I have a week to come up with the relevant paperwork or I'm out, just me, not the rest of the family, just me. They're all fine. Somehow, I've angered someone and they seem to have it out for me, maybe… The paperwork must be filed by close of business Friday April 7 or they told me they will be coming to put me on a plane.

You guys! I'm fucking scared, the documents they're asking for I can't get in time, the letter states no extensions.

So I'm not gonna be around much, I have to get this done or I'm on the 6:50pm Qantas flight out of JFK next week. Bare with me. I'll update when I can…



photo credit

OZ The Great and Powerful

April 1, 2013

I bit the bullet and took the kids to the movies. I don't remember the last time I went. I love movies but I like to be comfortable and I hate sitting with other people, so we usually wait until they come out on itunes so we can enjoy them at home. But occasionally it's worth seeing them in the theatre.



This movie rocked! It was in 3D and it was so cool. It kept us enthralled the entire time. It's not for young ones. The PG rating is correct. The Witches' flying monkeys are pretty scary.

No spoiler alert required, mostly because we all know what happens as this is a prequel.

This is the story of how the mighty wizard of OZ came to be in OZ in the first place and how the witches came to be.

The movie starts in black and white in a 1925 travelling carnival.Where the wizard is a trickster, a simple con man common for that time. The show travels around Kansas and he has a reputation with the ladies. James Franco plays the part well and although I don't like him much, the roll was played very well. He brought just the right amount of sleaze to the character. Oh I know I shouldn't be like that but since his Oscar hosting with Anne Hathaway well, we just lost respect for him.

The wizard in his final move in Kansas, betrays his partner by jumping in the hot air balloon to get away from a very angry strongman husband whose wife has fallen for our conman's charm. Of course he does this right as a twister approaches, which hurtles him and the balloon through a mighty storm to OZ.

When he lands in OZ, the colour is spectacular. This is of course is where the colour once again begins in the movie. Oz… a beautiful place. And someone is waiting for him, to guide him to the Emerald City. The prophecy has come true. The Great Wizard has come to save OZ from the Evil time.

Being the shady man he is, the 'wizard', see an opportunity to help himself and goes along.

In the beginning it's difficult to work out which witch is which but as the movie unfolds you discover who becomes the wicked witch of the East (who later is squashed by Dorothy's house) and who is the green wicked witch of the West we get to know so well in the Wizard of OZ.

The kids did not move the entire time. The story held them captive and the new characters introduced, Little China girl and the talking flying monkey who befriends the Wizard, are great additions. It was long but didn't feel that way unless of course you

have the bladder the size of a pea and bought the giant drink at the concession stand. Everything about this movie was great. A clever storyline and a perfectly seamless entry into the second adventure with Dorothy, Toto, the lion, scarecrow and the Tinman…

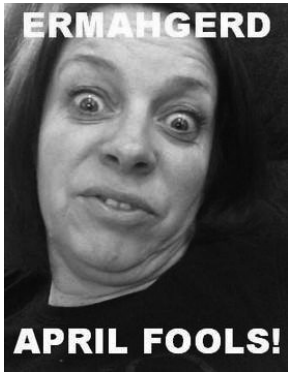
I would easily watch it again. It was so visually stunning that I know some of the subtleties of the story were missed.

If you love the Wizard of Oz, if your children are older and don't scare easily , I highly recommend going to see it. It's not for kids under 6-7 because it gets pretty scary at times. And nobody wants to get up in the night because of a nightmare caused by a flying monkey.

Great film, worth seeing in the theatre.

And The Truth Shall Set Me Free

April 1, 2013



First of all I want to thank each and every one of you who've reached out in messages and facebook, twitter, txt and phone calls! The outpouring of love has been so humbling and so amazing! This blogging community is such a wonderful support. YOU GUYS!

I have been with the people again today and while this is the most ridiculous situation to be in, it seems that it's starting to make sense.

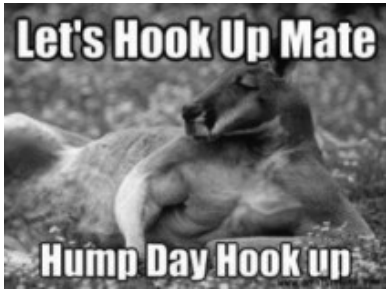
I have been so worried about the outcome and leaving everyone here! The King would have to be soul parent until we could get it fixed… can you even imagine him having to do all the cooking and laundry and school parent teacher meetings! Just let THAT sink in for a moment. I cannot even fathom how that would work.

This morning when he left for work he told me he'd miss me! It seems that it might be his turn for single parenting for a while.

I truly hope it doesn't come to that.

Wednesday is Hump Day, Let's Hook Up!

April 3, 2013



Because I'm such a cool , hip and up to date blogger, and I'm sick of giving you ALL the funny, I have decided to get on the link party wagon… Each Hump Day (Wednesday for the slow ones) instead of me providing Hump Day Humour, you can drop by and link up your old posts, funny, happy, sad, ranty…

Here's a ***link to the rules*** and ***link up***.

A Mother Life: http://www.amotherlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/hump-day-hook-up-e1364437027416.jpg

If you don't have a link, come to the party anyway, you can hook up by reading some really funny stuff!

LINK UP HERE

The Computer Match That Exploded ALL Theories… Wait A Computer Matched Us?

April 4, 2013

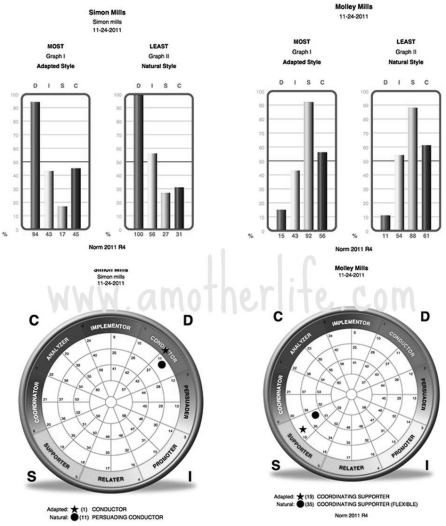
All these online dating services, Match.com, eHarmony, Christian Mingle, the tv ads in prime time drive you crazy, well me at least! "I met my match on… and now we're so happy together." Pfft! I'm calling Bullshit! How can two people meet by doing a computer survey and get matched to the right person and they live happily ever after? Ok, I have friends that it happened to, several actually. I understand the logistics and I get the whole point about matching up people's interests etc to optimise the chances of finding someone to love. Sure I'll play…



But what ever happened to the old fashioned way… you know, going to the bar and kissing ALL the frogs to find your Prince? It works, it's worked for hundreds of years…sure with the current statistics of divorce in almost 50% of first time marriages, it could have problems but I can't help it if you kiss so many frogs that your judgement gets clouded when a prince comes along…or that last frog seemed like a prince… blame the vodka…

That's how I found my Prince, King, whatever ☺ I knew he was the right one because he wouldn't speak to me… but I'm nothing if not persistent. And all these years later we're still together. If we'd been matched by a computer then none of this would have happened because a computer would NEVER do it. We couldn't be more diametrically opposed if we planned it.

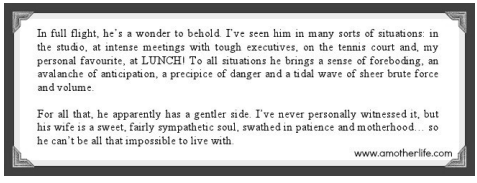
We recently took a compatibility study during a series of workshops designed to understand body language and business. Here are the results… I'll give you a minute to really look…



D=Driver
I=Influencer
S=Steadfast
C=Contemplative/Analytical

Look at those stats! Pretty … right? AND Off the chart different. But somehow it works. I know that being polar opposites has it's challenges, I live them every. single. day. but it seems to compliment them too. We work with our strengths and lean on each other for our weaknesses. It works really well because we can see our own strengths and weaknesses as well as each others and we adjust our communication accordingly…

Nah, I'm blowing rainbows and fairy dust up your ass… We just laugh **a lot** at how different we are. How we approach things so differently in everything we do. Why are we even together? Someone once said of us…



And that's why it works … because I'm swathed in PATIENCE and MOTHERHOOD?! *choke* But let me assure he ***can*** be all that impossible to live with… but live without him, I could never even imagine. And no computer could have ever predicted that!

I linked this post up with

Crazy is My Middle Name-Secret Subject Swap

April 5, 2013



Welcome to Take One of April's Secret Subject Swaps. This week, 12 brave bloggers picked a secret subject for someone else and were assigned a secret subject to interpret in their own style. Today we are all simultaneously divulging our topics and submitting our posts.

My "Secret Subject" is:

It's never any fun being normal. What's the craziest thing you've ever done? It was submitted by: http://suburbiainterrupted.com/

Firstly, OH MY GOD, Is that just the BEST subject EVA? It's like it was made for just ME and my crazy life. And then I went into a panic, I have to choose just one thing? How will I choose, will it be funny? People will find out my secrets…

So I pondered, would I talk about the time we partied with some bad bikers and Mansel the pig and I got a 2nd degree burn from a Harley Davidson on my calf? Having to drive myself to the hospital and enduring a tetanus shot. Or maybe the time I drove 18 hours straight from Sydney to Melbourne just for fun? Hung over…and then back, finally passing out at home and sleeping through an entire day…Stupid and dangerous. I could tell you about the time my car got 'stolen', oh wait, no we can't talk about that.

Overnight road trips to Sydney, drinking beer while driving in the morning rush hour traffic was a regular passtime. Hmmm, of course there was that time we accidentally broke the bar and danced on the tables. Should I admit to all those nights I drove home drunk and survived… Hmm, all that is pretty crazy but might incriminate myself and others, so I better not talk about it. Move along, nothing to see here.

And there is my dilemma.



So much for the excitement. :(

What to talk about without getting someone else in trouble. I even asked The King, he's still getting back to me.

I always made it to work on time… not always sober but I always turned up. Yeah, we were wild and kinda out of control but in a responsible way… kinda.

How is that even possible?

I'm still here to tell you it is, I was a crazy 20 something 'on the road with the band' chick, having an affair and experiencing all that the wild side has to offer. I didn't smash any cars, I didn't accidentally get pregnant, I didn't get hooked on any drugs, although I may have taken a couple, accidentally of course. But just that one time right?! For the experience only.

The up side…

I survived unscathed, unless you count the tattoo I got in King's Cross one night. (Let's not count that, it's not even considered crazy anymore.) I consider it all a learning experience, I'm all set to raise my kids, beyond their teenage years and well into their 20's. There's nothing they can do that we haven't done already. We will be able to guide them into adulthood … well hopefully, staying one step ahead.

You know what… that's gonna be the craziest thing I've ever done. Having grown up children. I'm actually excited for it. I am looking forward to seeing how they turn out.

Hey King, it's ok … I didn't tell 'em anything. We're good, don't worry…

Here are links to all the sites now featuring Secret Subject Swap posts. Sit back, grab a cup, and check them all out. See you there:

http://www.BakingInATornado.com
http://chewylicious.wordpress.com/
http://smn0409.blogspot.com/
http://dinoheromommy.com/
http://www.justalittlenutty.com/
http://followmehome.shellybean.com
http://stacysewsandschools.wordpress.com/
confessionsofafailingdomesticgoddess.blogspot.com
http://hypnoticbard.blogspot.com/
http://suburbiainterrupted.com/
http://mooreorganizedmayhem.blogspot.com/

You Can't Make this Stuff Up!

April 8, 2013

After a close call with the itunes man and cancelling my credit card again! …That's a whole other story coming soon…

I realised it was once again 1pm and I was yet to shower for the day. I never understood this when mothers complained but here I am… doing it again. I don't even have babies! I just get caught up in what I'm doing and then it's afternoon!

So up stairs I went to wash and on the way through I spoke to the King about our near miss, mentioned I was headed for the shower and that was …*my fatal error.*



I should have known better, I should have just showered and sent him an email but no… I had to go near the desk…

King: Well while you're taking your pants off.

Me: No I don't really feel like it…I'm just getting in the shower and I have work to do.

King: Yeah but … *(he may have flashed me but I pretended not to see) And then he put on the puppy eyes…*

Me: Oh alright then come on, quick! *…it's the kind of foreplay he loves so much.*

He nearly tripped over his trampoline getting up from his desk…which he hadn't worked out on yet.



As we headed for the bedroom …

King: I lubricated my trampoline… and I don't mean you…

Me: wha ? ? ?

This ended in uproarious laughter… I may have peed myself and had an asthma attack. I also got in trouble for not concentrating…

My life rocks ☺

Thanks to the itunes Man

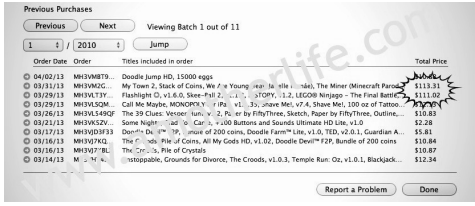
April 9, 2013

Going through the morning routines today, The King asked me if I spent $113 on itunes? Wait, what? No… why? Because there's a 113 bucks out of our account for itunes and 111 the other day. I think we've been hacked again. I'll check it out.

Having been hacked and victim of an unauthorised purchase at Gamestop, we have very recently changed cards.

The email comes back from itunes on what we need to do. They suggest calling the bank. Then they can refund if the bank starts an investigation. So as it usually goes the email get s forwarded to me to handle. I called the bank and got started, these things always take time. The bank guy wasn't very helpful but I kept on with the investigation.

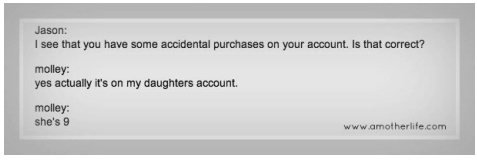
We got to the point of cancelling my card. There was nothing else to do , the transactions weren't made by us but other transactions from itunes were so cancelling was the only option.I would receive a new one in 7-10days… **7-10 days**! Seriously? Don't they want me to spend money? Anyway once that was done…he transfered me to the fraud department and I began going through the story again, because these guys don't talk and you have to repeat it every time. So frustrating. While I was on the phone with her it occurred to me that I hadn't checked Miss Gremlin's account, so I logged in … and low and behold…



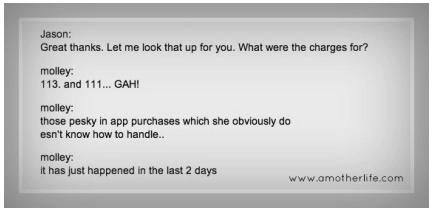
SHIT! What the fuck!? How did she? What is this?…

So I politely said to the fraud department lady that I found the problem, it wasn't fraud and was it possible to stop the cancellation of my card…Of course NOT Mrs. Mills but you will get a rushed card and you'll have it in 1-2 days… I bet it doesn't have 101 Dalmations on it anymore though… :(

Now I had to contact itunes and plead my case and get my money back. I love Apple… Have I mentioned this before? Oh I hope so because Apple has live chat and I could sort it out right away. I explained what was going on, I admitted she was 9.

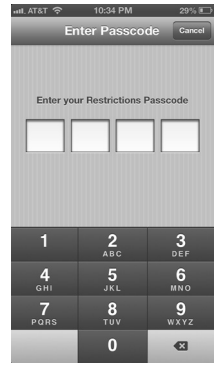


I'm pretty sure there's some rules about being at least 14 to have an itunes account. Whatever right? We all do it. Anyway he knew exactly what had happened.



Those pesky in-app purchases. The sneaky app builders nab your password while you're downloading it and then it's in the app so if you click yes it just charges your account automatically without asking you to approve it. **BOOM!** Who doesn't want more coins in Temple Run? And what kid thinks it would be $99? She thought it was .99cents… yep CENTS!

While he looked over my account he sent me very helpful information on how to put restrictions on and stop those in-app purchases getting in behind your password. Go to settings>general>restrictions…click enable and it will ask you to set up a 4 digit password.

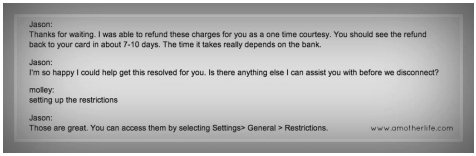


once you get beyond that, you'll see this screen. Turn the in-app purchase OFF and change your password to immediately.





OK, now you have that covered you won't get charged… Then Jason from itunes came back with the news.



I'm pretty cluey and managed to work it out myself with the instructIons he sent over but I asked a couple of extra questions just to make sure. Then I thanked him very much for his time and left the chat. I may have done a little win dance… We got our money back, luckily.

I then went around the house and restricted all the kids devices. I'm taking ONE TIME courtesy seriously ☺

Now to explain the new rules to Miss Gremlin and tell her what she did…

No Sudden Moves

April 10, 2013

Movement of a strange kind, no, actually any kind, is all too much for our poor brain damaged, blind in one eye, rescue dog Sir Lickalot…Be warned. Anything beyond vacuuming will upset him. Moving furniture around, bringing in large boxes with purchases in them. The shopping cart. Forget it when the kids get the nerf guns out. Even when too many people are here he'll go up stairs and hide beside my bed. And loud noises also make him bolt or hide.

Sunday, the King finally installed the components shelf in the living room for all the stuff after we moved the desk out into the dining room. It's been living on the floor for a couple of months. This time it was the drill that set him off. I was at the other end on the couch writing when it started. Sir Lickalot came straight over and sat right at my feet, looking the other way. The body language was hilarious… He was harumphing for sure. As the drilling got more persistent, Sir Lickalot got more fretful. We managed to capture it for your enjoyment, ok and ours…



Mum there's a noise, make it stop



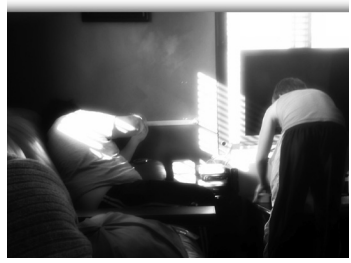
No seriously, can't you hear that?



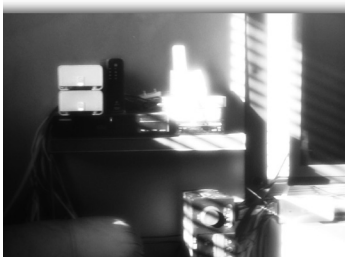
Listen, I'm telling you all this is NOT OK , not OK!



It's a mummy sandwich and I'm not leaving until it's over.
And here is why he was so stressed…

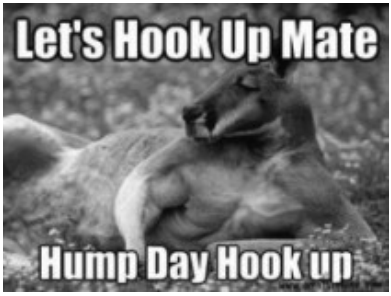


The men at work…no butt cracks here
Tada!



We're so fancy… (don't look at the leads, not the leads)

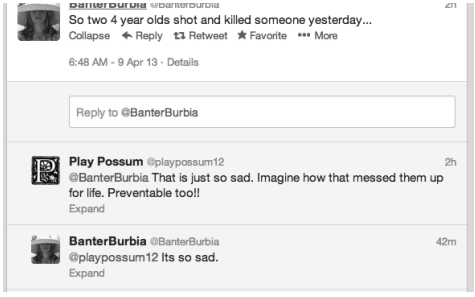
It's Wednesday Mates, so **click on the link to Bring your old posts out for the Hump Day Hook UP…**



A Sad Situation-Nobody Wins This

April 11, 2013

I saw something Tuesday on twitter about a 4 yo accidentally killing a deputy sherriff's wife at a cook out. WAIT WHAT?



So I went in search of the story. The article assumed accident. How could it be anything else. The child was 4, still in preschool, maybe even pull-ups, 4! And then another story of a similar incident, this time the 4yo shot his brother.

The next line news item was talking to the mother of a 4yo who was shot by a 6yo. She doesn't blame the kids. Again WHAT? How can this still be happening ? Why are

we allowing children to get near loaded guns? When are we going to understand that having a gun around makes you 40% more likely to be shot by it! **THIS IS INSANE!** I wanna scream at something. *This is all so preventable.* Why is American so hung up on gun ownership and hand guns and assault rifles for that matter. One of the articles mentioned that 600 people die of accidental gunshots a year while 31,000 die of gunshot wounds. So wait does that mean that the 30,400 others are intentional? That blows my mind and NOT in a good way.

Now before you get your knickers in a twist and want to write a ranty comment, which of course you totally can, I grew up with guns, I've used guns and I've let my children use guns under the strictest of control. But I don't own any. There are none in my CITY apartment, I have no need. No wild animal is coming for me. I don't hunt and I don't need it for protection. It makes me sad that America is going this way. It's been 5 months since Newtown and nothing has changed. Assault weapons are still readily available, there are no restrictions on purchase or how many guns you can own. Ten's of thousands of people a year die and nothing changes, school children, college children, office workers… and nothing changes. How is this acceptable in a civilsed society?



I saw this on facebook posted by https://www.facebook.com/OccupyTheNRA source: http://momsdemandaction.org/

One person puts a bomb in their shoe and we have to remove shoes, belts and jewellery at airports and get subjected to xrays and metal detectors. **ONE.** We can't carry a bottle of water on the plane but any idiot can buy a high capacity magazine off the internet, hell you can buy guns and have 'em shipped to your fucking house! It's crazy. I have great respect for sporting shooters, those who have guns for hunting, but hunting with a semi automatic rifle with a high capacity magazine is hardly sport. It's not like Bambi can fight back.

Why are we so concerned about one plane full of people when that many die every single day of gun related incidents?

There must be a change, we must protect our community from the carnage, accidental or not. You think these children will recover from this? They've killed someone, that's never going away, regardless of whether they understand yet or not.

All this is so preventable and I just wish someone had the balls to stand up, change the laws and make it a safer environment for all.

It seems that this is still not the time. It's just so SAD.

photo source :

https://www.facebook.com/OccupyTheNRA

http://momsdemandaction.org/

Random Thoughts that Couldn't Make it on Their Own as a Grown Up Post

April 12, 2013

Do you ever loose track of the days? Like really convince yourself it's a day that it's not? Well I did last week and no one could convince me otherwise!



You know when Thursday just has the Friday feel? I couldn't work out why people weren't #ff on twitter and how come the Friday movie we were going to watch wasn't on. No #wineparty. I was completely messed up. It didn't help that the kids were off school. Usually I can gauge the days by the kids but sometimes still get confused because now I work from home the days all meld into one. This one threw me.

I have issues. Yes Sir.

Let me continue my confession by admitting I'm not perfect, I know, mental image shattered… I'm sorry but I am developing quite a talent and it's coming along so well that it may be close to perfection…And damn it, I'm pretty proud!

I'll take special talents for $200 thanks Alex.

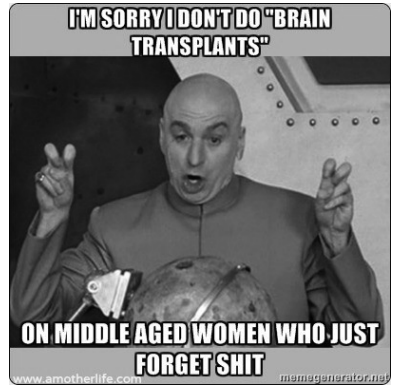
I went searching through the fridge looking for something and came across a rotten metal bowl of grapes, some slimy cantaloupe, 3 boxes of rock hard takeout rice, a container with 2 spoons of Thai Basil Chicken from Sunday night and this gem below…



I'm going with 'What is… tomato paste from the Jurassic era, Alex'. Perhaps I should do a check list of refrigerator contents on a more regular basis. Maybe there's an app for that. But I did find this! Who even buys that much chocolate at once?



The brain of a woman of my mature years needs a little assistance clearly. Mega doses of fish oil are NOT doing their job…Suggestions for a quick fix welcomed. And don't say brain transplant, I've already spoken to Dr. Evil and he's not interested.



Do They Have Interventions for Twitter? Asking for a Friend

April 14, 2013

I'm going to admit to you that I might have an obsession with the little blue bird. Yep that one, you know … *whispers*… *shhhhh they'll hear!*



However, it is a great marketing tool and shitloads of fun. I'm just beginning to understand the party part of it and how #hashtags work. I've tried several times to go to #wineparty on Friday night but those twitter whores over there just go too fast or the drinks at my end slow me down, either way after about 20 minutes I'm so lost I give up and go back to my usual activities. But this week my new bestie Lucy @ My Life As Lucille said we should have a party our selves, for the other blog I contribute to, with the great group of bloggers we call The Epistolarians.

So Thursday night we had a play, with ear pressed to the phone and fingers fairly flying we had a twitter party using the hashtag #Epistolarians… (cheap plug, you should join us next Thursday) and it was super fun and a success. Her next goal was to get me to #wineparty and to enjoy it. 'But I can't keep uuuuppppppp', I whined. 'OH Good God,' Lucy rolled her eyes and said 'Get tweet deck or tweet grid' …Que? (spanish for UH?) Apparently these are websites that help you keep up by allowing multiple feeds. Well this sounded like something I could get into and I so had a little look see.

And this my friends is **what I saw!**



~~~~~~~MIND BLOWN~~~~~~~

Did you guys KNOW about this SHIT? It's DA BOMB Diggity!

Anyway after I picked my face up off the floor, I set up my feed and no one heard from me since, except on twitter.

Please send



For the sake of the children

On a side note, if you like twitter, try tweet deck or tweet grid… you will never go back. Oops I've said too much…again.

The Education Elephant is in the Room and He's Sitting on Me…Again

April 15, 2013

This might be a whiny, ranty bitch session about education, so if this is not near or dear to your heart or you wanna tell me to suck it up… move along because today I own these feelings and I need to get them out. However I will try to stay coherent.

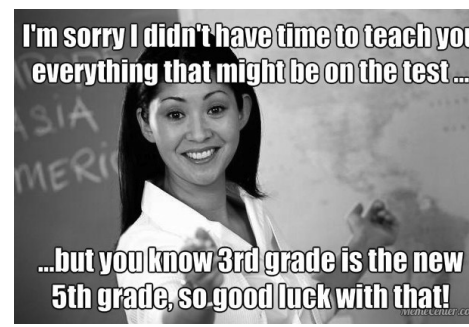
I made my baby cry in class today. I failed and I made things worse. I'm stressed, she's stressed and Lord knows the teacher is stressed! Her teacher wanted me to see her work. *sigh* We've been trying so hard to work on some issues she has.

I'm just going to say it…This year's state tests are ridiculous. The kids are all in a panic, it's their first year as 3rd graders taking them and in the process they're being told that the teachers have no idea what's on the tests because the DOE is overhauling the system with the new 'Common Core Standards'.

To exacerbate the situation, the *private companies* that are contracted to write these tests are right onto implementing the new curriculum because, of course, time is money…but the teachers now have to scramble to teach it in time… And catch the kids up, and fill in ALL the holes that the 'standard' BEFORE this new common core has left. So… not all the material will have been taught by the time the tests are taken. What's that you say? How can you take a test when you haven't been taught some of the material that **might or might not** be on it, but you're not sure… and then be graded appropriately and at the correct level? Hard to follow?

My point exactly.

How do you think the kids feel.It's like going for your written driver's license test but the book they give you to study is missing half of the information you need, yet it's on the test! Crazy right?!



The system is broken. There I said it. My children are in a broken system. It's run by *politicians*. We know it's broken. How can it be anything but broken, when funds continue to be cut. You can't do more with less. No Child Left Behind failed. Children need to be left behind if they can't do the work but over the last few years since NCLB was dropped, the standards have also been raised, which in my opinion is setting children up to fail anyway! The new inititive, this 'Race to the Top' thing, isn't much better. When New York City's DOE admits that this year, they expect up to 80% of students in some districts to fail these tests… what are they doing? What are they trying to achieve? It's all a bit moronic, right?!

Did they wake up one day and say, 'Hey, the kids coming out of the end of High school aren't college ready because we've just been promoting them on anyway, regardless of work standard, so now we're gonna make the curriculum harder, put more pressure on everyone, that'll fix it.' That doesn't make any sense.

Over the years that I've been helping in one of the kindergarten classes at school, (4 consecutive years now) the standards have changed so much that the teachers are stressed and stretched to the limit and more children are staying behind. The problem isn't getting better, it's getting worse. To add insult to injury it breeds a feeling of failure and kids doubting themselves, when in fact, his or her abilities are age appropriate but the expectations aren't. It makes me so mad!

Let's use my beautiful little Miss Gremlin as a perfect example. She is smart, she has extended vocabulary, she is reading on a 6th grade level in the 3rd grade… but her handwriting is atrocious. She's in 3rd grade and it's illegible. Why? not because she can't do it but because right back from day one when she was learning to form her letters she wasn't told to do it again. She wasn't told it wasn't good enough. There simply wasn't time… The standards that were put in place insisted that kindergarteners produce pages and pages of writing. It was all about the 'content' and getting the ideas down on paper. The more the better, they were expected to be writing 3-4 sentences a page and up to 3 pages. But trying to get 20 kids to extend their writing at age 5 doesn't leave room for correction on penmanship, which by the way is no longer considered a subject. As she went on it wasn't addressed in 1st grade, 2nd grade and now here we are in 3rd and I have to teach her to write so that they can read it when they score the test. It's not any of the teachers' fault, they don't have time, they are pushed so hard. They don't even have time to teach the curriculum that's set for the year. How can they possibly spend more time on individual children who need extra instruction on things that weren't addressed the previous year or even years as is Miss Gremlin's case.

She's a normal child who has still managed to slip through the cracks.

I'm worried for her, she's worried. It's an added stress these kids just don't need. Even Grand Master D who has taken these tests for years now, said he's worried because everyone is focused on how hard the test will be. It's the fear of the unknown and it's not fair. We all acknowledge the system is broken but why can't the new standards be phased in, instead of dumping it on kids across the board in one fell swoop, knowing full well that a large percentage will fail. How will that affect the learning psyche of students in the future. I wonder has there been a study done on that. There must be a better way. I really hope it can be found.

Are your kids testing this year? Are they changing the standards on the fly in your district?

I Wrote a Letter to My Dad…Cos Doesn't Everyone Write When Their Parents are Gone?

April 17, 2013

I wrote a letter but I couldn't send it, there's no mail service to the great beyond… but it felt good to just write it anyway.



Hey Dad-are you there?

You've been on my mind a lot. I can't shut you out. Does that mean you want to talk to me? I really wish you would. I looked at skype again today but still you're offline. I guess the internet is down.

Let me tell you what's been going on here. It's been so long since we talked. I forget what you've missed. The kids have grown so much, they're so wonderful. They make me proud. Miss Gremlin got student of the month for last month , her ceremony was last week. I didn't send you any pictures but I think you knew anyway. She was so proud and nervous making her speech.The stitches in her face looked pretty funny. Grand Master D is doing so well. He writes scripts now you know. He's growing up so much. He has that knife of yours hanging on his wall. He doesn't talk about you much but I know it reminds him. He's proud to have it.

Miss Gremlin cries about you a lot, she really understands. She's sad she couldn't come to see you that last time and I am too. I wish it was different. I wish we had more time. We got the family tree books out this morning. I told her all about them. She couldn't believe you spent 25 years researching so much of our family. She wished you were still here so you could add her and her brother in them. I guess that's my job now. She's the thinker you know. Through all her tough exterior she soft and sweet and thoughtful.

Your Brother had his birthday in February as you know.I'm sure you were hanging around. He's 72 this year. I heard he's a little worried but we'll keep him busy and thinking of the future. That 72 thing is just a coincidence. He is convinced that he caused it all and he'll not get through the year. Come talk to him, tell him he has so much to enjoy. His oldest grandchild is driving and he has so much pride for them all. I talked to him for an hour, it comforts me to do it. It brings me closer to you.

Mum is moving on and coping as best she can. I call her nearly everyday, she's going through so much, I know she wished you stayed. It wasn't what you wanted, you were tired and that old body just wanted to lay down that one last time. I get that but it still hurts. She's had to sell most of the farm, it'll be gone in a couple of weeks but I know you know all that. I imagine you've been sitting at the end of the table listening to every plan and negotiation. She must be channelling you, she's become a tough negotiator. I hate being so far away. She needs me and I can't help. It's really hard.

We'll still be able to walk on the land so it won't be that different I suppose. Grand Master D is planning on making a western next time we go over. Funny huh. Making a 'western' on the farm. I hope your smiling down, I hope we've done you proud. I talk about you often to the kids and tell stories of my life as a kid and the things you did. It's important that they hear those stories.

It's easier now to think of you and talking makes me smile, even though I miss you, yeah you've been gone a while. Two years is coming up, July is almost here. Two birthdays and two Christmases, and now two anniversaries. I guess my dreams are where we meet but you're always hanging around, a thought, a memory, a feeling . It's like you're reaching out, reaching down deep inside me bringing back things I forgot I even knew.

So Dad that's it for now. I wonder if you'll get this or even know I wrote. It's hard to be the one left behind, with all the memories. A lifetime of things rattle 'round in my brain. So many times I want to just get on skype and say hello or pick up the phone and call but that's over now. There's an upside I suppose. I constantly feel you

near me, always just beyond my reach but that can be really frustrating too. The miles no longer separate us there's a bigger gap now. The great beyond between us. I have no rush to get there, even though I miss you, my job down here is too important and the kids, well they need me. I know you're waiting patiently for all of us with those who waited for you.

Anyway it's early morning here, the house is really quiet, everyone's still sleeping, your favourite time of day. The morning rush will start soon and you'll get lost in all the noise. Just know I think about you all the time and wish we had you here for just a little longer.

I love you and miss you everyday.

Love M

Some times you just have to write down your incoherent thoughts that need to come out. I feel his presence. It's really weird. I don't even know why I'm telling you this. Life can be strange like that. So forgive this indulgence in things that make you sad. I'm not usually like this and the feeling will pass. But the presence is so strong it's like he's reaching out and so I wrote a letter. I hope you understand.

Do you feel the loved ones close around sometimes? It's a strange feeling and one that's hard to shake. I'm sure they're reaching out.

Wow, here we are again, Happy Hump Day! These weeks come around so quickly, before we know it we'll be hanging Christmas lights again. 42 awesome people hooked up last week, so come on over and Bring your links and we'll Hook Up



I've Been Doing this for a Whole Year? Cool, I Can Totally Commit to Stuff

April 18, 2013



I cannot believe I have been able to keep this up for a whole year! That's so cool. I'm having a Bloggerversary … Cue the Music…no wait … that happens at the END of the speech.

I'm not even close to being sick of it! I've met some awesome people and really feel like I've found my voice. It strays a little but I come back to it.

Like all writers,…oooh I'm a writer…we get slumps and side tracked…squirrel,… , our muse runs away with our brain sometimes but then…I stick the headphones in, turn the music up and my fingers fairly fly!

I though the best way to celebrate my bloggerversary was to showcase my work over the last year. To do this, I've chosen a post from each month for you to check out. Some you'll remember and some you may have missed. Of course once you get back there you won't be able to just read one from each month. I had such trouble choosing

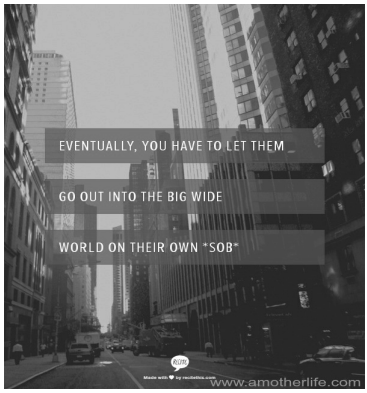
Enough rambling…Cue the Music NOW!
Grab a coffee or a drink, what?! Some of you are nightowls it's ok…
Settle in, get comfortable and enjoy …
April: Suns of Bitches
May: How Do we Live without You?
June: A Friend in Need
July: 5 Hardest Things About Travelling with Kids
August: Uncle Glenn Rocks
September: I'm an Excellent Driver
October: Sometimes It Takes A Couple of Goes to Get a Good One
November: Vote For Me -Homework Will be Illegal
December: The Healthcare Debacle
January: Edging Towards Homeschooling Somebody Please Stop Me
February: Things a Daughter Should Know But a Mother Can't Tell
March: He's Getting a Pirate Patch

See how much fun that was?…See y'all tomorrow for our second year… I'm so excited, I'm a Sophomore blogger…

He's Flapping His Wings… But I'm Not Ready

April 19, 2013

Last Night Grand Master D went on the subway by himself. He was keen to do it but a little nervous too. The plan was to meet the King down on Chambers street. They were going to the Tribecca Film Festival. That's a long ride from Harlem! So we looked at where he would go, double checked his phone was charged and that both mine and the King's numbers were in there. Just checking of course. I downloaded the itrans NYC app for him in case he needed to navigate out of a mistake.



He showered and prepped and then we headed to the train. My outer demeanour belied my inner terror, we must as parents, let go little by little, so our children can become independent. But it's so damn scary. How do you put your first born onto the giant metal death trap and wave goodbye? I asked as we walked to the station whether he wanted to just go in or if he wanted me to wait on the platform for the train with him. He preferred the latter. As he went to swipe in…those damn iridescent lights flashed 'insufficient funds'. The card was empty! Good God, … I didn't bring my wallet… damn it.

Hmmm.

So we had to use the $20 I gave him for 'just in case'. Funny though, I've never used cash to buy a subway card, ever and it was hard! I wanted to get a $10 card and give him the change but it wouldn't give me enough change so I had to use the whole $20. What a way to up sell, well played MTA, well played. Oh well. As the card came out of the machine the train hurtled into the station, it was the right one…We missed it. That's ok, it gave us the opportunity to discuss some scenarios and what to do 'in case of'…you know kidnappers, hoodlums, paedophiles… GIRLS.

The 'B" train came and if we'd been with the King or if I were going we would have caught it and changed trains but Grand Master D chose to let it go and wait for the train he needed, changing the first time was just an added pressure he didn't need. He was nervous, excited but still nervous. We laughed a bit about that, I understand completely, damn travel anxiety. The moment arrived as his train finally came and he hugged me and went to get on. I let him go, putting on a brave face, the horror reel playing in my head, making a mental note of his clothing for the police report later. Then he was back…for a second hug, such a sweetie. He was brave but needed that extra reassurance. I squeezed tight and said have fun, secretly dying inside.

As the train pulled out and I saw him sitting there, he gave me a big wave and I waved back. I walked out into the rain with my heart in my mouth, knowing than there was no way to even track him underground for at least 40 minutes. I texted the King to tell him the train time and headed home to wait. The King was already in place at the rendezvous…

I busied myself on facebook and twitter, looking for support and reassurance and well, sympathy … naturally ☺ So I need attention sometime, don't judge. The clock dragged on, slowly… s l o w l y …around it went like it was mocking me.

I couldn't help myself, I texted The King the description of what Grand Master

D was wearing, you know, so he would recognise him quickly if he came up across the street and not at the exact rendezvous point. (yep, that worked, I don't look like an over protective mum *at all*). The reply txt was simple…no words, just this



HE MADE IT…and He was SO DAMN PROUD! …actually, so am I ☺



When They Were Little … Was It Really That Hard?

April 22, 2013

Last week my friend Kelly at Debiehive wrote about missing the days when her babes were small and how taking parental advise for strangers wasn't always bad. And by

all accounts she's right. We may not want to hear from the weird stranger in the park telling us to smile and enjoy it and it gets better when we've been up all night with a teething baby or we have sore boobs from feeding or cracked nipples or our child has thrown themselves on the ground for the gajillionth time today. But they have a point, it does get batter but it also goes so fast, so don't wish it away.



It made me think back to what was my favourite time? I know it wasn't those early hour feeds, getting out of a warm bed to a sqwarking newborn but wait, maybe it was, just me, the boob muncher and Jessica Fletcher solving crimes at 3am. I still get a warm feeling when Murder She Wrote comes on tv. It was calming and nice and all for me.

It could have been when they started walking, watching those pudgy legs wabble across the floor… knowing that life just got a little bit harder because the kid was NEVER where you left them. Always finding new mischief.



I love to fly, Grand Master D being launched across the room



Miss Gremlin channelling Maggie Simpson with the sleeping bag



Hey mum, just gonna ride to the store… k?



This kid took this big brother gig very seriously. He was such a good helper.



Look what we made…



Little Miss Gremlin and her lovey



When the summer comes we all need some sprinklers to chase



Fun place to run



I'll have a cafe latte, frapamochchino thanks!

Sending them to school was a great stage, having some freedom and time to myself was an awesome feeling.

No kid is ever the same. They do different things that stick in your mind forever but so much of it is also forgotten. Going through the photos reminded me of so many things.

Every stage is precious and hard at the same time but you'll never be there again, with that child. Even when you feel washed out or overwhelmed, remember why you're doing it and how much love having these little munchkins brings. And grey hair and cellulite and … (no stick to the positive…) They bring us delight!

We're heading into the teen years and that's a whole other set of 'pass me the bottle'. I'm dreading it and looking forward to it at the same time. I know that sounds strange but I am interested to see their choices and who they become and where their lives take them. I'm not so excited about the arguments and probable groundings and late night worry…but I suppose it's our turn, Lord knows we did it to our parents!

Don't Go Bra Shopping or You'll End Up Getting a Boob Job Like Me.

April 23, 2013

I've been sick for almost a week now but yesterday I felt like I needed to get outside in the fresh air and sunshine. I've been in need of a trip to Victoria's Secret for some time. So it was the perfect excuse. Since I lost weight, I seem to have lost some plumpness to the girls… it's always the first thing to go. TMI? Whatever, I've said worse. I'll take less boobage, if it means I no longer have a muffin top. There's always a trade off. Ok, back to the point, I promise there is one.

The closest Victoria Secret is on 85th and Broadway and so I set off in the sunshine, music on, for a walk. I guess it took over an hour but I was in no hurry. The usual action took place in Victoria's Secret. My wallet was substantially lighter but I was gonna look awesome in the boobage area. That's the trouble with Victoria, she's so damned expensive!

On the way home, because it's spring and I haven't been outside in a week, I stopped at a nursery and bought some pansies to plant on the terrace. It's so different gardening in a 14' space 9 storeys off the ground, than at ground level. When I got home I put the plants outside and showed the king his goodies.

Ok **S T O P**… *blah blah blah*… this post is even boring me! ***Yawn*** Let's face it when you're sick you can't think and I've had this ridiculous cough, cold chest thing for almost a week now and I'm done…

Take two:

I came home with the goodies and showed the King. He was impressed, hey he reads the Victoria's Secret catalogue ok… lingerie does it for him. Don't judge. I said I will be replacing everything because I've lost a size and that's gonna cost a bit. He looked me straight in the face and said it's probably cheaper to get bigger boobs. BOOM !

That's done, cos you know how he rolls, I'll likely be booked in for a boob job after lunch tomorrow. Never mind if I want one or not. Bigger boobs are the answer to everything!



Ok that's it, I've just sneezed 15 times in a row, you're totally catching this cold. I'm sorry, try lemon juice, honey and echinacea.

Top 10 Things You Should Visit in New York without Breaking the Budget

April 24, 2013

Tomorrow my interview on the Expats Blog will be live so be sure to check it out, it was before I was sick so there's funny in there ☺… But today, I am sharing some budget friendly tourist ideas for seeing New York City. Ok let's be honest… this is for you guys who come to New York and can't do anything cos you spent all the money on your 8'x10' box of a hotel room.



photo credit

So here goes…

New York City is a tourist Mecca. The place is fairly hoping day and night. Nothing shuts it down, well nothing short of 10-20 inches of snow but hey that brings a nice peace to it anyway. The problem is that it can be expensive. Here's some ways to see the place without spending much. Call it the cheapskate tour.

1. **Staten Island Ferry. Better than a Liberty/Harbour cruise and free** When you come to New York of course you wanna see Lady Liberty. She's the jewel of the New York Harbour. Unfortunately, to go over there can be an all day experience and you get shuffled through a security check strict enough to rival any airport. Not to mention the expense. For a nice boat ride on the Harbour and a cruise past Lady Liberty for free, you can jump on the Staten Island Ferry, They hardly ever crash these days and it's a *free ride*. We love free…
2. **Wall St, the Bull and the Financial District** Walking around the Financial district is pretty cool, all the small cobblestone streets. The area has quite a history and of course, the Bull, everyone needs to go say Hi to the Bull. He gets all his power from the ball rubbings he receives, so go grab a handful.

3. **Central Park, Carriage ride, Ice Skating** You can spend days in Central Park and not see it all. There's so much to see. It's New York's backyard. Beautiful in any season. You can Ice skate in the winter, take a horse and carriage ride anytime, go to the zoo, see many and varied buskers and performers and just enjoy the beauty of the park. 825 acres of spectacular, including children's playgrounds along the edges. The park has everything for every one…It really deservess 2 points.
4. **Union Square Farmers Market** A local farmers market that has become so popular it is open 3 days a week. So much fresh produce is available and many unique Characters frequent the place. It's a fun place to just bustle through and rub shoulders with the locals. You might even bump into a celebrity.
5. **First Corinthians Baptist Church Harlem Gospel Experience** Nestled in the Lower Harlem on 116th st and 7th ave, is the First Corinthians Baptist Church where they run services all day Sunday. The church is housed in a turn of the century building and boasts an authentic gospel choir. A must see and an easy subway ride from midtown …The church is free so stop in and enjoy. The services go all day.
6. **Times Square** Just do it… but for God Sake walk faster, you tourists just get in the way ALL the time, so frustrating. (I might be local now) If you come at Christmas time and stay, you can see the ball drop for New Years Eve. The atmosphere is electric and the locals never go so there's plenty of room for tourists. You're sure to meet some great people. I hear you don't have to pee in bottle or anything.
7. **The Apple Store, 5th Avenue Stores** Cruising through the Glass 5th Avenue Apple Store is a cool thing to do, buying something is a bonus but you can totally go in for a look around without spending anything, go on, I dare you ☺
8. **The Museums** If you love museums then you need to see The Met, The Museum of Natural History and the other majors but you should know that the price is suggested…which means that you can just give them 5 bucks and you're in.
9. **Walk the Brooklyn Bridge** If you come at the right time of year you can enjoy a pleasant stroll across the Brooklyn Bridge. It's a great way to see the skyline of the city and it's a fun thing to do. It's available all year round but the weather can be prohibitive in the colder months. But totally worth it. People leave love locks in the middle, so if you feel the need ,bring your padlock and lock up your love on the bridge… but not literally. You get arrested for that shit in NYC.
10. **Empire State Building 34th St, Macy's** The Empire State is worth a look of course and the Macy's building, which is great shopping. If you're a foreigner you can go to the visitors centre and get an 11% discount card, so you don't pay the state taxes on your purchase. It's easy to get lost but there are so many things to see and the old wooden escalators are a treat. The Rockerfeller Centre (Top of the Rock) is another look out point. It's quicker and cheaper and you can see the Empire State. I always prefer that but… Do the Empire State, just to say you have ☺ It's quite an experience.

Above all enjoy it. Don't be scared to ride the subway. It's totally safe. Bring walking shoes, you'll do plenty of that and most of all have fun!



Well looky here…how did it get to Hump Day again? I think someone is flicking the desk calendar over too fast. You know what hump day brings? The hook up! Come on you know you wanna **link up**…

Me, me, me it's all about Me… OH and ANZAC DAY!

April 25, 2013

I'm an all round popular girl today. I have been interviewed a few times now. It's fun, I seem to always be interviewed about being an Aussie but that's an easy subject because Aussie I am. I spent a good deal of the afternoon swapping stories yesterday with Lady Estrogen on twitter and if you haven't read her then by God you be get over there now, she's hilarious. Sent to the colony as an exchange student, she's almost like a modern day convict with all that went down, well I'll let her tell it. What's more she lived around the corner from Ramsay St and those who know what THAT means can have a quiet laugh too, just like I did …

I thought it kind of fitting that my interview on the Expats Blog would come out on ANZAC Day, I have no idea if that was intended or if it was a happy coincidence but either way it's live for you to read here . It was fun to do. And interviewing an Aussie on ANZAC day is clever! ANZAC Day is our annual day to celebrate and commemorate those who have served our country in the wars and lost their lives and those who serve now. It's a national holiday and the country is scattered with buglers playing the 'Last Post' at dawn followed by marches in the streets. The afternoons are all spent in the pub playing two up, drinking beer and telling stories. It's a fitting way to celebrate.



Talking among friends can sometimes turn into an interview as well, my very special friend over at MY Life As Lucille kept asking questions one day and these interviews were born. Here's the second interview. If you missed the first one you can find it here.

So relax, have a read about an Aussie in a strange land and remember the soldiers who fought for your freedom. While it's only ANZAC Day Downunder, we can all think about them and have our very own memorial/remembrance day .

LEST WE FORGET



The New Couch Came and Someone's Been Furniture Shopping~Harlem Style

April 26, 2013

UPDATED:

So the new couch came and we're super impressed. There was some confusion as to whether it would make it inside the elevator and they were wondering if they had to carry it up the stairs. We live on the 8th floor, ain't nobody thinks about carrying

furniture up the stairs. It was early, we'll forgive them. Maybe their coffee hadn't kicked in yet but this was crazy talk. The King insisted that the long couch would fit and to prove it he went down with the 'experienced' guys. to show them. Now, The King for those who don't know, used to have a band and tour Australia and owned a 10 ton truck, full of equipment. That man could pack shit like you wouldn't believe. People were amazed at how much stuff could fit in that truck. It was an artform. He also delivered and moved pianos single handedly as a part of his piano tuning job. He will not be stopped. EVER.

Ok, back to the couch. We know what size can come up in the elevator, a 12' awning is beyond capacity and must be carried up 8 flights of stairs,(don't ask) but a couch… please! These guys weren't trying to get out of the delivery they just couldn't see a way. So the King went down to the street, bare foot, and got their heads right. Sometimes just taking something out of it's packaging will fit it in, he once brought home a grill from Home Depot in a sedan by taking every part out of the box and putting it in the car. You have to think outside the box to be in this family… It's a pre requisite, for those thinking of joining the fun.

Once the couch was placed in the elevator surrounded by the cushions shoved in the spaces the elevator arrived on the PH level… they then worried they couldn't get it out and into the door. It's too tall they said. Of course having very little english to help them, it was difficult to explain the problem and we were having that couch no matter what. But with a little jostling they got it in. Actually there was no doubt from our end but sometimes people can't see the big picture, you know…

Preparing for a new arrival means kicking the old one to the kerb, literally, and the night before we manhandled that bastard ourselves down to the basement. Under it we found 2 socks, 4 tennis balls, a super ball and about $3.50 in change.



It was put out in the street yesterday for trash collection. It's a sectional, with recliners and sleeper and it has served us well. It was a little weird coming home yesterday from school to see the super had man handled it to the street but that's New York. The garbage trucks will take anything.



As the afternoon wore on and we came and went, to taekwondo and groceries for dinner etc, pieces started to disappear, the small piece first, then an hour later the wedge piece, the big pieces are still there for now but who know what the day will bring. Whether someone is trying to get the whole thing or just wanted the small pieces we don't know but it's fun to see it go and kinda nice to know someone will get some use out of it.



It's the Harlem way, to get your furniture off the street. You'd be amazed what people throw out.

UPDATE… Friday lunch time when I came out with Sir Lickalot, the last 2 pieces were gone. I thought the garbage truck must have taken them as all the other trash was gone too but as I walked down the path I saw a huge gouge out of the concrete, I followed and followed, well the park was that way anyway, and they ended in the building one block down. So my assumption is some brave soul dragged those heavy sons of bitches all the way home … about 200 metres. I hope they love their new couch as much as we love ours and loved our old one too.

Monday's Flashback

April 29, 2013

Do you ever have those days when things just don't work out? When you try to be a good parent but you're tired and annoyed and everything's just too hard. Well don't be too hard on yourself, Monday's are tough at the best of times, everyone is tired and grumpy. It's like the whole world has a hangover and nobody wants to be nice. This morning was a tough one here. The kids went to bed late last because the Princess is going back to Australia. Oh yeah I forgot to mention she even arrived. There's a post in the draft folder about that but my muse has been hit by a city bus and there's been a bit of a writing drought. Anyway, I'll get to it ☺

But in the meantime here's an old funny story about that time I wasn't the perfect parent.

Miss Gremlin and I were getting ready to go to her taekwondo class, when she couldn't find her uniform pants. I went from zero to angry in 3.6 seconds flat because as usual I assumed because she never puts stuff away properly, that they must be is some obscure place. So time is ticking, we're heading for the 'gonna be late' point.

I look under the bed because she likes to sleep with her favorite things, her can be quite a sight some times, but no pants. I go though the closet for the third time and finally strip down her entire bed…nothing! Where the fuck can they, be? Then I have an 'aha' moment, so while Miss Gremlin searches the dress up box crying, I go upstairs and just for fun check my laundry pile which I haven't had the chance to put into the closet. I scan for anything white and tada, taekwondo pants! I quickly come down stairs, head hung low, bottom lip out and hold them up for Miss Gremlin to see. She laughs through her tears, I hug her and apologize, she finishes getting ready and we leave the house marveling at mummy's epic fail all the way to the studio.

A Slothagram Perhaps?

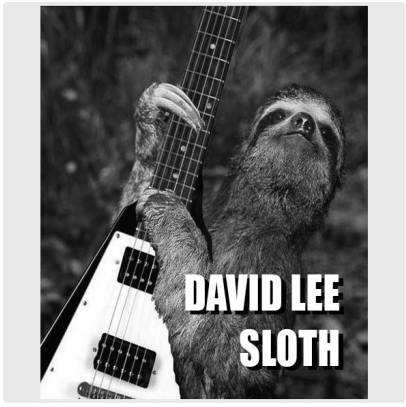
April 30, 2013

This is why we cannot leave the King unsupervised. Seriously, he was bored, so he built a website. In 20 minutes. Just for fun. Cos he wanted to quiet his brain. WHO DOES THAT?

My Husband does, the ADD-OCD, which actually works out because everything has to be perfect… but not for very long… (I can live with that).

He decided to make slothagrams just for fun, and give you guys the chance to do it too…If you go here you can upload a sloth meme you have made. At this stage he is looking for creativity and not hand feeding you the memes …so get to it and show your stuff.

Here's a few examples…







Show off your photoshop skills and make us all laugh…what else have you got to do today anyway?



Some House Guests are Better than Others

May 1, 2013

Do you cringe when house guests arrive? Are you hoping they don't stay very long? What if they're family? When the Outlaws land are you sweet as molasses but dying on the inside? Do you count the hours until they leave. Or are they wonderful and you love them to stay on and on?



Every guest is different. We've had some horror shows over the years but we've also had some *rippers.

My Sister in Law arrived on Friday. She is one of the best house guests ever! She cooks and cleans and gets hyperactive and gardens and weeds and takes the kids out and is just awesome. As I write this she has just discovered the swiffer mop and is happily mopping my floors!

Who even does that?

She's laughing at how amusing it is and she wants to buy one and take it home. This could cause problems shipping over the liquid but it's a small price to pay for someone who WANTS to clean for me ☺

I love the company, it feels like a holiday for me too because we chat, a lot, and we do projects together and have spa days. It's a refreshing change.

Do you love or loathe guests? How long can you stand to have them around? Are they helpful or a hinderance? I'd love to hear some experiences…

*ripper- great, awesome, fantastic, worth mentioning. Bewdy mate :P

Well looky looky, Hump Day has rolled around AGAIN! This year is going so fast! Don't be shy, link up your old posts… give them another go round.



Never Forget Anything Ever Again

May 2, 2013

How many times do you go to the store for 2 things and walk out with 10 bags? Or it's grocery day and you've forgotten your list, and come home missing at least 5 things? THIS. IS. MY. LIFE. friends. Every single time. I'm hopeless at it. Someone needs to do my groceries for me, or at least remind what I need so I can just run into the store and grab it as I'm passing by. Imagine how easy that would make the your shopping life, well the grocery shopping part anyway. Actually, just errands in general.



So imagine my delight when I came across this app, Don't Forget Your List. It's an app which you put in all your items required and then attach them to a store. When you get near that store it will pop up and remind you, so if you want to get those items you're right there. You can decide when it reminds you, for example as you're driving by or pulling into the parking lot or even a mile away to jog your memory that you need to stop in and get your supplies. You'll never forget anything ever again!

I have it set for parking lot, the closest I can. (I live it the city) no driving required and so far I've remembered to shop every time. It's simple to use and you can customise the alerts to get the most reminders you need to get those items on your list.You can even put obscure things in the app and attach it to a hardware store! I have paint on my list because eventually I want to finish that kitchen paint

job, now every time I go past the hardware I get a reminder. It's brilliant! That job will finally get done this weekend!

Every item stays on the list until you check it off so you will be prompted regularly. If you don't have time or choose not to go shopping that time you simply ignore the reminder and go about your day. Don't Forget Your List will remind you next time anyway. I love this app and I use it all the time. You sould try it, you'll be amazed at how much you 'remember' to do.

http://www.dontforgetyourlist.com/

It's a Dirty Job But Somebody's Gotta Do it.

May 4, 2013



Today was a fix it day. Now that we have a new couch and new rugs, we needed to fix some holes in the walls. You know how it goes, you move things around, mount speakers and tv's then change your mind. Move paintings around etc. All that stuff happens here will alarming regularity. It must be the ADD the King suffers from. The problem is I hate patching walls. HATE IT. I know how and I'm good enough at it, it used to be part of my job in a life long forgotten but it's not my favourite part. Lets face it, it's so messy. That fine white powder that settles over everything you own and everything you'll ever own, which you can never really clean properly, even if you do lay down covers.

But today I patched and sanded and vacuumed. It just had to be done. I was surprised how many holes we had, some were quite old, years even. That's bad right?

Three separate rooms, three different colours. Not how I saw Saturday going but sometimes you just have to do it right? While this was going on, The King and the Kids were tidying the Junior Suite. When the King goes in you know it's gonna be bad. Garbage bags full of crap alway come out.

3 hours later I was done and vacuuming the mess up. Paint was drying on the walls and there were no more holes. Satisfying even though I'm exhausted.

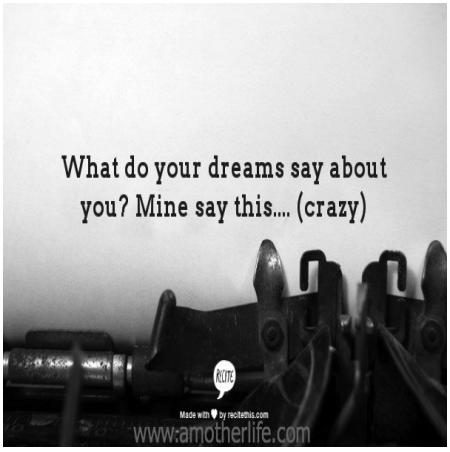
The Junior suite had a new kind of order. The kind that an OCD dad brings, the kind where ALL the clutter is gone.

Tomorrow we rest!

You Know When You Have Those Dreams?…

May 5, 2013

NO Not THOSE Dreams, this one was a different dream.
I think I have a secret, unrequited, blogger crush. You know you have issues when you start dreaming about them. I woke up this morning and I remember everything. A sassy little redheaded blogger, the Hot Mess Mom , whom I love, came to New York, and wanted me to show her around! Of course I accepted the challenge. Wouldn't you?



Yeah I know, never gonna happen but it's my dream ok… She wanted to buy some fresh potted herbs. I guess there's a shortage in Florida. Whatever, it was a dream… So I took her to the outdoor Marquetta under the train tracks on 116th st in Harlem because everyone knows if you're looking for 'herbs' in Harlem that's the place to go. On the way, I summoned up the courage and asked, respectfully, if I could tweet that we were together, just those words…'shopping with the Hotmessmom.com' made me positively giddy. She agreed, I wanted to share that I was super cool with all my followers. But I couldn't get twitter to work, no matter how many times I tweeted, it wouldn't go, it just sat there in the draft folder mocking me.

We continued to shop. Then magically, like in all dreams, the Marquetta opened up in the lobby of a classy hotel. And there was a bar waiting for us. The focus zooming into the two vacant stools at the centre of the bar. It's MY dream ok, just go with it…I asked her if we could take some selfies so I could remember the event, she graciously accepted, which of course she would, we were out 'shopping TOGETHER!' But my iphone was playing up. I had it round the wrong way and I fumbled, my left hand wouldn't cooperate and I couldn't take the picture. This sucked so bad, how would my peeps know I was out with her? It was so frustrating. All I wanted was proof that I spent the day with this awesome blogger and nothing would go right. It was like one of those dreams when you have to run but you can't, no matter how hard you try.

We finally decided to call it a night and as we were leaving the lobby of the hotel,

the owner's dogs came out to greet us.Trying to impress my Hot Mess Mom bestie for the last time, I decided to make friends with them. The three dogs came closer and as they did, the German Shepherd, the one with a wheelchair on his back legs, started growling and attacked me.

I was attacked by a wheeelchair dog in my dreams while trying to impress a blogger whom I've never met that lives a dozen states away, I'm so ridiculous.

We both have red hair, so that's something right?

If she ever does come to NYC, I would definitely be available to do the tour of the Harlem Marquetta for the 'herbs' she needs. If she ever needs them 😉

I'm blaming her bottle…clearly this time it was more than a chance vodka was involved.

There's a Predator in Our Park

May 6, 2013

Warning- Take Care- Beware
There's a predator in Central Park. Up our end too. There have been warnings posted all over the news. This predator hides and waits for his victims. There have been many attacks. Poor unsuspecting victims. It's quite a problem. The authorities have patrols sweeping the northern end of the park. People are on alert, they're afraid, very afraid. When you go in the park you want to feel safe, you deserve to feel safe. It's part of the Central park experience… but right now it's not safe. Especially for the young, small and vunerable.

The authorities are trying to contain the hysteria, nobody wants a panic in any city park but this predator is scary. This morning I walked in the park. I was nervous. I worried that Sir Lickalot or even myself were in danger. But how could you feel unsafe in this tranquil place?



What scary bad thing could possibly lurk here? In a place where sitting by the water is so peaceful and thought provoking. The thought of our leisurely morning walks being interrupted by a beast is unacceptable!



But that's just what's happened. We now walk a little faster and hold our loved ones a little closer. There's less meandering and more spring in our step, for fear of an attack of this horrid predator. The warning signs are there…so are the media warnings . This monster is dangerous in the water and on land!

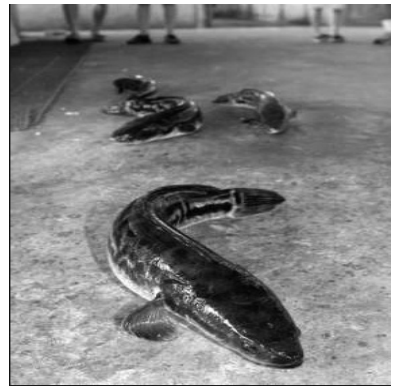




And here's the reason, wouldn't you be afraid of this?



we're all afraid…Especially when it can also survive and move on LAND…and grow large enough to attack a dog or small child!*



Consider this you public service announcement- **you've been warned**.
*I have no idea if it would attack a dog or a child but whose willing to risk it? Not me.

Why Do We Need Permission to Treat Ourselves?

May 7, 2013

I have a problem with pampering myself. I do. There I said it. It's some internal thing that says *you can't spend the money, you don't deserve it, you're supposed to struggle, hard work is the secret to life*. ~While all these things are true, hard work is important, and you will struggle through parts of your life, why does it have to be your whole existence? It comes from my upbringing, it comes from watching how others lived their lives. We struggle, we make do, we accept out lot in life.

But what if we all looked after ourselves, treated ourselves to things we deserve. We do deserve things, we're worthy. Wouldn't we all be happier? More relaxed? Wouldn't it make the struggling times worthwhile? I like the way I'm beginning to think! It sounds good, right?



I've had 2 spa massage/facial vouchers since Christmas, they were gifts and I haven't used them yet. Why? Well several reasons but the main one is I don't feel like I should. I feel like I don't deserve the break. I have to be here all the time working and doing for my family because that's what you to. It's dumb, I know but it's hard

to break free from. I work hard and I work long hours, this parenting thing has very little in the way of job satisfaction. Of course we love it and of course we see the fruits of our labours but it never ends and there's always another problem and complaint and whiny child waiting in the wings to drag you back down to the pit of hell. Just when you think things are going wonderfully, you're back to square one. So what's my point? I don't really know, I guess it's that we **do** deserve to have an hour off here and there to get our nails done or our hair or have a well deserved massage, go out to lunch, spend the money. Don't waste it, but use it to make your life happier and better. That's something I am still working on but it's important. You can't take it with you and you shouldn't deny yourself to pass it on the the kids. They need to get their own.

So I'm going this week to get myself massaged, maybe even twice, oooh I feel so rebellious! I am slowly changing my ways. Oh don't worry, I will have the guilt but I'll work through it while they're rubbing scented oil into my back as I listen to relaxing asian music…

Do you feel like this? Do you have issues with having time to yourself? Tell me about it, so I know I'm not the only crazy one…

Books to Read to your Toddlers when they say Again, Again.

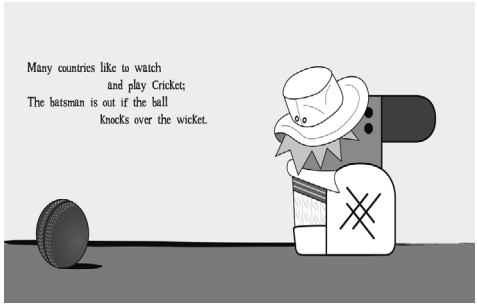
May 8, 2013

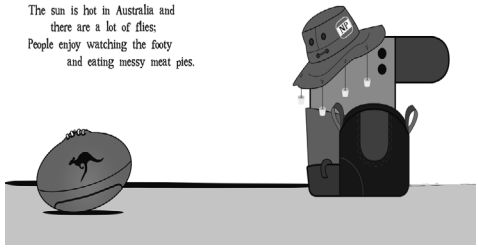
When I was reading books to my toddlers I would try to find something that wasn't mind numbingly boring for me, because we all know you're gonna read that book 66 gajillion times, so you better love it. I tried to find things that were cute but also had a cool theme. When we moved here to the U.S. Miss Gremlin was still so little, so I was always looking for Aussie stuff for her. I also tried to fine Aussie themes. I desperately wanted her to have an Aussie accent, we failed miserably, she's got some weird aussie/american/english hybrid thing going on. I blame Dora.

I came across these Noble Platypus books recently and although they're not written by an Aussie, they have a platypus as their hero. I was immediately attracted. Who doesn't want a platypus guiding you through life? Well I DO! And I know your toddler does… Even older kids love platypuses, look at how popular Perry the Platypus is on Phineas and Ferb. And he's the hero spy. Platypuses are like that, they know stuff.

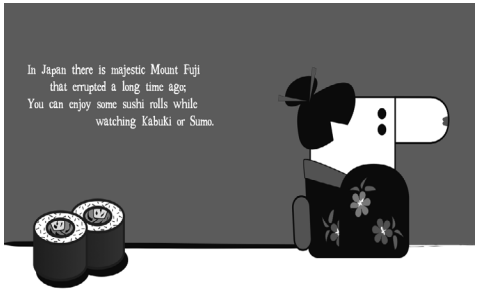


The Noble Platypus endeavours to teach toddlers about work and travel and play. He does so on a global front, exposing children to new things like cricket and Aussie Rules football. The obligatory baseball and hockey are in there but it's nice to see an author bringing other cultures into early learning in a simple way. It gives parents an opportunity to explore with their children things they might not get in an average toddler story.





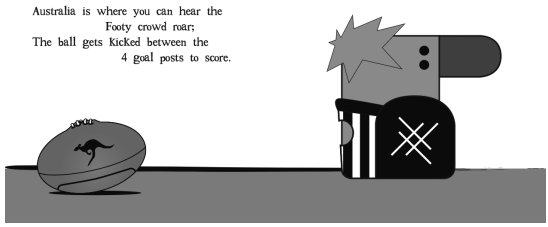
The artwork is very simple, which is great for the small folk, there's not too much going on to distract them from the story. It's bright and colourful and something I can see a small person carrying around until it falls apart. We all know how toddler get attached to their favourites!



I love these books, I think they're cute but also informative and simple in design. If you're looking for something new to share with your child or a gift for a friend I know Noble Platypus will thrill for hours and give you something to think about too. I'm sure they'll become a favourite in no time, just don't leave them anywhere.

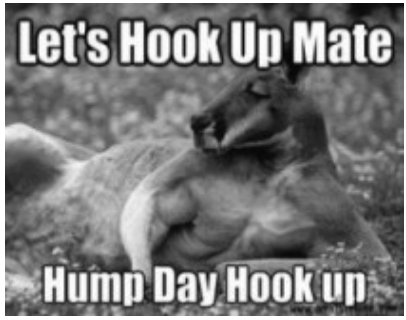
You can order them directly from nobleplatypus.com and here are some other title by author Christina Evans





Also be sure to visit Noble Platypus on facebook . He likes to be 'liked' too!

Oh wow! Time got away from me this week, Hump Day already?… ***Come Hook Up***, you know what to do 😉



How to Keep Your Family Happy and Healthy While on Vacation

May 10, 2013

Today I have a guest on the blog, my first one! It's very exciting… Let me introduce Kendra Thornton, who loves to travel and has a passion for talking about travel. She has some great tips to share for traveling with your family, to help keep you sane. Please Enjoy!



My family and I just returned from our family vacation. We finally had the money and the paid time off to take our vacation. I just wanted to share with you some tips I picked up along the way.

1. **Eat a Good Breakfast**

Starting with a good breakfast gives the family energy to have a good day.

Take advantage of any breakfast meal included with the hotel room.

You will save money on one less meal.

Eating a good breakfast will reduce the craving for sugary sweets later in the day.

A full tummy is a happy tummy (which makes for cheery children and parents!)

2. Pack Snacks for the Day

In case the kids get hungry between meals, pack some of their favorite snacks to save money.

Some snack ideas include dried fruit, cheese, pretzels, peanuts or dry cereal.

It is OK to let the kids have some sweets. You can still make healthy decisions at fast food places also if it is a last minute need.

Consider packing some fun size candy bars.

Pack snacks for the parents as well as the children.

3. Traveling Long Distances

While on the road to your destination, take along activities the kids love.

Ideas include favorite books to read or coloring and activity books.

Keeping the kids busy keeps them content.

Take frequent breaks to let the kids run around and go to the bathroom.

Use technology to your advantage and have the kids watch their favorite DVDs on portable DVD players or factory installed entertainment systems.

Let children listen to music or audio books on their iPod.

4. Keep the Regular Sleep Schedule

Try to have the kids get up and go to sleep at the regular time.

Keeping the kids on schedule ensures they get the proper sleep so they are happy and well rested instead of cranky. Keep in mind that most of the Orlando hotels in Walt Disney World have quiet hours for families to sleep peacefully throughout the night!

Adults will benefit from keeping their own sleep schedule as well.

If the kids still take naps, try to plan your day around nap time.

5. Hygiene

Unfortunately, I learned from Dr. Charles Gerba that airplane bathrooms are one of the most germ riddled environments.

Tests show that E. coli exists on most surfaces on airplane bathrooms.

Try to wash with hot soapy water in the bathroom.

Whether on the plane or elsewhere use hand sanitizer before eating.

Basically, the rule is wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after every activity.

Vacations are for having fun. It is OK if you cannot follow all of these travel tips. They are meant as general guidelines to keep you and your family healthy while on vacation.

Bio:



Kendra Thornton: Travel advocate, TV spokesperson, PR businesswoman, proud wife and mama of 3.

I am a long time travel expert who has been packing my bags and traveling the world since I was 3 months old! I've found my utmost desire in life is right here in my own home. I have mixed my excitement for travel by bringing the taste of authentic cuisine to my own home with some of my unique recipes and sharing some of my personal traveling tips. Enjoy!

Twitter: https://twitter.com/KendraThornton
Website: http://www.thorntonpr.com/

Happy Mother's Day!

May 12, 2013

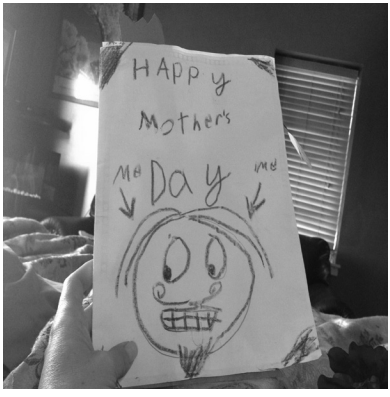
I woke up this morning to the smell of toast, wafting up the stairs… my stomach was grumbling and I was looking forward to eating… but then it started to take some time, ok, do they need help? Toast isn't that difficult. Don't go look, you'll spoil the surprise. But what if they burn stuff… it's the mother in me. It can't be helped… And then I heard a sound that made my heart skip a beat, the coffee grinder! Oh was I going to be in for a treat, toast AND coffee. What arrived was something of a pleasant surprise…

Eggs Benedict, bacon, toast juice and a perfect cafe latte!

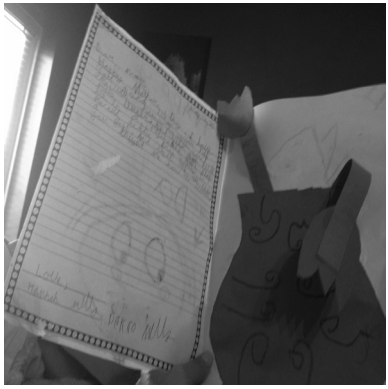


My job here is done, my children can make complicated breakfasts, I'm a very lucky mummy.

Then it was gift time, Miss Gremlin made a card at school, in my favourite colour!



Inside the card was a flower pot containing removable tulips with chores written on the stem, chores the children will do … but they are only redeemable ONCE Miss Gremlin insisted. She's a funny girl.

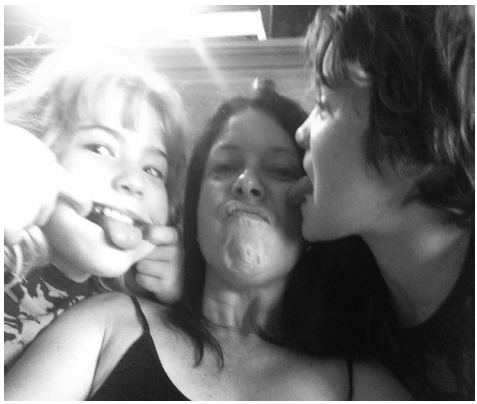


And a flower pen made by hand to make my writing so sweet.



And then we got silly with the camera…







Happy Mother's Day to all, may your children grow to make you an awesome breakfast, beautiful handmade gifts and the dumbest faces ever!

A Datevitation~ Wait… A What? Come See, You'll Love It!

May 13, 2013

Father's Day is coming up and thanks to Datevitation.com I am giving you the opportunity to win this really fun gift idea. Don't we all struggle to find the perfect gift for Dad? They're so hard to buy for! I always struggle with what to get. Maybe you are a new family and looking for something from baby to Daddy on his first special day. It's not like bub can go out shopping but they could totally watch you order one of these online 😉 These Datevitation booklets are fun for all occasions…They're even a great little motivational gift for children.

When I was reviewing for this post I made one for Miss Gremlin, there were lots of things to do with kids. It's such a fun versatile gift that I will be going back to make them again and again. It's so simple yet the recipients love them . Making one for Dad this Father's Day is a double bonus, because Dad gets treats and time to spend with the kids and while they do… we get some down time, see what I did there? You're welcome.

Datevitation.com is the web's first online platform to create a custom love coupon book. Unlike the pre-packaged love coupon books on the market, you pick the dates and can customize the text to your liking. Once you are done customizing the text in your book, Datevitation will print it out and ship it to you. My booklet was very simple to make and arrived in about 3 days! The packaging is really lovely, a natural envelope with surprise printed in gold on the front. Very classy.





Datevitation just launched its “boy” and “girl” characters with over 200 new activity illustrations specifically for kids and parents. Just in time for Father’s Day! These are the simple yet personal gifts that build precious memories and remind us what Father’s Day is really all about. There are many fun date ideas to choose from, so much fun for the kids to help design too.



Their library contains over 350 date ideas ranging from skydiving to stargazing even steamy adult-only activities.(I’ll be sneaking back later when nobody’s looking to make a naughty book for the King) We also have over 100 book cover options to suit any occasion.



Books normally start at just $20 so it makes for a thoughtful yet economical gift. But as a special treat for you guys, you can use the code 'AMOTHERLIFE' for $10 off your purchase in May or June. That means you can get your loved one a one-of-a-kind gift for Father's day starting at just $10! The order cut-off date for guaranteed delivery by Father's Day is **June 6** so make sure to get your order in before then!

Be sure to click on the button below to get started making your own Datevitation booklet for 'Dad' .

Did I mention…You are receiving $10 off ! Just use the code AMOTHERLIFE



Be sure to submit your giveaway entries too, you could ***win*** a booklet for Dad, someone has to, why not you?

a Rafflecopter giveaway

I was compensated for this post by receiving payment and a free custom made Datevitation booklet. All opinions are my own.

We Live in a Fish Bowl, Did You Know?

May 15, 2013

You know that feeling, when you live in the city that you kinda live in each others lives? Let me explain. Since the building across the street has been built and become occupied, I have spent many happy hours trying to work out who is who and what is going on over there! Oh come on everyone wants to know what the neighbours are up to right?!

Occasionally this habit offers up some little surprises, like the dark naked man playing with his dog (real dog) late one night, or the Asian couple having sex! Oops I've said too much.

But I often wonder if they're watching us too? When our beautiful neighbours lived next door, who we used to play tricks on, we discussed whether we were going to get window coverings once the building was up… J decided that nope, he was gonna parade around naked for a few days and then let the new across the street neighbours decide if they wanted to cover that shit up!

And basically we've taken the same approach, although the King did get timber venetian blinds while I was away one summer, it's is purely aesthetic for the inside of our apartment and not to stop the neighbours watching us of course 😉

But this fish bowl is not that kind. It's of a variety that is seldom seen unless you live with someone like the King, which I do, so please remember me in your nightly prayers, thanks…

It all started 2 Christmases ago, when searching for the perfect gift, he came across flying fish… because amazon sells EVERYthing. Naturally he purchased this as the perfect gift for a friend and decided perhaps we needed one too. Well when Christmas arrived and we unwrapped it, it became entirely obvious that the King, bless his heart, hadn't read any of the instructions and we required helium… so this fish was relegated to the closet, never to be seen again… Until last week's Spring cleaning frenzy. At which point the King decided this really would be fun and ordered up the helium from, yep you guessed it Amazon. (they really should start paying me commission, just sayin')

Well you may or may not have already seen the results of the arrival of the helium into this house… you can watch that here, I'll wait…but the real fun was making the fish…



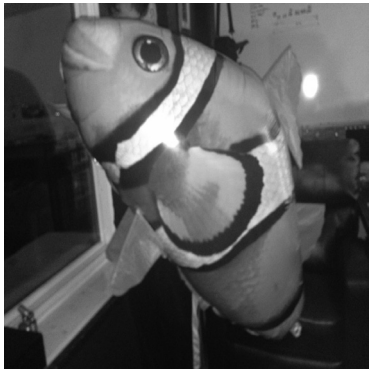
First one fills with helium



then one applies fins



and more fins



and then you have a fish

after about an hours work…

Tada!

A fishy and we shall call him Sid Fishious and we shall love him …And now he swims around our apartment at will, with the windows open or by remote if we choose. We live in a fish bowl.



Oh look a wall!



Getting this swimming thing right



Just swimming around



Oh look a wall!… are you sure you're not Dory?

Proof that we live in a real fish bowl and my life is crazier than yours… but should you want one of these, you can buy it here and live in your very own fish bowl.



Sid Fishious cruising by

Yesterday he just floated by to say hi… He'll float around until the helium leaks out and them we'll fill him again.

Come and link your posts to the Hump Day Hook Up…



I linked this post up to

Off With Your Boobs!

May 16, 2013

So all over the news is Angelina Jolie and how she lopped of her boobs to prevent cancer. Which she doesn't have. Wait what? Back that train up… She doesn't have cancer so she decided to have a double mastectomy in case she might get it? She has the gene which makes her predisposed to it but that doesn't mean she'll get it. Baby is on the crazy train!



image source

Now before you get all yelly. I applaud her guts and determination and all those other things that must have swayed her decision BUT is this insane? Why would you mutilate a perfectly healthy body on the off chance you might get cancer? It's not even certain she will.Predictions can be wrong.

My concern with this going public is that so many women will think that doing what Angelina has done is a good idea. The gene has been identified but not every woman who has the gene develops breast cancer, so why not treat that gene. Surely science can advance to do that. Why would you mutilate your body just in case? Men don't whip off their balls for fear of getting testicular cancer so why are women being told to do this? Where will it end? Are we going to give ourselves preventative frontal lobotomies just incase we get depression because our families are predisposed to it? I know there are preventative measures for all sorts of things and for some women this is a piece of mind thing and for others the risk is so great they really believe that doing this will stop them getting cancer but for someone so high profile to come out and admit to doing it, it saddens me. You watch double mastectomies increase, you watch women have copycat surgeries just because Angelina did. Because some people are that stupid.

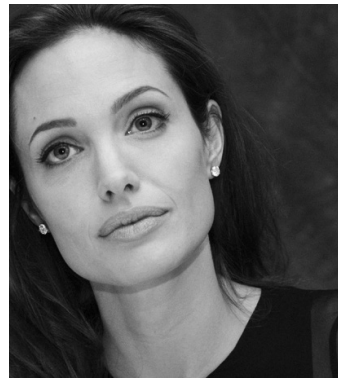


image source

The worse part… it's not even always a fix! There were interviews of other women who'd done this, for the same reason and now have ovarian cancer. Last night an interview aired with Angelina saying she is taking out her ovaries next because her mother died of ovarian cancer. I am sad for her. I'm sad that medicine has gone so far down the crazy train tunnel that we're cutting off our noses to spite our faces. I hope beyond hope her decisions are right for her and she doesn't go through all this trauma for nought but I worry that as women we are getting the wrong kind of care, and that the mutilation will continue.

What's the Deal with All the Kidnappings?

May 19, 2013

In all the hurriedness of life this post got buried, but so did the story on the news. However it's still interesting to talk about and so I am sharing this post with you anyway…I think it's still worth discussing. It's an incredible story of survival and escape…

I'm sure you have seen the news. Three more women escaped from captivity. They were kidnapped 10 years ago! The world has gone crazy!



photo source

How do these things happen? In the last 2 years this is the 3rd incident to make National News and a total of 5 women and 2 children have been emancipated. What sort of sick fucked up world do we live in where girls get snatched off the street and held captive for decades, in plain sight! These 3 women were kept less than 5 miles from their abduction site. It just blows my mind! The details are slowly coming out and they are horrific. One poor girl had 5 pregnancies and the abuser (I refuse to use his name) punched her in the stomach and starved her until she miscarried. Another of the women carried a child to term and delivered her in the house aided by the others. That child is now 6 and free. The reports say they were held separately in the house chained and padlocked in rooms and the basement. For 10 YEARS! And nobody noticed. How can it even happen that nobody saw anything suspicious? Is it because we mind our own business too much? I don't think so… plenty of people are investigated by CPS and found to be ok, why do these crazies slip through the cracks? It just shows that you can never really know a person.

His family had no idea what he was doing. What kind of person does this though? Imagine the discipline and the money it cost him to clothe and feed these captives for 10 years! They were found in good physical health so that's a God send. When they are stronger mentally, there will be interviews, their stories will be told. And those stories will be incredible. How do you live through something like that?

How will they adjust to freedom and try to return to the world beyond captivity? How do they make up for the loss of their teen years? A decade lost… no prom, no first dates, no birthday parties, unspeakable acts of cruelty performed on them. It's such a sad situation. There are so many questions with these stories. Was there ever a time when they though they would escape, how did they keep their sanity?

I think of their families, how do you never give up hope? How can you live everyday of *10 years* not knowing you're child is alive? How do you not think that they must be dead somewhere? When do you try to get closure? Those questions are hard for me because I'm a realist and you have to cope somehow. I wonder how I would handle it. I know the dad of Nina Dejesus said he never gave up, but really, honestly, deep down did they think that? 10 years is a long, long time. I am not judging in any way and I could never imagine what it would be like to have a missing child. I am so very glad for these young women to be reunited with their families. It's such a strange scenario. Over the next few months we will hear many details but it will also raise awareness for young people how to stay safe and how to avoid being the next

victim. I know it's reignited conversations in our house with the children. It's good to remember how to stay safe.

I wish them a swift recovery and adjustment to life back home and that the media will leave them alone until they're ready, but when they are, I hope they have the strength to share their stories with the world. These girls are an inspiration and we all have something to learn from them. What do you think?

Look Who's Coming to Visit Now!

May 20, 2013

Harlem is quite the place for filming. The NYC film Corporation makes sure that we get our fair share… It's nothing to have different streets blocked off every week. Someone is always up here. Law and Order SVU are the usual suspects, I guess their story lines lend themselves to our area. They set up around the kids school pretty regularly. So it's nothing strange to walk home through the set and see Mariska Hargitay, Christopher Meloni and Ice T just hanging out on their chairs between takes as we walk by, close enough to reach out and touch.

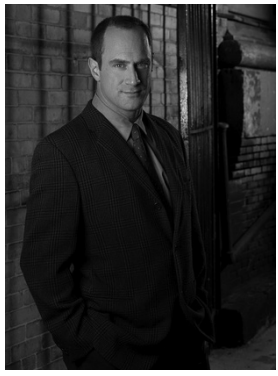


photo source



photo source



photo source

One time I was in Australia visiting, and an SVU episode came on featuring Morningside park and the kids school … it was very strange but also kinda fun…I walk Sir Lickalot there and it's on tv across the other side of the world!

We've had many other productions, including Rescue Me, who set fire to a building across the street one evening. The whole neighbourhood was our watching that one! It's never boring… When we first moved here, we had location scouts for Law and Order SVU check out our apartment for possible filming but it wasn't suitable at that time.

This week we have White Collar moving into the 'hood. The signs are up… so don't park there Wednesday or you'll get towed.



We'll go out and scout the location and walk nonchalantly by the set to get a glimpse … because why not?

I linked this post up here

You weren't here and I Freaked Out, How Can it be MY Fault?

May 21, 2013



Sir Lickalot flipped out on Sunday night. Like never before, like some kind of strange thing happened… AND WE MISSED IT. Let me start at the start and piece together the things we know. It was a crappy day weather wise and we spent the day inside playing scrabble and watching movies. We ordered lunch in and totally slothed around. We

even refilled Sid Fishious cos he was hanging low, like that cloud on the Jimmy Dean Breakfast sandwiches ad. By evening we decided we should at least walk outside to dinner, (that's code for I'm not cooking and if the King cooks any more steak we're all gonna mutiny) that way we can actually trick ourselves into thinking we've done something physical for the day.Hey walking to the door for hotwings is physical, getting the plates is physical but I'll play. We even chose a restaurant that was several blocks away… several, you guys! Not even across the street. For the exercise… And because it's new and we wanted to try it out. But mostly for the exercise… Dinner went as planned, Miss Gremlin was trying to sleep in her food until the coke kicked in then she couldn't sit still and then she crashed… We really should just learn and stop giving her soda. We enjoyed the food and will probably visit again although there were some problems, we know it's new and they're still finding their rhythm. It was still raining when we came out so we jumped in puddles all the way home, just laughing and talking and doing the thing you do on the streets in Harlem after dinner on a Sunday. But when we opened the door to the apartment, we found devastation, the likes of which we haven't seen from this dog before. Bits of fluff everywhere, all over the floor near the door. It took a while to register what it was but Grand Master D picked it… it was our door snake, you know the foam double sided one you buy on tv? The name escapes me but that one. The inside part was dead, hunted, caught, killed and lying in pieces on the floor. Sir Lickalot was crouching, knowing he'd done wrong, then as we rounded the corner, the cushions of the new couch were on the floor, also weird because they weren't like that when we left. My mind was working furiously, then upon closer inspection I could see little telltale hairs all over… dog hairs. He'd been on the couch. He never does that, well when I say never, I mean never unless something scary happens or the King gets out the drill.



SO something freaked him out while we were gone. But what? It must have been something bad because he chewed the door snake and got on the furniture. He's never done that before ever! Especially not while we're out. It's like he was a different dog. We were only gone for an hour and a half. His reaction was such that I got to talking about it with Lucy the next day because it was significant, we ran through scenarios and discussed it and then we got off track and started being silly. Maybe he had a party? And his doggy friends wrecked the place. Then she said maybe his dealer came over… which is feasible because he is a nervous nelly and does need something! But because he doesn't have opposable thumbs he couldn't open the door. Maybe Sid

Fishious attacked? Clown fish he may be… but still a threat is a threat. I've seen them eyeing each other.

I guess we'll never know but it certainly had me worried for a couple of days, trusting him inside unattended… but yesterday he was fine and today he'll be fine. Maybe he was just pissed off because it was raining and he didn't get his doggy stroll around the 'hood? I really wish he's just learn to talk so we know what the hell goes on in his head… but I guess it could have been worse. He could have left us a message on the new rugs.One of those not so nice messages.

Still the question remains…

Do you have crazy animals? Do they ever give you welcome home surprises?

That Time We Wished We Had a Delorian

May 22, 2013

Today I felt like pulling out something old to share with you… For new readers, you will get to dig deeper into my mind and for you faithful from the beginning readers, it's fun to look back… right?! Last August we went home to visit… Isn't that some kind of oxymoron? Oh well. Travelling against time is also an oxymoron but fun… Here's how we did.

{Actual post starts here} Got your time travel helmets on?

So that was a long trip…leaving Brisbane 8.25pm Monday night Australian time (6.30 am NY time) and overnighting in the fleabag hotel in Sydney. Having breakfast in The Qantas club this morning did start the day off nicely though and erased all thought of the evening's accommodations.We boarded Tuesday morning in Sydney 10am bound for LAX. Our first time on an Airbus A380. They are huge, however there really isn't any more comfort room. They're just for moving *more* people. I don't understand why airlines do that.



Our Plane from Sydney, an Airbus A380

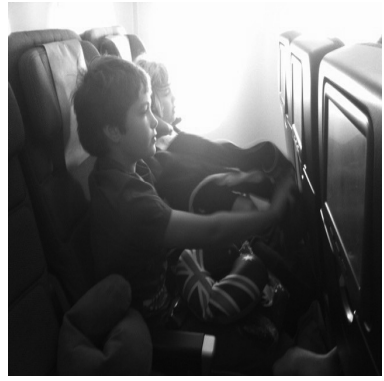
We walked in our door at 8pm Tuesday night New York time (10am Wednesday oz time), 38 hours later.

We've travelled back through several time zones and the kids thought this was pretty cool. We arrived home in time to watch the Back to the Future trilogy…go figure!

Several times I had to ask Grand Master D which city we were in ☺ I just couldn't work it out. All airports look the same.

Miss Gremlin chose not to sleep on the 14 hour flight, so she was a bit tired and cranky through the immigration and customs process in LAX… But that was thwarted and we caught our connection without any delay. Actually in comparison to some of the adults, she did quite well.

Before the wheels were even up she was OUT…



The kids getting settled for the trip from Sydney nothing was waking that child, not even the promise of food. She woke upon landing in New York 5 hours later. She's quite excited to have stayed awake 21 hours straight. Funny the things that kids find fun.

Grand Master D managed a few hours on the long flight and then he slept half the flight over to New York. He's a great traveller, no problems there ever. Although he was a little snappy at Miss Gremlin in LAX and JFK but that was due to fatigue and her whinging.



This is how they looked at the end of our travels

I think I managed about 2 hours on the long flight and half of the second flight, so we're all extremely happy to be home and heading for bed …

I had serious trouble keeping them awake on the hour and a half subway ride home. I knew if they fell asleep I wouldn't be able to wake them so I had to keep them up. I hate being mean like that but it will also help with the jetlag adjustment.

By the time we arrived here in New York we'd been through 4 security checks, 3 airports, 2 train stations and a hotel for 1 trip home. It's such a long way but we had a really great time. Miss Gremlin commented that she'll be ready to do that again in 2 years time ☺

After all the fun and travelling we really understand "There's ***absolutely*** no place like home."

Dont forget to come on over and hook up your old favourites…at the Hump Day Hook Up



And Now He Has A Real Throne

May 23, 2013

You know how you make those late night random Amazon purchases? NO? Just us then? Ok we could have an amazon problem but that's for another day… I'm sure there's a support group. We just settled down for the evening tv/computer thing we do after the kids have gone to bed and the King said 'Have you checked the package room?' Well, not knowing he had ordered anything, I hadn't checked for a couple of days. 'Have you checked the package room?' is also code for can you go get the parcel in the package room please. And because I'm an excellent wife, down I go to the lobby bare feet in my pj's, hey most of the neighbours have seen me in worse so… whatever. I find a package addressed to the King. Oh MY God, this man is totally ridiculous and naturally I tell him so as I walk in the door holding a box with a soft closing cherry wood toilet seat inside.

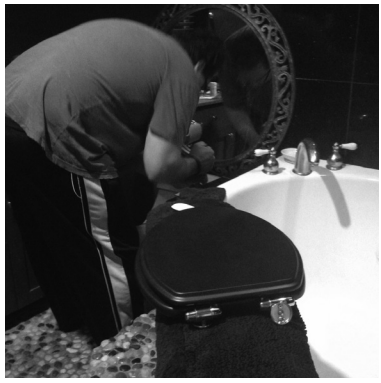


After I laugh at him for what seems like minutes and he explains it's all for my sweet little tushy, he's thoughtful like that. So we unpack it and head upstairs to install it… how hard can that be?



Well I'm here to tell you nothing goes as planned in this house *ever*… it's like there's a special dispensation or something, for shit to get fucked up royally… I guess that's why he's the King!

The old toilet seat, which has been happily seating us for the last 7 years, is screwed on in the usual way but won't come undone. As the swearing begins, I get the camera ready because I am almost certain that the porcelain will entirely shatter under the heavy handedness of the King. He's banging with a hammer then drilling till the tip of the drill is red hot and then banging some more.



You see the contractors in their 'infinite wisdom' (used very loosely) just used random screws and glued them in with sikaflex epoxy glue. Because why would you install something to be able to come off. Listen, these same people hooked up the hot water to the cistern so don't even start… An hour passed, countless swears and a freaked out dog later, the new royal seat is ready to be placed on one's throne but there's a glitch, naturally. A toilet is a toilet is a toilet right? WRONG. Let me enlighten you with 'toilets 101'. There's round ones and elongated ones… *We* have a round one, but the new seat is elongated, because why would you check *that* detail when haphazardly ordering late night on amazon? It's a minor detail but an important one nonetheless, which means that the mechanism is too long for the back and the installation isn't really gonna work. For fuck sake! It's 9:30 on a Tuesday night and we have one broken off loo seat and another which won't fit…it's at this point that I leave the room because it's all getting too ridiculous for words. He follows me down and the discussion turns to options. Option 1. Do we return the seat and get the round one, which I found after a 27second search on Amazon (yes I'm THAT good) or Option 2. do we keep this one and buy a new elongated toilet? You already know how this is gonna end, yes you do… because it's US. So now we're both furiously looking for the *right* toilet on Amazon, because why not. It must be *elongated*, and it must have jet flush because don't even get me started with the shit that gets left behind in the current one! Pun entirely intended ☺ And there it is… the throne for us, it's a low flow, dual flush, jet expulsion, elongated mother fucker of a toilet! There's probably extra arse washing attachments too but again that's another post.

So now to solve the immediate problem, somewhere to sit and think…the King ascends to his chamber to attach the seat as best he can. It has adjustments and he manages to make it work. He's nothing if not resourceful. It hangs over a bit at the front but it will do a fine job until the new toilet arrives. As he descends the stairs to announce that the throne is complete, I show him what else I have found, the perfect vanity for the children's bathroom. I have wanted one for ages, we don't have enough storage space and the pedestal sink we currently have is a total waste of space. He resists but as I explain, it's not just the children's bathroom but the main guest bathroom too, I also explain that the kids need places to put their stuff and Miss Gremlin will need places for her tampons and pads soon enough… it's at this point he cries out, 'I don't need an inventory, lady products would be just fine.' So lady products it is. I'm totally sending him out to get some now …☺ Evil? Probably.

Incidentally, while he was up in his throne room he managed to google a toilet installation video and reckons he totally has a handle on installing this new elongated bad boy upon arrival on his own. That will be a day to look forward to, now as for the vanity… I will have to work on him but I like my chances.

Tada…Like it? It suits us right? Of course it does and it doesn't even look like the wrong size.



Nothing to See Here.

May 24, 2013

You know those days when you do nothing? I mean really achieve absolutely nothing? Well for me, today is that day… I have literally done nothing, just passed the time away. Oh sure I was showered, dressed and out the door by 8:30 but that's because I was breakfasting… it's a word, ok. I needed to see people, other people, not the King people, but people who don't know what I've been doing …

After I whiled away a good couple of hours chatting and filling the emotional tank, I headed home. Thinking I should grab some bacon and eggs … just in case, I called into the butcher. More chatting, more emotional tank filling. By the time I hit the building I was feeling GOOD, the self esteem was feeling pretty shiny and nice. I walked in the door to find the King and Triple G still hanging out working on the upgrades they were doing when I left. And of course because I'm the wife I am, my first question was "Did you guys eat?" SUCKER

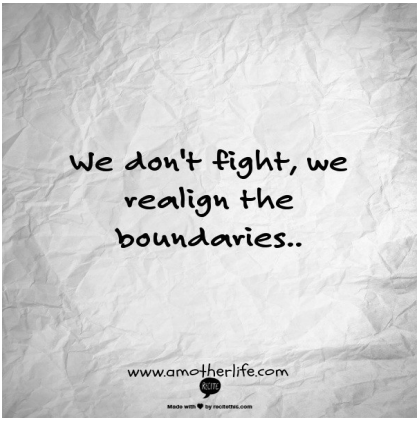
The resounding 'NO' made me shrink just that little bit…some of the shiny fell off… fuck it- Now I have to cook? But I covered it really well with"Well, lucky I bought some bacon and eggs, who wants bacon, eggs and beans for brunch?

I really am the best wife. I'll take my award now, thanks. *bows and waves*



Boundary Realignment is the New Fight.

May 28, 2013



Yesterday was not a good communications day for the King and I. He already has an attention span that is minimal at best, picture a ferret on crack, team that with zero patience and you get …" I have NO idea what you're saying" as a regular answer to something I might be trying to discuss. So trying to discuss anything of any significance is futile. However I tend to be a slow learner and still try to have these conversations where I expect him to listen and comprehend…In my defense over the last 23 years I have learned that the big stuff needs to be in writing. All our best fights are done by email. Come on, stop judging, this is an awesome way to fight! There's no emotion, and you have time to formulate how you want to respond. I'm way wittier that way :P

Anyway back to the weekend, we were not communicating well at all and while getting frustrated with each other, we had heated but playful banter. Miss Gremlin

didn't like it at all, she thought we were fighting. We had to explain that we don't really fight and we were just having a discussion. We have nothing really to fight about, we seem to have done all that many years ago, we know each other well enough to know when to pick the right time ☺ Like DON'T try to to talk about anything for at least an hour after the King wakes up! And you'll get a way better response to any strange requests or wrong doings after you've put out! (Am I right Ladies?)



photo source

While we were discussing all of this we were enjoying our meal together outside. Meals times are always great teachable moments.The most interesting topics come up, well in our house anyway! Grand Master D made a comment that he's never heard us fight and that was really cool. I felt inwardly proud of us as a couple. Of course by the time he came along we'd sorted out a lot in our relationship, even though we continue to have the occasional boundary realignment along the way. We talked to them both about having opinions and the fact that even though we're married, we are still our own people and we do have differing ideas and we do occasionally argue but we don't do it in front of them. We explained that it's not fair to them and not something they even need to know about. My parents never fought in front of me and I don't believe children need to be involved in their parents differences, it's unsettling.

Home needs to be a secure place and children should be shielded from marital problems as much as possible. I felt quite proud that the kids hadn't really heard us fight before… I feel like we're doing something right.

If you must argue and we all must sometimes, try to do it out of earshot of the children. I'm sure thats what all the experts say ☺

Over the years we've worked out how to fight really well… we email back and forth, get a bit yelly late at night so the kids don't hear, then after the appropriate amount of time the King will say 'I'm sorry you got angry at me', and then it's done!

It's quite perfect in it's own fucked up way. We're happy, and that's what counts, right?

How do you fight with your significant other? Do you try not to fight in front of the children? Do you use social media? Have you worked out most of the kinks in your relationship?

It's really about picking the right battles… isn't it?

What's Up with The Service Industry

May 30, 2013

So we started eye therapy yesterday, every Wednesday from now until probably the end of summer. She received her patch today. Argh she's a pirate. We're still learning the rhythm that is trekking downtown after school and so we arrived 30 minutes early. Totally fine because Miss Gremlin came prepared with lego to play with. The office was full, children coming and going, doctors checking cards, patients waiting and paying bills. But it's a small reception area, not a lot of room to move and at one point it was pretty full. Not uncomfortable but there were more people than chairs by half.

After the 30 minutes and a few more… because doctors always run late, Miss Gremlin went in for her session, I waited in the reception area. While I waited a dad came in, his child was on the way in a cab with the nanny… they were late. He announced they were on their way and he'd wait outside for them .



I couldn't been seen from the reception desk, the receptionist was sitting low, as is typical, behind the high counter. And then it began… the slinging off at that parent, the paying client… Spouting out her opinion for all to hear, her colleagues standing right there. She was very disrespectful, to the client AND to the doctor, her employer. I was rather shocked and a little bit horrified. Who was she to even have an opinion, especially in front of paying clients. Regardless of whether I was there or not. I don't know if she knew but the others sure did.

I was waiting for the f-bomb… it didn't come but almost everything else did. Calling her boss an asshole? I could probably get this woman fired. How do people like that get jobs? She's terrible on the phone too, so rude and condescending. After listening to this go on for 30-40 minutes. I decided that the only way I wouldn't be spoken about like that was to watch this bitch like a hawk and give her nothing to talk about. We will be there every week for the next 6-8 months, I have no desire to have an uncomfortable time of it.

If I ever get an opportunity to reveal what I heard or even tell her that this is not a way to behave, and I probably will over the next few months, I will have to make that decision then. For now I get to bitch to you about it and shake my head at the way people behave. They never cease to amaze!

Got any stories to share? Someone behaving wildly inappropriately and you caught them? I'd love to hear it…

I'm Gonna Need A BIG Stick

May 31, 2013

Do you ever go shopping for something and come out with something completely different? I swear that's our M.O…every damn time. We were out doing touristy stuff for a friend on the weekend, in the city, they needed the quintessential shots with some promo material, we were happy to oblige. It was an outing and kinda fun for the kids. Although let me tell you those damn dressed up characters are really pushy when it comes to their tips…If you visit New York then either stay away from Times Square or load up with singles. Especially if you have kids cos they get the kids and then you can't say no without risk of a meltdown. Am I right? Anyway, after we were fleeced of about 30 bucks our project was done. We were heading home when the King reminded me that Grand Master D still needed some black dress shoes, so like idiots we went shopping on a holiday weekend.

Over the last year or so Grand Master D has decided that brands count, not that I pay much attention but we were out with the King and his choice was Men's Wearhouse. I protested, thinking they wouldn't have his size but in we went, I often don't win these decisions.

As luck would have it they carry a size that within a couple months he'll fit into and so we made the plunge. However, and here's where it gets expensive. You remember why we went in, right? BLACK DRESS SHOES. Moving along… the beautiful brown leather Cole Haan shoes they picked together are never gonna work with a black suit and what do you know, they don't have black in that size. What would you do? Leave right? Go somewhere else and find what we need? Right?!…



Can you tell I'm loving this?

NUH AH, Not us, The King says, 'These are so beautiful I think we should look at suits instead.' I'm in the chair, resting my feet from another poor footwear choice trek around the city and the three of them head to the back of the store in search of a suit…About 15 minutes later the sales lady comes back to me and says I should come down because they are having great fun trying suits? WAH? Wait… we were getting blacks shoes… So I pick up my shoes and walk down to the change rooms. There's stuff everywhere and Grand Master D is getting fitted into a Grey Suit because that will match the brown shoes. Now next thing I know, it's a buy one get one sale and we're looking for black suits! Good Lord help me… we just want black shoes!… of course

suits need shirts and they are also buy one get one. I know when I'm beaten, I can just lay down and take it…



Oooh A suit, I look good

The tailor is ordered and measures up my little boy for his first big boy suit. The King insists we pick up in an hour and sends the tailor off in a frenzy to his machine downstairs… AND make it a cuff my man!

We head to the register with our brown shoes, grey suit, black suit, lilac shirt and matching tie and white shirt with red tie. FACE PALM… You know this is gonna hurt.We only wanted black shoes, God Damn it! The sales lady, bless her heart is the slowest woman in the universe and before she got us checked out (she needed 3 other attendants to help) the tailor delivered the altered pants. How's THAT for service!

My little boy is growing up… He looks so handsome, I'm gonna need a very big stick.



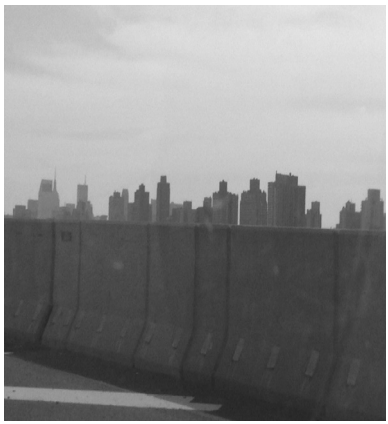
This boy, my friends is gonna break my heart!

SUMMER!

June 3, 2013

Our first official summer outing was had this weekend…and it was good!

We went over night to the Hamptons, I know, so pretentious… but we have friends out there and it's fun. We chose to drive out friday after the kids got out of school but the traffic was against us and it was a 5 hour trip… WTF people… 5 hours! It didn't matter, we had fun, I got quite an education from my son… but more on that later, anyway half the fun is in the drive, right?





We arrived in time for dinner, it was still light out and the kids were off. Stretching their city legs in the wide open spaces. We stayed friday night and all day saturday and at 3pm we headed back to the city…



wide open spaces



Cool off time



I look cool right?



3.2.1!

And found the most delicious Indian food on our block! Yep I think we'll be seeing more indian in our future.

As most weekends go, you get home sunday exhausted and then have to get up monday for work and school. It sucks right, well we got up and it was still Sunday! Another free day! It felt like a long weekend… So awesome to have a get away and stay home too. I highly recommend doing it that way.

The kids had so much fun, running around, riding the motorbike and swimming. I may have forgotten sunscreen… oops my bad, but you know you've had a good weekend when you feel the scorch of sunburn…

The King was totally relaxed.





We even got the toes out… wild right?





How did you spend your first warm weekend?
I linked this post up to:

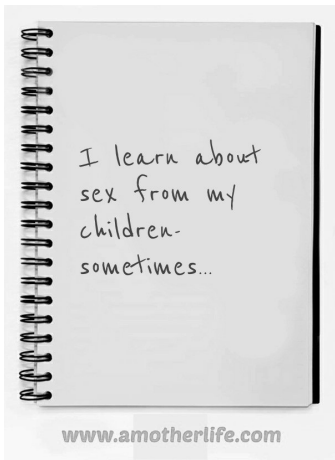
I Don't Even Know What This Means!

June 4, 2013

This conversation really happened. I'm not really sure who is the most embarrassed… maybe you can decide. Driving out of town on friday afternoon, now you know that driving can get a bit boring but along the way there are things to distract and give amusement.

The scene is set, driving along the Long Island Expressway, the King announces "That's a big 'Merican flag!"

Miss Gremlin pipes up: "What's a 'Merican?"



Grand Master D: "It's a fur bikini!"
The King: "Wait What? How do you know about that?"

Miss Gremlin: "A what?"
At this point I'm thinking what the hell are they talking about , because I wasn't really paying attention… because, you know, twitter and facebook!
But I'm tuned in now…
The King asks again:" How do you know about that?"
GMD :"Conan,…long uncomfortable pause, thinking, shit, I've said too much.
Me: "Maybe you shouldn't be watching Conan! And what is it again?"
King: "A merkin"
Me: "What the hell *is* that? Ok how do you spell that? I'm googling it"
GMD: "Um … M-e-r?"
ME : "never mind! I found it OMG! Grand Master D, how did you know about this?"
Miss Gremlin: "What the?" (no she's not allowed to say 'what the' but I let it slide, you understand) "Who would want a fur bikini?"

The car broke out in to uncontrollable fits of laughter for a long time, miles even. We all had tears rolling down our faces, gasping for breath and I came really close to peeing!

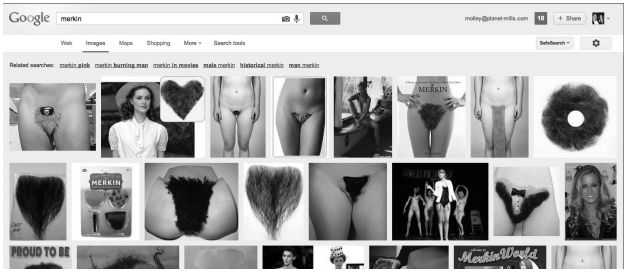
Here's the definition:

The *Oxford Companion to the Body* dates the origin of the pubic wig to the 1450s. According to the publication, women would shave their pubic hair for personal hygiene and to combat pubic lice. They would then don a merkin. Also, prostitutes would wear a merkin to cover up signs of disease, such as syphilis.[1][2]

It has also been suggested that when male actors played female parts onstage, they would cover their genitals with a merkin so they could expose themselves as women in nude scenes.[3]

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* first use of the term itself was in 1617.

So if you didn't know what a merkin was before, now you do! If you did… why didn't you tell me? How come I had to learn it from my 12 year old who desperately wanted to change the subject!

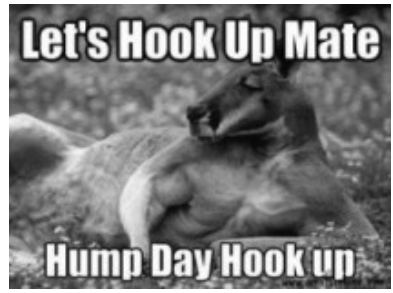


This is what happens when you google it…

Not in a Movie, Again…

June 5, 2013

So because it's Hump Day and we're sharing old posts, I dug this one up… It's about the time I wasn't in a movie and Densel didn't save me! Oh yeah, sometimes the subway stops too!



Actual post starts here…

I had my first bonafide, actual, stuck in the tunnel subway ride on the weekend. We were headed downtown for some awesome family weekend activity, when between 86th and 81st the train came to a screeching halt.

Now I wasn't too concerned to start with because as millions of strap-hangers know, the MTA sucks. Trains stop, then go and some drivers bounce the brakes like Captain Kangaroo and some go too fast and others go too slow. The announcements are never audible because of the crappy speakers.

Basically getting on a subway train in New York is an overall crappy experience however I've always managed to get to my end destination without too much trouble.

Sure some days are more entertaining than others, some are more creepy too and occasionally you wonder why the hell didn't I take a cab?

Well to take a cab is to put your life in someone's hands who a) can't drive, b) doesn't know where he's going or *speak English* and c) probably only arrived in the country last week … remember The Terminal with Tom Hanks? Occasionally you'll get a good one but not very often. I just don't take them anymore.

Anyway I digress…

So there we were, stuck in the tunnel. As I've said, I've done this before…it's usually only about 5 minutes… then they shut the train off and we're there, in the train, in the tunnel, in silence. :(

As they turned the train off there was a collective 'sigh' from the passengers in our car. An 'Oh *great*' sigh, you know the kind. I said something like "Oho" to the King and he said "Wait til they turn the lights out!"

I'm glad that didn't happen.

So we were marinating there in our subway car with everyone else, when an engineer came busting through the door at a breakneck pace checking something, radio at his hip blasting out instructions, then on to the next car. I imagine he was going right to the end of the train.

Are we in a movie?

Of course while we were sitting there all sorts of images came to mind… I didn't feel a bump, did we hit someone?

No, we're between stations, no one would be there.

Did something break? What could be wrong. The stages of panic ran through my head.

Then the King referenced the movie 'The Taking of Pelham 123', and I said 'If Densel comes through that end door, in fact if any actor does, then I guess we'll know it's a movie.' But no one famous did, just a different conductor asking if anybody tried

to get off, open the doors while the train was moving or if anything was stuck in the door? UMM…no… really? Nothing like that happened in our car and so she continued moving forward through the train.

Waiting, waiting…

By this time we'd been there about 20 minutes and during this time, only once was there any announcement saying what was happening and the description was pretty vague. There was no 'Sorry for any inconvenience'. The MTA really don't care about your time or inconvenience.

And then, as if it never happened, the train started back up and we continued on without explanation.

You know, exactly like when you get hauled into security or immigration at the airport. They eventually let you go but *never* tell what the problem was. Oh that hasn't happened to you? Just me then? Right.

After a few minutes there *was* an announcement, like it was an after thought 'sorry folks' and that was it.

I wasn't in a movie, I didn't get to walk the tracks in the subway tunnel, I didn't even freak out, which I'm quite proud to say …we were just late to our destination.

Totally not in a movie that day…

Don't forget to come and link up to the **Hump Day Hook Up** or just come and read some funny stories…

School's Over When the Tests are Done

June 6, 2013

You guys got pretty riled up the other week when I posted about these ridiculous state tests and the Common Core standards, so if we're gonna talk education, let's get all the cards out on the table. Is this what your child's education looks like?

no spelling tests
no grammar
no times tables by rote
no show and tell
no handwriting

teaching to the tests and learning how to fill in bubble sheets. (A very important skill *eyeroll*)

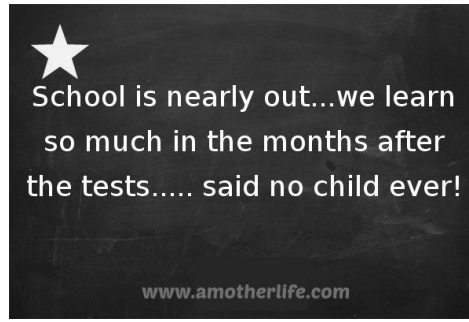
Do they still have:
collaborative learning
hands on manipulatives
creative writing
field trips
art/music
after school programs

As the funding gets tighter and the teachers are being held accountable by state test gradings. It's a wonder our kids can function at all.

School is almost over now, for some states it already is…My kids are basically marking time, not really doing too much in the way of learning. It's not the teachers'

fault, it's just the way of the system. June is the month of field trips. Miss Gremlin brought a list home the other day with so many trips to fill in the next 3 weeks that it made my head spin… not to mention my wallet 😉

Grand Master D's math/science teacher left the week before the April tests to have her baby and I am happy for her, you can't always plan these things, but it's left the upper grades, 7 and 8 with out a teacher…and while Admin has scrambled to find a replacement, several in fact who just don't show, the kids have not really been learning much. The law requires a licensed math teacher to teach the curriculum but aren't all the sub's licenced to teach? Why so many hoops? Why can't the subs just pick up in the text and continue on? Grand Master D has complained and complained about being bored in the mornings, doing puzzles and worksheets. It's a worry… April to end of june… no teacher? It's glorified babysitting with the subs, not to mention missing instruction. How's that going to count to the kids end of year scores?



And now there's a ground swell among many principals, that they will be disregarding the test results this year anyway for the admissions process. They were unfair, too hard, too long. The kids didn't finish them, students were very stressed,some crying. It's makes me worry for what comes next. Is this the death nell for state testing? One can only hope… right?

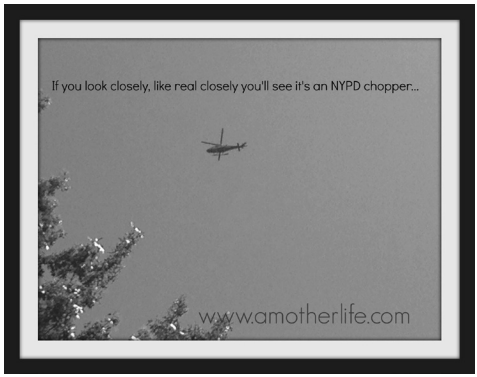
For a laugh, the kids are home today… It's Chancellor's Day. Whatever that means… By all means let's have a thursday off school for no real reason when our 13 week summer break is a mere 3 weeks away. And we wonder why our kids aren't ready for college or real life for that matter…

It's Harlem, We See Plenty of Crazy…

June 8, 2013

The serenity is broken by fireworks buzzing past our heads from the street below… They usually start in May, getting ready for July 4th and then they continue to be set off all through July and well into August. Some nights it sounds like a carnival other nights, Beirut because of the gun fire and motorcross bikes.

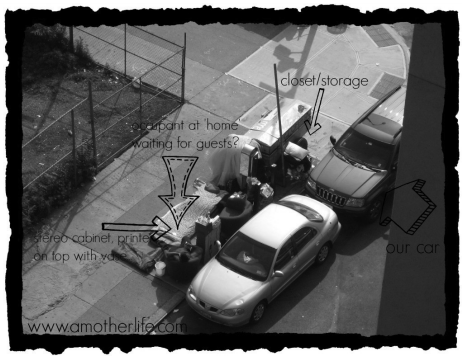
Often in the daytime we have the helicopters buzzing… In this neighbourhood, that usually means someone has done something stupid. And stupid seems to happen a lot around here. Today those noisy machines were hovering directly over head, for an hour! I guess the perps were hiding well. There wasn't much street activity, which probably means they were just checking stuff out. It's just like that here…



At night the search lights from the choppers light up the 'hood in a different way. Crisscrossing across the night sky and there's always more than one.

But it's better than it was when we first came, fresh off the boat, so to speak. I was so naive. I saw some really crazy shit…There was a needle exchange clinic around the corner and lots of empty blocks. The crack heads would sit on our garden and smoke their crack, cos it was comfy…I'd never seen crack or anyone smoke it before, so we all learned together. Luckily the kids were too little to notice. Because of the crack, the hookers were around too. Lovely girls really all strung out on crack , just looking for their next money source.

A homeless guy set up house on the corner, complete with rugs, couches and lamps. But then the cops came and threw it all over the fence. He lived there happily for 3 whole days!



On any given Saturday night the entertainment on our block was loud and random. Often the street would fill up with cop cars and plain unmarked cars and even a taxi. This is how I learned there was an undercover yellow cab. Did you know that?

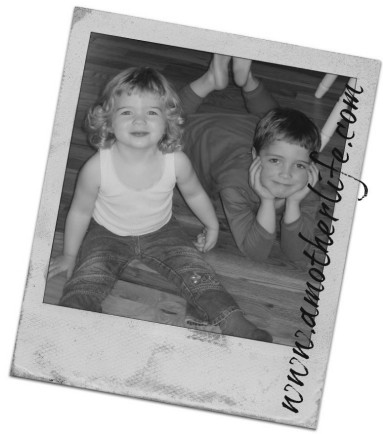
One evening, late, The King and the Princess were coming home from a function and cruising the 'hood for a parking space, around here they're rarer than hen's teeth, after 6pm. After circling for some time they found one, one street down but there were two men rolling on the ground fighting, it was 1am after all. The girlfriend was screaming at them to get up and out of the way. Now the King, not being one to be deterred ever, started slowly edging into the space, where the brawlers were, as he edged in, they rolled out, continuing to fight. It was like a synchronized ballet

performance. They finally got out of the way and he neatly parked the car but as he and the Princess began to exit the vehicle the fighters got up and one pulled his gun out and fired 3 shots in the air. Thinking very fast the King dialled 911 but from his lap using hands-free dialing. The last thing you want when a drunken brawler fires a gun, is for him to see you calling the popo. Those boys in blue rained down on that scene like flies on a shit pile…You've never seen something appear so fast. Off to jail those brawlers went, with the girlfriend cursing them out all the way.

Another time, as I was coming home from the playground with the kids, who were 2 and 5, a car came screaming up the road on the wrong side , slammed on its brakes and four HUGE guys jumped out with guns drawn…in broad daylight! I was less than 20 feet away. My first instinct was to see which way they were holding those weapons so as to determine whether I was safe or to run like shit the other way. As I was sizing up the scene, one of them saw me, said "shit!' with a look of horror on his face and I registered at that exact moment, they were cops because they had the double handed fist grip going on and not the sideways gangsta hold and a gangsta wouldn't care if kids were around. A quick turn right and a hightail outta there we did do… I didn't leave the apartment for about 3 days. It unnerved me that much.

We have 9mm shells we found outside the building, but not in a long time.

ë



Not long after that, I was involved in a mugging, not the victim but I chased the guy away, called 911 and stayed with the girl until they came. I later had to go to the precinct to try and identify the assailant. It was at lunch time and Miss Gremlin and I were walking home from a 'Mommy and me' class. I saw him in the bushes but I thought he was just peeing, he obviously decided a) I didn't have what he wanted and b) was too difficult a target as I had a small child… you know mama bear goes crazy ass when attacked. The girl was only one flight of stairs behind me, so I was able to help quickly. He got her ipod but she wasn't hurt.

The cops used to use our rooftop as a look out vantage point around the 'hood. Ours was one of the first 'new' buildings and therefore towered over the neighbourhood and they could see all sorts of things…

It's changed here a lot since then.

In the early days, I was pretty freaked out but things have improved and I've

gotten braver as well. It's not perfect but it's so much better. When the kids get home, they give me a report that they saw another arrest in the street or the trail bikes are out again. They're learning to spot the real danger.

Nowadays we mostly just smile and keep walking, not too much phases us anymore, we know the drill. *Hey, we live in Harlem, Yo!* The Detectives come to party now ☺



Have you ever lived in a neighbourhood with 'character'? I'd love to hear your experiences, has it changed you much?

Meaningless Monday Memories

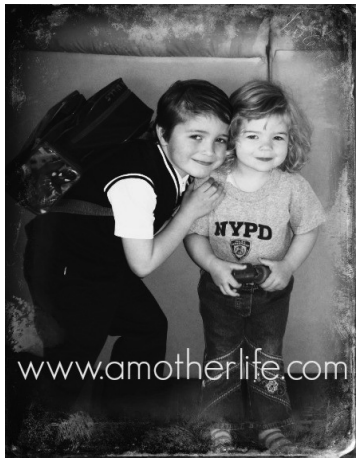
June 10, 2013

I'm calling tonight Meaningless Monday Memories…
I worked really hard today on other people's stuff so here's some cute stuff for you just to go AWWW!

It's all I got 😉



My family of pirates… arrrrghhh



Grand Master D's first day of school
Grand Master D's first day of school…



Miss Gremlin…as her favourite character…



And my Boys!

How many times did you go awwww?
I linked this post up to

Are We There Yet?

June 11, 2013

Seriously, this school year will NOT DIE… Yesterday was a half day. Brilliant idea. Make the kids get up on a Monday morning to go to school until 11:30. These guys are smokin' crack! I may need some soon but this is how we're limping to the finish line…



6:40… I'm rudely awoken from awesome dreams by 'natural' buzzing of the wrist from my Up by Jawbone band. I head to the loo to read my latest tweets and facebook stuff then silently slip downstairs so as to not wake the King. I shut one door and open the other for Sir Lickalot, who is so pleased to see my feet hit the floor, he immediately 'talks' as loud as he can. I shush and direct him out and he takes care of his tweets and facebook updates.

6:45. I struggle to the couch where I flop, just to get myself together enough to face the day…I open my laptop because what else would you do but delve immediately into the internet in the morning. I whizz around checking stats and comments on the blog, read more in depth into the facebook statuses and delete the 65 Target, Victoria Secret and Old Navy emails I have accrued since midnight's last check. I check the time…

6:53, great plenty of time before getting the children up at **7:00**. Then I see my A Mother Life facebook has ***666*** likes! Panicked, I head to my groups to plead for salvation in the form of ONE MORE LIKE. I look up at the cable box.

7:04, shit… I quickly jump up and head toward the Junior suite, where the cherubs enjoy their last moments of slumber before the hell that is a school morning washes over them. I go to Grand Master D first, as he's the hardest to get moving. I swear this child turned 11 and received cement shoes…He wakes with a start, like he does every

morning. I gently stroke his arm after I've already started calling his name. He grumbles and turns over. I head around the other side to wake my shiny morning baby… Miss Gremlin. I repeat the procedure, gently stroking arm after saying her name… She's less than chipper this morning. Its just that time of year…but I persist in my task knowing there's no other way. I head back to Grand Master D, who is comatose once again… Shit boy… 'GET UP mate… Come on, lets go.'

7:15 They finally stumble out of the room. Shit, we're late…I point to the bathroom for Miss Gremlin, otherwise she waits until Grand Master D is in the shower… every damn day. I ask what they'd like for breakfast and begin my frenzied kitchen whirlwind…raisin bran, vegemite toast and pineapple juice for her… As Grand Master D tries desperately to snuggle down into the bar stool at the counter, I painfully extract his breakfast request. Fruit loops and raisin toast and apple juice please. I dispense the gummy vits and have a glass of water while I wait to butter toast. A quick look at the clock shows **7:25**.

While they're munching, I get their clothes ready, placing hers on the end of her bed and his just inside the bathroom. I hurry them up with their eating as the clock reads **7:30**, mockingly.

I finish my water and rush them to get dressed. Grand Master D showers and Miss Gremlin dresses. She comes out, all ready within a few minutes while Grand Master D is still in the shower. This kid is the cleanest boy I know! He finally exits the bathroom, it's a good day as I haven't had to knock 3 times…time check

7:44 We're ok, five minutes they can do it… Miss Gremlin is sent to the bathroom to brush her teeth, with a reminder to 'do a good job' while I call into Grand Master D to get off his bed and get dressed, but he's dressed this morning, that was yesterday…

7:48 panic begins to rise in my chest… Miss Gremlin's almost good to go and asks me to help her untie the knots of champions in her laces. As we work together we finish a shoe each and she puts them on, grabs her bag and the suit for dry cleaning and heads out the door! She's my favourite today… She wins the go to school race.

I head back to check on Grand Master D's progress. He's brushing his teeth… no he's squeezing a zit. OMG what have I started… anyway. I give him a time update and he looks ok, it' **7:50** but if he leaves now he'll make it by 8:00. He leaves the bathroom, we're on track , we're gonna make it …

And then it all falls apart! I don't even know what stops him… but the next time I look it's **7:56** and I'm in a frenzy… lets go! You're gonna be late again! Come ON!

How did we ever get out the door by 7:40 when I was walking them? I know, less free will, I was in charge… but now I just sit and wait as the clock on the cable box flips from **7:59** to **8:00,** my dreams of not receiving a call from school at 6pm are shattered. He comes and hugs and kisses me and I say good bye. My reward for being patient. ☺ I hear the elevator and then I hear the lock on the door, it jiggles, clinks and nothing… I get up and open the door and there's Grand Master D… 'I need a pen.' he announces. I offer him the one on my desk 5 feet from the door but he walks down the 30' hallway into his room to get HIS pen. Minutes tick by, well it seems that way… he re-emerges with his pen and walks out the door.

They're gone… it's over.I slump on the couch to regain my composure… coffee, that's what I need .

You should be proud! I manage all of that every day with out coffee!

But soon, very soon, it will be summer and I will wake naturally without the buzz of an armband alarm, probably around 8, without the frenzy and without the panic of being late…but not today, not this week…

How Lucy Interviewed Me and Now She's a Hooker…WHA?

June 12, 2013



This week on the Hump Day Hook Up, I decided to invite Lucy to share in the fun. Now this is something that is done around the blogosphere and so not being one to miss out, I'm playing too. I first me Lucy on twitter, she was this awesome, cool witty chick who said super funny stuff. She was at #wineparty, Starr from The Insomniac's Dream had dragged me along. I couldn't keep up, I didn't know the rules but Lucy was nice to me and I decided to stalk her for a bit. I'm all about loving on the people who give me attention. Is that wrong?

Anyway, weeks passed and she didn't unfollow me and then we came together in a group called The Epistolarians, where a kickass group of women bloggers, who like to be a little edgy, formed a bond. From there it blossomed into a full blown friendship and now we rarely go a day without chatting on some form of media, often all at once. You should see me balance conversations on twitter, facebook and txt at the same time. I rock.

We started some collaborative working and it was fun. Even Google chatting when we could. It was during one of those work sessions that the Hump Day Hook Up was born and so I have Lucy to thank for throwing me to the wolves and loving every second of it. I felt the need to share the fun with her and so I invited her to co host last week but as usual real life got in the way, therefore it didn't happen. However, persistant I am and although we're both buried in end of year school stuff and other real life business, we managed to carve out 25 minutes of work time to pull this off.

So here she is my gal pal Lucy from My Life As Lucille interviewing me…

Seemed appropriate 😉



So now you know… go link up one of your favourite old posts to the Hump Day Hook Up. Then go Love Lucy!



The Homeless Take Credit Card…? Begging joins the 21st Century

June 13, 2013

Walking to the supermarket this evening, for the third time today, I passed the homeless girl on crutches with one leg…She's always on our corner, I guess it's a lucrative spot.

'Can you help me?' She says, waving her cardboard cup almost in my face.

I gave my usual response, 'Sorry, no change'… and kept walking, simply because if I gave to every soul begging on the corner, I'd need a bigger wallet!

To which she replies, 'I take credit card!'

Say what? 'Of course you do!'



I laughed all the way to the supermarket…because, shit, she may be begging but she's witty!

On the way back, I gave her 2 bucks because she made me laugh… Her answer to my generosity and compliment about her style? 'I'm serious about the credit cards, ma'am'…

Still making me laugh lady, still!

The 'Fathers' in my Life

June 15, 2013

Father's Day is coming up on the weekend. We shopped this afternoon and as long as Mr Amazon delivers on time, we're gonna be awesome at the gift giving. If not we'll have a do over. Wouldn't be the first time 😉

I started thinking of the father influences in my life. Of course I had *my* dad until very recently and I've written about him **here** and **here**. I miss him everyday. But I was thinking about others who have influenced my image of a Father.

My Granddad died when I was 10, he lived 8 hours away until the last 18 months of his life. I didn't have a lot of time with him but I still have great memories.He came from England with my grand mother and 5 kids in 1956, the oldest child coming later, to a land so totally foreign to him that he longed to return to England for the rest of his life. He never did. His children thrived in the new land though and so he sacrificed for his children. He left his family to make a new, better life for his children. I do remember learning about Roman Numerals from him, sitting quietly on the front step, him patiently teaching me. That's my strongest memory. He was an artist, a creative sole and a piano restorer and tuner. Funny how life works… I married one of those :P Maybe Granddad was more influence than I thought.

My Pop was a hard man, a victim of the times, he married young, in the 20's it's what you did when you're girl was in trouble. He was a tyrant of a father and the stories my dad told of his childhood were awful. Later in life Pop mellowed but only slightly. I heard stories that I was his favourite grandchild when I was little but I never felt that way. He loved the land but circumstances took him away from that love. I think it made him bitter. My earliest memories of him were visiting as a kid. By that stage, Nan and Pop lived on a one acre block in a large country town. To us kids that back yard was amazing, full of fruit trees and a vegie garden to die for, a chook shed with lots of chooks and there was even a sheep or 2 right down the back that Pop would fatten up, then kill to eat. It was the 70's but they lived like it was the 30's still. Nan used to cook on an old fuel stove, heated by fire wood only. She was a tremendous cook. It was quite the country retirement. As they got older, they decided to move closer to their boys and sold up and moved to our town. The block was way smaller, no room for big garden. In fact I can't remember if he had a vegie garden but he may have. I do remember he made a hothouse out of the back verandah. The ferns he grew were so beautiful! Like a rainforest. Those next couple of years we became closer, I showed interest in his plants and he would spend time in the hothouse teaching me. He would give the scrawny little ferns in the old pots to me to learn to grow them. My bedroom from the age of 12 looked like a nursery. I ruined the windowsill from the water. By the time I was 13, he was dying of bone marrow cancer, we used to go and visit him a couple of times a week in the hospital. It was boring but that's what you do for family. I was a kid, not as sophisticated as 13 yos are today. I didn't really understand the process. He died in September and I remember dealing with death for the first time. He died just before his 73rd birthday, just like his son… Is there something in that?

I have a large family and many uncles on both sides. I have good relationships with all of them and feel a father type connection with them all. I feel very lucky to have had so many different male influences in my life.

To the King, the father of my children. I find blessings everyday. I don't always agree with his fathering, but parenting is a journey. He had different influences to me. His childhood was very different to mine and his father had a very different approach.

Some of it rubbed off and some of it showed the King how NOT to do stuff. I love everything he does with and for his children. A better husband and father I couldn't wish for, he completes me … 😉

I wish for all the fathers a meaningful day with their children. Not everyone has a happy relationship but I hope Father's Day can help bring families together. For those whose father's have gone on without them, I pray for peace and happy memories.



Summer Camp Mommy

June 17, 2013



Arztsamui/freedigitalphotos.net

Summer is fast approaching, the kids are almost out. What are you gonna do with yours for the long break from school? If you're a stay at home mom, I'm sure you're already dreading it. Oh sure you'll revel in the lazy mornings, the relaxed breakfasts and the morning backyard activities. But by mid afternoon they'll be bored, fighting and you'll be ready for September. And that just the first week! So what *are* you going to do with your little ones?

There are many options in the form of day camps and even sleep away camps available but those suckers are e-x-p-e-n-s-i-v-e. Some sleep away camps are so ridiculously over priced - you pay less for a small car! Awesome concept but back in the real world we've gotta get a little more creative.

If you live in a city then you have many day trip options. There are museums, art galleries, parks and playgrounds. If you're lucky there's water nearby, which gives the children a place to cool off from the summer heat.

If you're in the country you have so much open space and I'm not going home this year so can we pitch a tent in your driveway? Kidding… kind of.

There's planning involved for sure being Summer Camp Mommy, but you can make it a fun thing, planning a week at a time and soon enough it'll be Labor day, time for school supplies shopping and putting away those white pants. I know about these fashion things… Why not pretend you're a homeschooling mom, just for the fun. It's totally doable and a novelty all round, especially knowing they'll be back at school soon enough…didn't you play teachers when you were a kid? Besides, I've heard the movement is growing rapidly, so there must be something to it!

You can set the kids some lessons in the mornings, so their little brains don't forget what they spent all year learning. I'm sure the school supplied you with summer packets an inch thick, so finding material won't be difficult! Then arrange to spend the afternoon out. There are plenty of free places to go if you have a tight budget, which most of us do, otherwise you would have been shipped them off to sleep away camp already, right? Most cities have community websites chocked full of free summer activities. Be sure to pack picnic lunches and home snacks so that you don't spend money on junk food out. You can use the home activities to stock up!

It's advisable to have a couple of home days a week, just so you can get your laundry done. Hehehe, yeah I went there. And don't forget to include all those things you can do on rainy days like cooking, painting, making forts and board games on your schedule. Set them up and let them go for it. You don't have to supervise every waking minute and there's plenty of flexibility but if you have a loose plan, the next 13 weeks won't feel so daunting.

With a little structure and planning, Summer Camp Mommy will keep everyone happy, well mostly…and when it's all too hard, remember there's always vodka!

That's my plan…

I am a Mama Bear

June 18, 2013

I went Mama Bear on a kid the other day. I happened to be at the school delivering Grand Master D's lunch and saw Miss Gremlin lined up. She looked a little sad but I let it go. Then a teacher called me over and told me a girl was kicking her at lunch time. Now we've had a few incidents of bullying lately and although it gets cleared up quickly, I'm sick of it happening. I'm not sure why it is happening because Miss Gremlin is a sweet and compassionate kid at school. Maybe because she's getting so tall, maybe because she doesn't like girly stuff. I really don't know but this shit has to stop.



So after the teacher told me, I went back to Miss Gremlin and asked if she was ok, she started crying but said she was just tired. I know it wasn't that but I also know not to push it. She's 9 and those emotions and hormones are becoming a challenge.

So I did the next best thing. I went mama bear on the kid! In front of staff. I know how to do it. No touching, no threatening but making your point known in a strong way, I got down to eye level with this kid and told her in no uncertain terms that I didn't like her kicking my child and that it's not nice and we're all friends and don't do it again. I explained that was bullying behaviour and I'm sure she didn't want to be a bully. Then I asked her if she understood me. With her wide eyes trained on me she assured me she understood and wouldn't do it again. With that I left the area, went upstairs to inform the classroom teacher (covering my arse) and headed home. I felt bad for this kid but I wasn't gonna put up with someone kicking my kid at lunch, making her miserable for no reason.

Then it struck me, what if I got in trouble, what if the parent came and got Mama Bear on me? Holy crap what did I just do? I'm just one little person, I may talk a big game but I'm a gooey mush inside. I crumble at the first threat. So now I'm panicking… This child's mother might come and confront me. It was in the forefront of my thinking for the next 3 hours and when Miss Gremlin came home I was still worried.

I asked her how her day was and she told me that the girl came and apologised, of her own volition and they were friends again. I felt relief, for Miss Gremlin, that the situation was over but mostly for me because the child realised she did something wrong and fixed it and wasn't going home tattling about the crazy white woman who got in her face at school.

Sometimes I just forget where I live. This time it was ok…Next time, I better think before I go Mama Bear on someone's kid even though it's my first instinct.



image courtesy of Hal Brinkley/freedigitalphotos.net

Have you ever had to go Mama bear on a kid being mean? How did you do it? Did you regret it later? Did it become a problem with another parent? It's so tough to navigate…

A Little Love From Friends Will Get You Through

June 19, 2013

You know when you feel so helpless in a situation that all you can do is try to make someone feel better? This happened last week, my friend's sister was dying, her body was failing in the hospital, in another state. She was panicking, waiting without news. I was even further away! I just wanted to be there, just to be supportive, make coffees and chat, distract, wipe tears, do whatever I could to be helpful. Sadly I could do nothing.

So I did the next best thing. I made a little package. I didn't spend any money. The things in it weren't of any value but they were sent with love and support and I hoped it would brighten her day. A pipe cleaner bent into a heart, a purple feather, and a hand embroidered handkerchief. With a little note explaining…

I filled the envelope, posted it and promptly forgot.

Well it arrived today… and it's purpose was fulfilled.

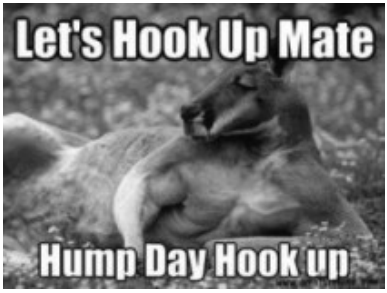
I don't have a magic wand, I can't fix all her sister's problems. She's ok for now but has a very long road to recovery and it's complicated.

But I made my friend feel better, she knows someone cares. She's not alone in her struggle even though we're separated by distance. Sometimes it's the little things, and the thought behind it that gets you through the hard times…

And sometimes that's enough.



Speaking of love, why not head over to the Hump Day Hook Up and spread some love around. Link up a story or just read something brilliant.



Pull Your Damn Pants Up

June 21, 2013



The 'pants on the ground' thing is getting old people! Enough already. I just hate it, and I swear every season they just keep getting lower. How did this even become a fashion thing? It just looks so ridiculous, kids walking along the street like they've shit themselves! Don't they know how stupid they look? I can't help it, I laugh out loud every time. Even Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D point and laugh now. Of course this is probably not the wisest idea, lest we get shot cos who knows if they've got a gun tucked in their pants or not, we are in Harlem after all but we can't help it.

I saw last week that Atlantic City has made it illegal on the boardwalk to wear your pants low! There have been other places that have also banned it. ABOUT TIME people. This just has to stop. I can't wait until the trend changes.

How uncomfortable must they be honestly? Having to walk around all day holding your crotch so your pants don't fall down. All to create an image. *eyeroll* In the dead of freezing winter, you know those days, where you must blink fast or your eyeballs freeze? yeah that. So on one of those days last year I was walking on our block and a teen was walking just in front of me…I can only imagine how breezy his junk was feeling with his pants around his thighs. As I followed him, this guy who was waddling along the way they do, checked around, looking for his peeps and when he realised the coast was clear, those nice heavy, warm denims he was wearing, were hitched right up to his waist. I followed him as far as my door with a knowing smile, thinking how ridiculous he was but at least his brain did see reason and made him protect his boys in spite of his fashion nonsense.

Let me mention hygiene for a second. If you're on a crowded train or bus and a guy is standing in front of you with his belt on his thighs, then you know that there's nothing between his package and your face but a thin layer of fabric. That's just GROSS! What if the convenience hole gapes? Why do they think this is ok? Subjecting us to their business. Now I'm not scared of what's under there, hey I've got kids, I've seen a penis or two but sitting on a train with my 9 yo daughter with some hood's dick in our faces… that's just not cool! I'd like to choose my own up close and personals thanks!

A few years ago now, when I still had to trek to school everyday to deliver and retrieve the children, we were walking home behind some teens with their pants 'on the ground' as its called and this one fellow had the great misfortune of not managing with the old cottonelle, if you now what I mean. So there we were walking home behind this kid with his pants around his thighs, his light heather grey underoos were showing and he had a great big brown skid mark all the way up the crack of his arse! Well, the kids thought it was the funniest thing they've ever seen! We just couldn't stop laughing and there was plenty of eewwwwing and pointing too! OMG… if you're gonna expose your duds then at least wipe until you're clean!

Just eeewww people.

Almost Done!

June 24, 2013

Today has been filled with busy end of year stuff. Firstly, checking Grand Master D into his week of intense film study and then heading back to school for Miss Gremlin's award ceremony. She's awesome, suited herself up like this for the occasion.



She did so well this year, and has grown so much. We're very proud. Here are her awards.



Grand Master D had his ceremony last week and he received this one, quite fitting don't you think?



Talking About Funerals

June 26, 2013

This Thursday, James Gandolfini will be honoured at a service in the Cathedral St John The Divine, the very same Cathedral we see from every western vantage point of our apartment.



The neighbourhood will be crawling with international press and the skies above our apartment will be a buzz with helicopters but this time they're be reporting a major event, not chasing down some petty criminal or drugged up local behaivng badly.

I imagine all manor of celebrities will be in attendance, I'm hoping to get in amongst it all but I imagine security will be pretty tight.

I feel sad for the family, their day of mourning will be taken over by the paparazzi and news crews from around the world. I know that's part of celebrity life but he was also a husband and a father and when everyone else gets on with their day the Gandolfini family have to learn to live without a very important part. I truly empathise with them.

I've attended my share of funerals over the years. Most of them pretty standard in proceedings. My Grandmother was the first viewing I ever had and it was unnerving to say the least. She moved, my mum and I both saw it. I am yet to explain it and maybe I never will. It was like the three of us were having our last moment. The hardest one, my Dad's, well that's another story.

Not long after my Grandmother we lost a very close friend to cancer. He was The King's music partner for many years. They had a very popular duo when I met the King and he was a large part of our lives for around 20 years. We lost touch when we moved away but when we reconnected shortly before his diagnosis, he was so very happy to see how things had worked out for us.

A few months later he spent 2 weeks with us, so he could record 'Summertime' in our studio, you see it was the song he played at all the funerals and he wanted to play it at his own. Watching someone record their death march song is quite profound. His fight was short lived and we knew as we left his benefit concert that we would not see him again. He had shrunk in stature and his body was just skin and bone. He accepted his fate and was finally proud of the fact that he could fly while carrying marijuana and no one could arrest him! He joked that it took cancer to become legal ☺

He passed about 3 weeks later, at 49, while we were in Italy, that night we heard 'Summertime' play in the restaurant, we weren't notified but we knew. We received the news upon reentry into Australia the very next night.

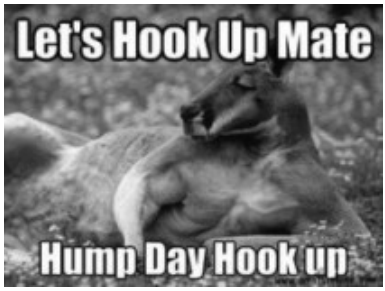
Being Jewish, tradition dictates that the dead are buried quickly and in a pine box. I was asked by his partner if I would paint his coffin. The idea was that the plain pine

box would be painted with blue with clouds and golden saxophones and then on the day, friends and relatives could write something on it. It was a wonderful idea.

Naturally I accepted but I did wonder if he'd be on board- he wasn't.

But the next morning, he hoped on board, we all dressed in colourful clothes, wrote our messages on his pine box and sent him on his way. It was a fitting end to a colourful life.

Some funerals are more celebratory than others. Have you experienced any interesting proceedings?



Come over and hook up your old posts to the Hump Day Hook Up

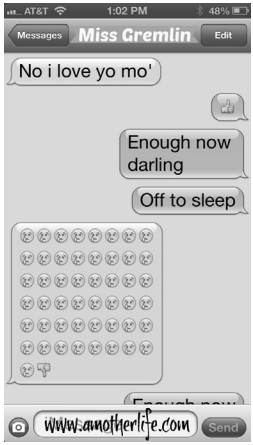
If you Give Your Child an Ipad

June 27, 2013

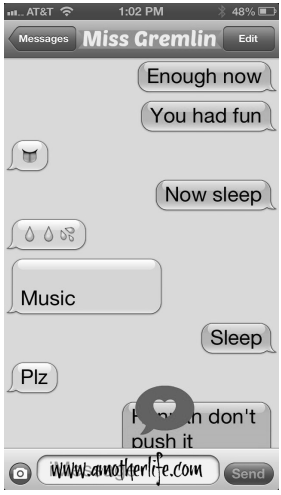
If you give your child an ipad,
you better makes some rules.
Don't let them go to bed with it,
or they'll be late to school.
If you give your child an ipad,
expect a late night txt
your relaxation will be stopped
you'll wonder what is next



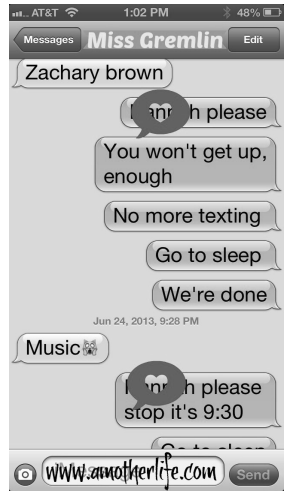
If you give your child an ipad
you know you will regret it,
they won't give up,
they won't give in,



if you give a child an ipad
expect to be frustrated,
you child will try and test you
and request you, every single night



If you give your child an ipad,
you will not get your rest,
you'll be in your chair, then on your feet
they'll steal your very best



If you give your child an ipad,
they'll test your strong resolve
they'll stretch it and they'll flex it
and work that one last nerve



If you give your child an ipad
you know they're gonna love you
you've won their heart, they better not start
to take that thing to bed.



You've been warned.

Abortion on the Subway

June 28, 2013

Shocked? Sorry ☺

Here's what happened:

I've already had 'The talk' with Miss Gremlin, she's got those facts straight, well straight enough for a 9 yo; yeah maybe for a 20 yo, whatever. We have so many strange conversations while we just walk home from school or eye therapy, it's our girl time. She loves it. I have no problem talking about anything with her, I believe honesty and knowledge is the best policy.

We've discussed HIV/AIDS and pregnancy, condoms, sex and puberty and so many other things, when a question comes up I answer it, simple. There's nothing for me to be embarrassed about and I try not to make it a big deal. It's always been like that. I was that way with Grand Master D too. He once read a sign on the subway about impotence and I had to answer, that was a fun conversation!

So yesterday on the way home, the subway afforded us a new topic of discussion! One I was hoping to delay for a few years yet but somethings aren't meant to be. Right there in black and white and yellow was a large ad talking about abortion alternatives. The train was full, it was peak hour. We were sitting across from each other and above my head was the ad. So because she's curious and always asks questions, she asked me what abortion was. Feeling that was neither the time nor the place for that discussion, I said remind me and I 'll tell you later.



Here is the Ad we saw

The topic was forgotten and we continued on our journey. When we got home she reminded me and in the most age appropriate terms I could, I explained what an abortion was and why it may be necessary. I wasn't graphic and I didn't offer opinions as to whether I believe in it or not, that discussion is for when she's older, luckily she was satisfied and we went on our way.

What pisses me off is that we as parents have to deal with this shit regularly because our kids can read and the subway ads have adult content. I get that this ad may help a woman who feels lost in her situation however I'm not sure the subway cars are the most appropriate places to advertise. Then again maybe it is, we seem to let everything else hang out, why not this?

What do you think? Is the subway an appropriate place for these kinds of ads? How would you handle it if your child asked?

The Post Where I Discover Sleep is NOT Overrated.

July 1, 2013

As I sit here slurping my coffee and writing this through bleary eyes, I.wonder 'what next'. It's Monday, that's bad enough, with the collective weight of the world on her shoulders it's no wonder Monday serves us up a barrel of shit to wade through. To add insult to injury Sunday night was a pure arsehole. There's no other description. I have been noticing increased temperatures in my body for the past couple of weeks. Not a lot but enough to make me uncomfortable at times but last night it was awful! So bad in fact, that when the air conditioner reached it's set temperature and cut out my brain went into panic. I lay there, trying desperately to will it back on without moving so as to not disturb the sleeping body beside me. I failed, on both counts, The King asked if I was going to be fidgeting long and the air conditioner mocked me from the other side of the room as the ambient temp soared to levels that could rival the surface of the sun. In my panicked state I tried, I really did, to lay still so the cool air could surround me but hormones are sneaky fuckers and cruel to a fault and so to avoid further discomfort to all, I picked up my pillow and headed downstairs to the couch, where I could settle

in the cool of the cranked up air conditioner and flip flop to my heart's content without disturbing my bed friend from his snoring slumber.

Upon arrival to the downstairs accommodations, I wake the dog, who huffs at me for the inconvenience and promptly ascends to quieter quarters. The clock reads 2:05 and I haven't even begun to sleep. I toss and turn and try to settle but the component lights mock me in bright green and blue and white. The couch offers some comfort, the familiar feel of hours before but that was lounging and watching tv, this is trying to sleep, sadly it's not the same. The air conditioner buzzes, the temperature drops and finally, finally I drift off to sleep.

4:13 am stares at me from the shelf as I readjust my position, this sleeping on the couch thing is not for me, I miss my bed, I miss the snoring but it's cool and I'm sleeping. Three more hours, that's all I ask, just let me sleep until there's a 7 at the beginning of the time. Then I will get up and be the mother that makes her kid breakfast, the mother who is cheery and asks how you slept even when I didn't, who caters to your every need as you get ready to take on the world. Because that is my job.

So if you need me, you'll find me, right where you left me, on the couch in the cool, waiting for the next hot flash to pass.



The Princess Has Arrived!

July 3, 2013

Insert Fanfare here…

We get all our information off facebook ☺ . But she has returned, for an undisclosed amount of time. It's great to have the opportunity to live between countries when you're young. It gives you a chance to really decide where you want to be. I wish I'd had that opportunity as a 23 year old. At that age I was still living in the town I grew up in, working for the local council. But times were different. I did my share of stretching my horizons, just in a different way 😉

So far she's been to the zoo to see the sloths with the kids…but the Bronx Zoo doesn't have them

And she's been to the shiny room at the art gallery.



Caught a seasonal cold (sshh) don't tell Dad.

Been broken into and lost her laptop and iphone, then partied with the detectives in true Princess style.



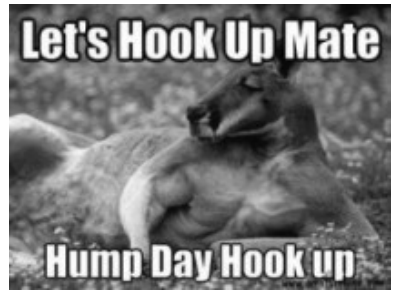
After all that she changed her mind and booked her flight back home.

Phew, That was the last trip…exciting right? Now as I write this and you read it, she is winging her way across the Pacific Ocean to once again take up residence here for an undisclosed amount of time. This time it'll be different, this time she has purpose and several career opportunities to choose from, and so this time, we'll have our overnight babysitter and dog sitter and random dinner guest who brings her own laundry.

Again, I got my notice from facebook ☺

Welcome Home Princess

Hump Day Came so fast this week, come on over and bring your best old posts



I Got Nuthin'

July 5, 2013

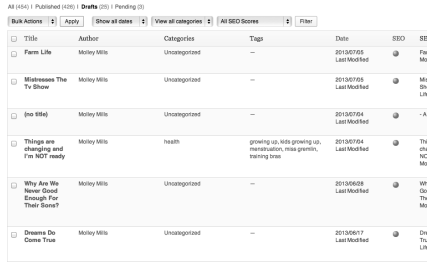
Writing a blog is fun, but sometimes it's hard to come up with stuff that's interesting and people want to read every day. Some days you can churn ou several posts and have it all going on but other times you sit at the computer and…nothing!

This whole week has been like that, really…nothing. It's like my creativity has gone for summer vacation.

I start writing, then I check twitter and then I go back and write another couple of lines and … wait facebook, somebody said something? quick check, it might be important! Nope nothing special, now where was I? oh yeah …no this is not an interesting post, what else can I write about.

I start another idea and then I get stuck again.

This is what my draft folder looks like :



Title	Author	Categories	Tags	Date
Farm Life	Molley Mills	Uncategorized	—	2013/07/05 Last Modified
Mistresses The Tv Show	Molley Mills	Uncategorized	—	2013/07/05 Last Modified
(no title)	Molley Mills	Uncategorized	—	2013/07/04 Last Modified
Things are changing and I'm NOT ready	Molley Mills	health	growing up, kids growing up, menstruation, miss gremlin, training bras	2013/07/04 Last Modified
Why Are We Never Good Enough For Their Sons?	Molley Mills	Uncategorized	—	2013/06/28 Last Modified
Dreams Do Come True	Molley Mills	Uncategorized	—	2013/06/17 Last Modified

25, yep 25 drafts! I never have that many un-ideas. Yep that's my word, I made it up…It's a problem… My mojo is missing. I'm just not feeling creative at all…but please forgive me, I'm sure it happens to the best writers.

I'm going to the park to find my muse. Sneaky witch has left me in the lurch. She's in so much trouble. If you see her out partying, send her home, tell her she has responsibilities at home. It's not ok to abandon your work like that!

Not even this cuteness gives me any inspiration!



Keep coming back. I'll be awesome again, I just know it ☺
The family are insisting I go to Central park… Maybe I'll find her there.

Long Weekend Fun

July 8, 2013

Yesterday we went to Coney Island. Haven't been there in a few years. Certainly not since Hurricane Sandy had the place 10 ft under water. It was fun and so easy. I love that you can get on a train from Manhattan and boom you're at the beach for $2.25 a head. The subway is cool like that. Ok so we won't talk about the noisy ass toddlers and their mother's who decided to give them pop tarts just after Master 3 announces that although he loves pop tarts, they make him so crazy because of the sugar! Smart kid… I guess that's what happens when babies have babies. Anyway we made it to the end of the line without bloodshed. The King had the most amazing self control *giggle*.

We found ourselves a nice area on the sand, and everyone headed to the water. I played guard to the stuff. I wasn't in any rush to go into that water, call me blue water and golden sand spoiled but it was really brown and murky looking. Blech.



Queue mister whistle-blower life saver behind my head … it's like he was placed there just to aggravate. No wonder the space was clear ☺ He had whistle-blowing tourettes too. Anyway he made friends with us because we were sitting on our Aussie towels. He loved Australia, spent a year in Melbourne and loved the beer and footy ☺ It's all that saved him from having that whistle shoved down his throat. Oh the restraint we showed! You guys should seriously be proud… toddlers AND whistle blowers! It was truly a test.

After about an hour, knowing any longer would be too much sun, we headed up to the boardwalk for some way over priced sausage and peppers in a bun and then took the kids into Luna park. They had been eyeing off the crazy scary rides. It's really fun to have kids who are tall enough to go on all the rides ☺ So we got the tickets and set them in the line for the long wait you have for the good rides. After some time it was their turn, I'm not sure who had more fun, us watching the fear on Miss Gremlin's face or the kids on the ride.







When they came off they loved it, so we lined up for the next one. This one was a little scarier but still they went. When they got on the ride we could hear Miss Gremlin scream, and scream, blood curdling! And like all good parents we pissed ourselves laughing from the bottom of the ride. They spun around 3-4 times then sat, suspended 100 feet in the air while the people on the other end of the spinning arm were loaded off and on. Her shrill scream could be heard the entire time.



Then they were off again, this time in the opposite direction. And we caught it all on film, the screaming, crying freaking out… and still we laughed. When the ride stopped we could see she was totally freaked, wiping tears from her face with her sleeve. We're such bad parents.







She informed us through tears that one was too scary, so the the slingshot ball was a no go. It was fine, we were nearly out of credit for the rides anyway, so we opted for the 'throw the ball at the plates' game and the 'shoot the water in the hole' game… at each place Grand Master D won a toy, so they both came away with a fun toy each and we all had an entertaining time.

Actually it was pretty awesome!

How was your 4th July Long Weekend?

I linked this post up to the

Here's the Thing about Grief

July 9, 2013

Here the thing about grief… for the last week I have been dreading the 8th July. It's the second anniversary of my Dad's passing. And on that day all the memories of that event come flooding back, well they did last year. This year I just wanted it to go by, everyday is another day without him. I didn't want to think about it. But I think the anticipation of trying to avoid it has made it a whole week of yuck. I didn't cry yesterday, I came close a couple of times but I held it. I didn't mention it to the King, I didn't tell the kids. I just didn't want to talk about, think about or discuss it. I think I'm onto the acceptance part but with a healthy dose of denial still peppered in there. There were some messages on facebook in the morning from my cousins but I didn't respond, Sorry L and T, I just couldn't.

I haven't slept much all week. Last night was no different and with Miss Gremlin doing her Lacrosse camp for July, I'm up with the fucking farting sparrows every morning helping her get ready for an 8am start. Who even does that on summer vacation?

So needless to say, I'm not much fun to be around, I'm tired, holding back tears, cranky, snappy and generally belligerent all round. I had beer yesterday too. Because I thought I needed it but it just made my stomach hurt and the scales lie to me this morning so fuck beer, fuck anniversaries and fuck grief. It doesn't get better.

It never goes away but I have purple nails now, so there's that.



I'm the Enabler, Yet I Complain About It.

July 12, 2013

It seems that I have inadvertently added to The King's alcohol habit. I cannot believe I did this. I have struggled with how much he drinks for many years and now I have aided and abetted him… Good Lord. And you know what else that means right? Yup, Sex all the damn time. Ok let me back track.

The King likes a drink, he's OCD and ADD so he's a finisher, because it's tidy and that's what you do when there's half empty bottles of booze in the house. You finish them right?! Let me clarify here I'm not being a whiney asshole of a wife complaining about alcohol consumption…I'm not, well I kinda am but let me explain.

The King, my King likes wine, he enjoys a couple of glasses a night, the doctor said that is actually good for you but that sucker doesn't know what size our glasses are! Three glasses and the bottle is gone but when the doctor says you should do it then by gosh you better, right?!

He likes the finer things in life, good wine, good food, cigars and cognac on the terrace. I can appreciate that. It has made buying gifts a damn site easier too because let me tell you he is a HARD person to buy for. VERY HARD. Over the years we have managed to get good gifts, usually when the money is flowing, when it's not then you better be happy with a beer bucket bouquet because hard to buy for is just annoying.

For his 40th birthday we bought him a star, and the kids called it the Daddy Rocks star. It's in the southern hemisphere, in the 'Corona Australis' constellation because, what was I thinking? Beer and Australia, not that we can never fucking see it! DOH!

For a Christmas gift one year, The Princess bought him land in Scotland, an entire square foot, so he can officially call himself a Laird, because we all like to torture ourselves with shit like this. As if he doesn't insist on being called Laird.

So this Father's day just gone, Grand Master D and I were perusing Amazon 3 days before (cos we're so orgamanised) It's a word ok… whatever, and we found 'the rock'. What self respecting cognac drinker doesn't need a rock from which to dispense his cognac. The cognac which always goes too fast when people visit because The King is also an enabler, Oh he disguises it as being a good host but he's a total pusher of the

booze ☺ many a fine man has been poured into a cab after an evening on the terrace at Planet Mills. It's a given really, come here for an evening , leave here legless.



So naturally we buy the rock, because we're also enablers and need something to complain about and then we figure one must have proper cognac glasses in which to serve this arguably salubrious liquid.

Amazingly it arrived in time and everything! Gotta love Amazon Prime's 2 day free shipping.

On Father's day morning as the children served their self made breakfast in bed , the King received his gifts-cigars, cognac glasses, chocolate ipod and 'the rock'. He was intrigued and went out immediately he was up to purchase some cognac to get it going. Since then it has seen the likes of that first bottle of cognac, and another, and a half empty bottle of scotch and Jack Daniels, another bottle of cognac, some wine because you can't have an empty rock, vodka and the most recent bottle of Cognac with a bottle of booker's bourbon on the side should the cognac evaporate… yes apparently that happens.A LOT.

So you can see I have trouble learning from my mistakes and although I am not sure he doesn't drink too much, I still buy him gifts to enable him to do so and then just for the fun, tell him he drinks too much…and my reward for such silliness?

Late night drunken cognac sex. I'm an awesome wife.



Land of the Not So Free

July 14, 2013

While I am not a citizen of America and I didn't grow up here, I live here now and what I see frightens me for the future of society in this country on so many social levels.

The verdict came down on the Trayvon Martin case last night after 18 hours of deliberation, I didn't watch the case, I only saw snippets. I only know what the media wants me to know. The only people who really know the truth are George Zimmerman and Trayvon Martin, but Trayvon's dead, his life snuffed out by an over zealous neighbourhood watchman. Or was Trayvon an enraged teen and Zimmerman acted in self defense.We'll never know. George Zimmerman will live out his life and he only he can know the truth of that night. But why did he not heed the advice of the 911 operator to wait for police, why did he think Trayvon was a threat in the first place. We live in a world unfortunately where if you act a certain way, look a certain way then you are a threat, even if you're not. The idea of shoot first ask questions later is scary. Citizens being armed is scary. You can't make rational decisions in a split second of life or death. This boy, and he was a boy, lost his life because he went to buy some candy and a drink in the dark in an unfamiliar neighbourhood. He could have been anyone. George Zimmerman did what he thought was right, did he act with a jaded view of young black men? Was he racial profiling, would he have done the same if Trayvon was white or Latino? We will never know and while advocates insist this is not a race case and he was found not guilty from lack of evidence, the facts are a young black man is dead because he was walking alone with his hood up in a neighbourhood where he was not known and was assumed to be a threat.



The law is complicated and flawed. It can be manipulated to serve a purpose and doesn't always follow a moral code. How does Zimmerman get off and a black woman gets 20 yrs for firing a gun in the air to warn an abusive husband, who already had a history of violence against her? How do the police get acquitted for killing Sean Bell in New York? How do they get away with beating Rodney King in LA? Why are these men being targeted? Why does being black automatically put you on the wrong side of the law?

This case, while supposedly not about race, is so very much about it. Hundreds of people a day are murdered by guns, that doesn't make International news.It doesn't

even make national news. Why this case? Would he have been acquitted if the races were reversed? If Zimmerman was black and Trayvon latino? Would it have happened in the first place? Again we'll never know. And while the law says he is innocent until proven guilty and if there's reasonable doubt about it he must go free.

The facts remain that Trayvon is still dead and Zimmerman still did it. Is that really justice? I think not.

The worst part… every black mother worries a little more for their sons tonight, every wife and girlfriend of a black man worries a little more for their husbands and every white person fears retaliation a little more which worsens race relations.

In a land where all men a created equal, equal is still defined by the colour of your skin.

America has regressed tonight and for that NOBODY wins.

We're ON FIRE Over Here!

July 17, 2013

So we have a heat wave here in NYC, until Sunday… we're gonna melt. The authorities have even put out a heat advisory warning and set up cooling centres around the city. Doesn't it look scary? What happened to the pretty sun icon… what's with the fierce looking FIRE BALL thing?



Are they trying to scare us? Sheesh…

Stay safe and cool, drink plenty of liquids. Yes alcohol is a liquid…

We'll be alternating between the kiddie pool on the terrace and inside with the AC on. I know what you're thinking, I'm an Aussie, this shit should be a walk in the park but let me remind you this 1. I've lived here for 8 years and 2. EIGHT damn years! and

3. Australians get hot too. We're not made of fucking asbestos you know.

Hey you know what, while you're trying to stay cool, why don't you hop on over to the **Hump Day Hook Up**, drop a link and read some really fun stuff. I'm co hosting with my good friend Julie so don't be shy.

Maybe there's ice cream…(possibly a bribe)

The Truth Must Be Shared

July 18, 2013

Let's talk secret women's business, ok to be more precise, secret 'older' women's business.

The dreaded menopause. Yup I dared to speak the word. The change of life.

We all know the facts right but living them is a wholly different experience: There are many fazes, I have listed **some** below. Please feel free to add any I may have missed or am yet to experience.

The 'don't touch me I'm *so* hot' faze

The 'get away from me before I eat you' faze

The 'you can't seriously want sex from me' faze

The 'if I get a fourth period this month I'm gonna scream' faze

The 'I can gain a pound a day without even looking at food ' faze

These fazes are just some of the amazing things happening to me, sometimes simultaneously, just for fun!

I think it's utterly rude that we not only have to endure menstruation for 30+ years and painful childbirth but now, when all that's coming to an end, we get all these other issues. I have spent half of this week sleeping on the couch, not because I don't love my bed but because I'm so hot and the airconditioner isn't cooling me and I'm like a fish flip-flopping on the deck of a boat. The King, in his patient voice says "will you be flipping around for long?" And knowing that the answer will undoubtedly be yes, I just grab my pillow and head downstairs where I can have the aircon going at 65 degrees and I can flip until my hearts content. It's just easier.

Even during the day I feel a rise in my core temperature, wait, what am I, a planet? It's not unlike the elevated temps you endure during pregnancy. I can't stand to have anyone touch me, or stand too close. Miss Gremlin is all touchy feelly these days and I continually sidestep her advances, not that I don't want a hug from my sweet girl but just don't touch me… sheesh, especially on a hot subway platform.



And then because Mother Nature is also menopausal, she is turning on the hottest flash the North East has seen in a while because she hates us!

So how do we combat all these problems?

We yell at everyone, we get moody, we sit on top of the air conditioner. We drink! We stay indoors and we hope like hell it'll be over soon. And I'm not talking about the heatwave.

Are you suffering? Is your significant other? How are you all coping?

Voodoo In the 'Hood?

July 21, 2013

The other day on my morning walk with Sir Lickalot, as I was walking past the abandoned brownstone in our street, I came across a pile of dolls thrown out on the footpath with the trash. They were creepy, all dressed the same. There were heaps of them. I was a little creeped out but just kept walking…We see some very strange things in the street but I just kept it moving and didn't really think any more about it.

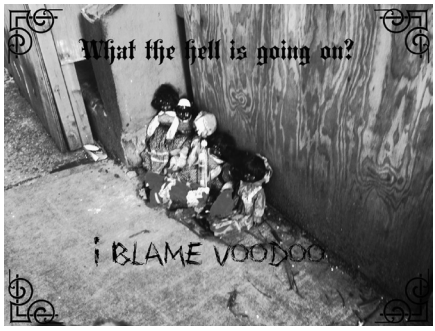


This would make you double take right? Yeah thought so…

So this morning when I went out, I had forgotten all about the creepy dolls. The garbage had been collected so I assumed they were gone. Actually I didn't assume because I forgot about them… So imagine my surprise to see them all lined up in front of the brownstone with an empty bottle of liquor laid across them.

CREEPY RIGHT? WHAT THE FUCK!

Just weird. I have no idea why they were there or who put them like that. And they stunk like shit, literally! It was awful, especially in this hot weather.

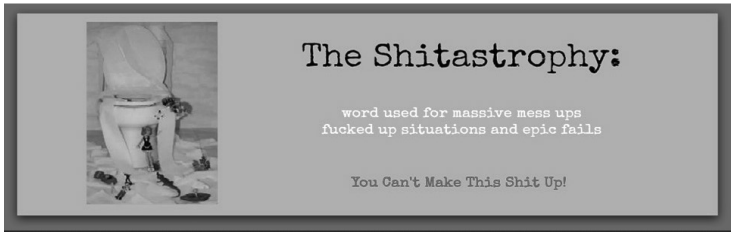


Does weird shit happen to you too? Or is it just me? Anyone got any clues? Is it voodoo?

Unintended Consequences-A Guest Post

July 23, 2013

Today I am featuring a post from a blogger friend, this incident happened recently and because she didn't feel comfortable posting on her own blog where the woman involved may see it, I offered her a voice. It's a subject you know pisses me off no end anyway so it's nice to see others getting pissed off about the state of Education in America. Please enjoy and if you love her as much as I do then be sure to head on over and read more of Alyson at The Shitastrophy.



The state of Indiana, where I live – kinda, has implemented a school voucher system. Indiana is not known as a progressive land, more a land of corn and Amish and cows. Did I mention corn? Indiana is conservative, having voted Republican the last election and most prior elections as well. They did swing Democratic a few times, but decided they only go one way and went back to the shit they know and love – red. Oh that was fun.

Indiana ushered out the past Democratic Governor and swept in a new Republican with quite a large swing. Yes I did it again. The conservatives had their guy back on top and they were stoked (or stroked – third times a charm really). The new Governor made one of his first pillars Education Reform. Awesome, who doesn't love education? People want good quality schools for their kids. Who wouldn't? Indiana instituted a State Voucher System that has had some issues since it's inception, in my opinion.

Vouchers? What are those? Well in a nutshell parents in failing school districts can take their taxpayer money that was earmarked for public school and now send their funds and child to a private school. In theory this is a great idea. Here's why.

If you live in a shitty school system why should your kid continue to be screwed? This is not something minor we are talking about; this is their education. This is what will determine their future paths. Why should a child be limited by their parent's financial inabilities to afford the awesome house in the awesome school district? In a land that is constantly weighing fair against unfair this would seem to me the pinnacle of unfair.

I live in the shitty school system. My kids go to the private schools but we do not get the benefit of the vouchers. There is an income cut off that prohibits our family from benefiting from this law. Shit happens. As a parent that has seen first hand the impact of this law, here are my issues.

1) Taxpayer money is now going from public schools to private, primarily religious based schools. How does this not break the separation of church and state provisions in our constitution? It doesn't according to the Indiana Supreme Court.

2) The private schools are now required to provide a large amount of accommodations for the new students to bring them up to speed. This would be fine if the private schools were also provided special education teachers, or other resources – but they are not.

3) By making a decision to draw a line on income, some families that have worked their asses off to afford private school prior to the implementation of this law are now priced out. These families pinched and saved, taking on multiple jobs to make private school possible. Now they make too much to meet the state requirements for the vouchers, while other families that have done nothing to advance their socio-economic status will get the full benefit. How is that fair? It's not.

These were some of my main issues with the vouchers, that is until the other day when I almost lost my fucking mind.

I was picking another child up for a play date when her mother informed me, "Thank God I am getting vouchers for all three of the kids!"

"Oh, that's great." (I totally don't know why she is telling me this.)

"Yeah, so-and-so in the office called me to tell me that all of the kids were now covered."

"Wonderful, the school would hate to have seen them go, glad it was worked out." (Why do people tell me this kind of shit? Please just drop your kid off and go.)

Now here is the crowning jewel of the entire conversation…wait for it…wait for it…

"Yeah, if it wasn't for the vouchers we would have had to quit the Blah-Blah Country Club."

BOOM! BAMM! WTF? Did this chick just tell me that she has a fucking country club membership?!!!

I am pretty sure Indiana did not have that in mind when they gave the vouchers out to families in the state. Take note lawmakers – if you have a fucking COUNTRY CLUB membership you should not be getting a fucking voucher!

What are your thoughts on this? I personally think it is bullshit, in case you hadn't noticed.

Lessons I've learned from my Children part 2

July 24, 2013

So now the Princess is back, we are into the swing of adult children visits. As some of you know adult children are different to small children. They are still a wealth of entertainment and strangeness, just in a different way. The other night we were sitting in the living room innocently, or so I thought when I walked in they were laughing.

And then the question was asked "Do you know know what twerking is?"

Well obviously not, I'm 45 for heavens sake. So she showed me.

Did you know about this? I mean seriously?

Ok I get it, every generation has crazy dance moves but this one? Sure we had Dirty Dancing, Thriller, The Busstop and Nutbush but this is like porn dancing…

WOW… yeah maybe I'll just learn it for the bedroom, although I think I could seriously hurt myself and probably the King for that matter.

Can you do this?… Yeah you know what, scrap that, I'd rather not know.

I'll stick to hooking, hooking up to the **Hump Day Hook Up** that is… geez what were YOU thinking? I have linked up to

You Know When You Don't Really Want Something Until You Cant Have It? Yeah Me too

July 25, 2013

I've been sitting here for 4 hours now, procrastinating and fucking around on facebook. Sure I pumped out a piece for Families in the Loop but really I just finished it off, it was mostly written already. Mostly I'm fucking around on facebook and twitter. I even set up Grand Master D on the little blue bird because a) he's started actually writing on his blog and b) He's a funny kid and I think the world would enjoy @theDekko on twitter. I could the worst parent in the world, maybe.

I'm pissed with myself for procrastinating so long on deciding whether to go to Blogher, the blogging conference in Chicago this weekend. Everyone I know will be there, except some but oh so many are. I wanted to go but felt weird about mentioning it to the King because I'm weird like that and I don't feel I deserve it but I totally know I do and because it's expensive but we can totally afford it and this is the fucked up mess I've been thinking for weeks. Then he booked his trip to Dallas, that's when I knew I really wanted to go… Michelle from They call Me Mummy even offered to let me be her roomy. She might be an axe murderer but she's an Aussie axe murderer and lives near my Mother in Law so I was totally comfortable taking the risk.



So the King is in Dallas, returning Friday night. He should be here, I should already be in Chicago but I'm an idiot and missed my opportunity, now I'm all green with envy and sad… Even Lucy is going, even though she's not 'going' she's just gonna hang

with the peeps! WAHHH I know it's totally ridiculous and #first world problems and stupid and I should have just said I wanted to go but I didn't and snoozers are losers, see I KNOW this now. Next year I'm going. It'll probably be in some loser place like Hickville, ScaryTown that no one wants to visit and everyone went this year and they only go every other year and I'll have missed out again. It's also my 'go to Australia' year and it will totally fall the same time I fly out…WHATEVER!

So I'm being whiny, it's silly and I'll get over it. It's not important but I am sad. I will be living vicariously through all the statuses and post and blog posts and all the stories when they get back.

In the mean time I'm staying here with sick Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D and the vacuum cleaner that's driving me insane.

Hmm, I may need rescuing from my self induced pity party. Bring chocolate.

It Smells like Puberty Around Here-Ewww

July 27, 2013

It been pretty hot lately and the children have been spending plenty of time under water and so haven't really be worrying too much about actual bathing, you know like with soap and forget about putting deodorant on. Not to mention it's been Miss Gremlin's only relief during her week of stomach pain. So I haven't really been paying attention.

The King got home from his trip late last night and today we have spent the day hanging out as a family again. They went out side to play with the alien camera ship that was a family gift. I'm fairly sure I'll never have need of it-but anyway they've had fun freaking the dog out.



Alien Camera Ship Movie **IMG_1611** Right now they have the motorbike turned upside down in the living room repairing the tyre. The children are helping. It's been hot and I can smell someone, no wait, EVERYONE! They stink, and not the slight smell of someone whose been a bit sweaty, the hideous stench of an unwashed, undeodorised body… ALL 3 of them! I'm living with Pepe le Pew and his cubs, who are clearly in the midst of puberty. It's time for an intervention of the soap variety.

Are baby skunks even called cubs? Hmmm, google?



Gross right?! So after they finish with the bike I'm sending then all to the shower, probably together and then I'll be lining them up the spray them with fabreeze!

I'm living in the house of P.U.!

Things all Fall Apart at the Same Time Because That's the Rules

July 31, 2013

In the last few weeks things have been breaking, you've seen the toilet seat post and the fact he bought the wrong size, well now we have the right size coming, no we didn't return the seat, eewww that'd be gross and also I don't think you can return used toilet seats, I think it's something like the underwear rule.

So wait, if you didn't return the seat but there's the right size arriving how? wait, what? Well I will let you marinate a moment and remember to whom I'm married. We have a new toilet coming to fit the elongated toilet seat. He's planning on installing it himself. It's a power/jet flush model. Be afraid and expect details.

Then our kitchen sink flip mix faucet broke. We have a new one of those coming too. But in true Mills style we now have a hand free sensor one…He's gonna install that too. Worried yet? I'm very confident… No I am. I married fucking McGyver. It's true. If he wants to do it he will, whatever it is.



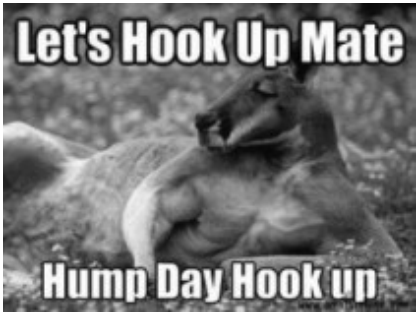
Image courtesy of Gualberto107 at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

So as you can see we are on a mini home reno course for a bit, Kari from A Graceful Life would be so proud.

While we're on a roll I got my vanity as well, the one I want for the kids bathroom, to house all the bathroom stuff , including future girly products ☺ I might be excited. It's fun to get new stuff.

There will be installation posts and pictures because I know you don't want to miss the fun. Promise, but it'll have to wait until the weekend. Other things are afoot and we have a house full of Australians…

But while you're waiting for all the new stuff to arrive, let's hook up some oldies but goodies that we wished had more comments or visits or just more laughs at the **Hump Day Hook Up .**



My Handy Man Can- A Home Improvements Guide… Aussie Style

August 5, 2013

When stuff breaks in your house, it's usually all at once right? Well we've reached the 8th year mark in our city dwelling and so far we've really replaced nothing, except the washing machine and microwave. They were last Christmas and Easter gifts to the family. Last week we lost a toilet and a kitchen faucet (tap) and so like all good addicts we headed for Amazon to replace them. But because we are who we are, we don't do replacement, we do enhancement and so we got the 'you beaut' super duper arse flossing, jet flush of toilets and the awesome no touch sensor, 3x the price, kitchen water dispenser. I'm not even gonna try explaining that to the cleaner. I think charades will work just fine :P Swipe on , swipe off.

Friday night was designated replacement time, because when else do you do home improvements but as the hardware stores close around the city.

The following is a mostly pictorial account of the events of friday night. The toilet installation went surprisingly well and was completely operational within an hour.



The kitchen sink faucet installation, while still successful, was more difficult and so the help of an assistant and beer was required. When you get an instruction booklet 10 pages long you know shit is gonna get real.



Dismantling things that have been in place for many years is often the most difficult. Add cramped quarters and you'll likely to hear rather colourful language from

the man doing the work. Having an assistant near by to administer beer is an important ingredient.



Consuming beer while doing handy things is the Australian way…







After several beers and some serious sweating, we have a functioning unit with which to dispense water, hands free!



It's amazing how awesome it is but now I am forgetting to turn off the bathroom tap when I've finished washing hands… Oh how quickly we adjust to the finer things in life.

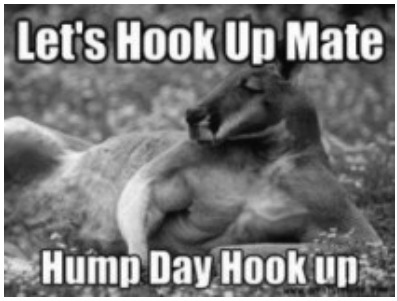
I linked this post up to:

When You Let Them Fly Free

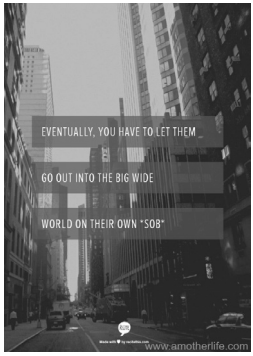
August 7, 2013

Hump Day is here again, and in the theme of that and Summer and travel I am sharing a post about the time Grand Master D took his first subway ride alone. It was exciting and scary … Here's how he did!

Happy Hump Day, Don't forget to hook up an old post to the Hump Day Hook Up



Last Night Grand Master D went on the subway by himself. He was keen to do it but a little nervous too. The plan was to meet the King down on Chambers street. They were going to the Tribecca Film Festival. That's a long ride from Harlem! So we looked at where he would go, double checked his phone was charged and that both mine and the King's numbers were in there. Just checking of course. I downloaded the itrans NYC app for him in case he needed to navigate out of a mistake.



He showered and prepped and then we headed to the train. My outer demeanour belied my inner terror, we must as parents, let go little by little, so our children can become independent. But it's so damn scary. How do you put your first born onto the giant metal death trap and wave goodbye? I asked as we walked to the station whether he wanted to just go in or if he wanted me to wait on the platform for the train with him. He preferred the latter. As he went to swipe in…those damn iridescent lights flashed 'insufficient funds'. The card was empty! Good God, … I didn't bring my wallet… damn it.

Hmmm.

So we had to use the $20 I gave him for 'just in case'. Funny though, I've never used cash to buy a subway card, ever and it was hard! I wanted to get a $10 card and

give him the change but it wouldn't give me enough change so I had to use the whole $20. What a way to up sell, well played MTA, well played. Oh well. As the card came out of the machine the train hurtled into the station, it was the right one…We missed it. That's ok, it gave us the opportunity to discuss some scenarios and what to do 'in case of'…you know kidnappers, hoodlums, paedophiles… GIRLS.

The 'B" train came and if we'd been with the King or if I were going we would have caught it and changed trains but Grand Master D chose to let it go and wait for the train he needed, changing the first time was just an added pressure he didn't need. He was nervous, excited but still nervous. We laughed a bit about that, I understand completely, damn travel anxiety. The moment arrived as his train finally came and he hugged me and went to get on. I let him go, putting on a brave face, the horror reel playing in my head, making a mental note of his clothing for the police report later. Then he was back…for a second hug, such a sweetie. He was brave but needed that extra reassurance. I squeezed tight and said have fun, secretly dying inside.

As the train pulled out and I saw him sitting there, he gave me a big wave and I waved back. I walked out into the rain with my heart in my mouth, knowing than there was no way to even track him underground for at least 40 minutes. I texted the King to tell him the train time and headed home to wait. The King was already in place at the rendezvous…

I busied myself on facebook and twitter, looking for support and reassurance and well, sympathy … naturally ☺ So I need attention sometime, don't judge. The clock dragged on, slowly… s l o w l y …around it went like it was mocking me.

I couldn't help myself, I texted The King the description of what Grand Master D was wearing, you know, so he would recognise him quickly if he came up across the street and not at the exact rendezvous point. (yep, that worked, I don't look like an over protective mum *at all*). The reply txt was simple…no words, just this



HE MADE IT…and He was SO DAMN PROUD! …actually, so am I ☺



e

The Proposed RV Trip- A Dream/ Nightmare Come True

August 8, 2013

In the spirit of just having booked our tickets for our very first *actual* vacation, one that is not tacked onto the end of a business trip and the King booking one of these bad boys to tour Ireland and the UK…



I will share an old post about the Princess' fear of the family RV vacation…

Oh it's happening, and there will be updates!

Originally posted on The Epistolarians.

For some time now the King has been saying we should go on a road trip in an RV,(recreational vehicle) not unlike the Robin Williams movie RV. The Princess lives in trembling fear of this and we use it against her all the time. ☺ Bad parents. Of course I think it would be totally crazy driving across the country couped up in a large bus type vehicle with The King, The Princess (cos she's not getting out of it) Grand Master

D, Miss Gremlin and Sir Lickalot the dog! Can you imagine it? I shudder…

I suppose it would be a great way to see the countryside, however I think it would be a hard way to live. Cooking, and doing laundry, being the most difficult, then of course there's the close quarters sleeping arrangement. It certainly would be one way to get the kids used to the nocturnal symphony of the King ☺

The latest incarnation of this idea is to go for an extended period of time, say 6 mths and home school the children. Yes you read right, long time, home school… Can you picture my reaction? I know he's just stirring me. I said straight out have a nice time I'll stay here and look after the apartment. But now when he mentions it I just smile and wave ☺ …like the Madagascar penguins.

I'm not really sure how it would actually go with the King, seeing he has such an aversion to camping. Imagine if we drove into a no internet zone! HA

The movie was on yesterday and it makes me laugh every time we watch it. I can see the similarities with our family and can totally relate, knowing that if we ever end up on the road across the country in an RV it will be like the sequel.

Language is Hard-Google Translate Helps… Sort Of

August 9, 2013

We've booked our tickets and our camper and called the Irish relos we've never met, and maybe the English ones will get a call too… I'm still deciding. We've secured the house sitter and dog lover and we'll pack on Sunday. Easy stuff.

Now I have to tell Dina, our cleaner, that we're going on holidays and she can still come and do the things best left for when the family is absent. I will give her keys … but how do you convey all the details when she doesn't habla Ingles and I don't habla Espanol! I could take her to the dry cleaner, I could call my friend who speaks, except she's out of state and out of range. I could call our business partner in Spain but it's late… or I could type it all out on google translate and hope for the best that I didn't tell her to sell the dog and eat the fish!

Language is hard. I am really trying but Spanish is one of those fast languages, unless she slows down and even then I'm fucked. I get every other word. I can tell her things in single words but having a conversation or adding the joining words to make a sentence is still so far beyond me that it's just funny to watch as I try… There's a lot of smiling and nodding with neither of us having any fucking clue what the other one is saying. It's actually hilarious. But whatever right?! The house is super clean.

That's just how it goes, I'm learning and every week I learn more and eventually I will know stuff but in the moment when you need to convey information and you can't, it's hard and frustrating and just dumb. Curses on those who caused God to do the Tower of Babel thing… scattering man far and wide and jumbling up the languages… Fuck THEM! They did this, otherwise we'd all be speaking latin or aramaic or something but it would be understood by everyone. That'd be awesome.

But in the meantime, I will endeavour to do it as best I can. And I'm sure she'll either come and clean or she won't, she'll either surprise the house sitter or she won't but rest assured Sir Lickalot will be waiting at the door with a waggily tail and special lick on the knee … El Perros are good like that!



Before Day One Even Begins!

August 13, 2013

Because we are who we are, leaving the country isn't done at all the way normal people do it, I can assure you. We are so far from normal that sometimes its hard to see where normal even exists! Yesterday, we decided that we needed to do all the repairs… Well when I say we, I mean the royal we and we all know were not talking about good old Liz! So Sunday morning saw me eating pizza and drinking coffee in the bathroom while grouting around the new jet flush wash your arse toilet… While I was there I had some re gluing of the stone floor. It was a good 2 hours crawling around the bathroom floor and toilet bowl. While I was doing that the king was moving the air curtain tithe outside to see if it actually worked because so far it had proven to be nothing but a noisy installation which flies were laughing at. Of course when you remove an appliance form the wall there are holes, and when it's an appliance installed by the king there a lots of holes and big ones! So my second job of the day was patching the holes, sanding them and painting. It was such a busy day we forgot to eat, well except for Miss Gremlin, she chose to catch up on her gummy vits and because she hadn't had them for a while she thought she should finish off the bottle. I discovered it about an hour later, curious as to why there were 2 empty gummy vits bottle in the trash when I knew they had plenty left I began to quiz. She fessed up straight away and that's when panic set in. OMG how many had she taken, and it wasn't one bottle but two! Is it dangerous? Should I be worried? Is this a stomach pumping kind of thing? Were supposed to be going to Europe … So I did what all good parents do in this situation, I googled it and google came back wimped reports but yes it was a problem. My next step was to call the poisons information centre, who were very helpful and talked me through it and asked me plenty of questions and checked the brands and ingredients. She decided that because there was no iron and the fact that Miss Gremlin is 9 and of a sturdy stature that it would probably be ok and she would most likely just have a stomach ache and some diahorea. We could live with that. She's been like that for weeks anyway!

Crisis averted! Knowing she was ok, we enjoyed a nice steak grilled on the terrace and relaxed with a beer after a busy home renovation day. This morning, although certain she was fine, I still went in to check she was breathing… Because you that's

what you do right? We got on Witt he business of packing and finishing laundry and last minute thing, the regular kind… When the princess calls to say she's been in a car accident… WTF! This, people, this is why I never take cabs! Someone else is not good enough to have my life in their hands. I'd rather ride the subway… And to top it all off it was the cab drivers fault AND he was on the phone… He wouldn't let the princess go because he wanted a witness to say the other guy merged incorrectly and that they were in his blind spot. The princess stayed for about 45 minutes and nobody came so she decided screw you you need I let me go. If you don't I will tell the cops you were not the phone and that automatically makes it your fault. After some arguing she left and went home to continue packing for our trip.

We are so ridiculous! Luckily she wasn't hurt, just a mild bump on the head. They say things come in threes but as we're flying over water at 30,000 ft for the next 5 hours I'm going to completely ignore Murphy's law and just trust we touchdown safely in Dublin… Thee will more tales because it's us and our life is a fucking saga and a reality tv show. You just can't make this shit up.



Disclaimer: I typed this on my ipad wihtout glasses, squished in the plane so Im totally doing the 'these are not the spelling mistakes you're looking for' wave.

The Gathering of the Clan-No Not like Highlander

August 17, 2013

After arriving in Dublin, looking around for a while and sampling some Irish food, we heeded south the county cork and the town of Youghal where the clan of mills reside. It's in the south of the country and we travelled through some spectacular landscape. It's not often a place lives up the the exact expectations you have but so far Ireland is doing just that. The drive was about 3 hours and along the way we passed through quaint little villages and countryside filled with stone walls and sheep. We stopped in Waterford where the famous crystal is made. We couldn't find the factory and as we were on a time schedule to visit the family we just kept going. We arrived in Youghal around 5, checked into the bed and breakfast and waited for the family to find us in the bar. We weren't there long when the daughters came in looking for us, as we were

the Bly ones there're it was easy for us to be recognized … But they still managed to say "oh ya it is ye." Ye is a great word. It's the Irish equivalent of you but cooler. So we followed these strangers into the countryside, onto the back roads, out into the fields and to the skinny single lane roads with stone walls lining them, deeper and deeper we went into the unknown, they'd said we'd never find it and they were not wrong, later in the evening Johnny was to announce they were getting zip codes next year… No wonder the gps didn't work.



The gathering of the clan was a great success, they just kept arriving, the cousins the second cousins the aunt the great aunt the second cousin once removed. It was so easy and comfortable even being in a room full of strangers, we were family and the stories fairly flew of those gone but still so vibrant in the mills history. We ended the meeting with a huge family photo and the promise to keep in touch.



Too busy to Write but Everything will be Shared… I promise.

August 25, 2013

We've been so many places and seen so much in the last 2 weeks that my head is spinning while I try to process everything we've seen and done.

We landed in Dublin, drove through Ireland, met family, missed a nights sleep, got a ferry to Scotland, ate haggis, met a monster,saw some castles, travelled the length of the UK, went to some battle grounds, saw some rocks and some very old cathedrals, started off uninspired by London, went on our first open top tour bus, got inspired by London, met One Direction by accident, ate fish and chips, realised London cabbies are dicks just like new york cabbies.

Seems like that was enough holiday to last… but then we spent the night on a bus to Paris. travelled through the Chunnel (channel tunnel) and arrived in a whole new world of food and foreign language. We are having so much fun. Yesterday after spending all night on a bus, we checked in and had a small rest before going to the Champs Elysees and the Eiffel tower. We climbed the eiffel tower. It was awesome, we walked up all the stairs to the top level where you catch the elevator to the top. It's 324 metres high. which is over 900 feet! It was nerve wracking in the final summit elevator because it was open and you could see the ground, Miss Gremlin panicked and freaked out. I felt the same way but held it together.

Today we toured the city and the Louvre. Tonight we have our 10th wedding anniversary dinner while the kids all go on their own little adventure in Paris.

I have so much to tell you but I need time to compile my thoughts and pictures. In the meantime you can follow along here where I can upload images. It seems wordpress isn't loving the foreign internet.

Where's the Bidet?

August 31, 2013

After leaving Amboise, a little village in the French countryside and NOT paying 43 euro to see the Da Vinci garden we stumbled upon Le Mans. The town with the car race, which I know nothing about. We cruised through without stopping and as we were getting back on the highway we saw a sign to Champagne. Naturally we had to go there. We're in France and Champagne is 7 kilometres away, of course we go. We get there, I'm in desperate need to pee and lucky for me the tourist information place is right next to the loo. I walk in, turn and walk straight out, it was a no…



Just a hole in the ground with two foot areas so you can squat. My mind said no but my bladder said you better, so I pulled my big girl panties up and went back on in, where I had to obviously pull them down. Now I've squatted and peed my way around Australia on the side of the road, I've done it all over my farm since I was a kid. It's

not a problem… But squatting over a porcelain hole is not the same, seriously not the same, aiming for a hole is really hard and the porcelain, unlike absorbent grass on the side of the road , just splashes it all back up. Are you picturing it? Pants around knees, squatting and back splashing on yourself. Stop laughing! I was desperate…



With the deed done I promptly put my feet and flip flops in the sink for a thorough rinsing. The bladder was happy but the feet were not. The princess and miss gremlin opted for the next stop. Which by the way was about 40 minutes later. I was glad I chose not to wait. Evidently for future reference. There are no champagne vineyards in Champagne, they are in the entire other direction. We tried but Verve Clicot was 304 kilometres and Moлt Chandon 296…in the wrong direction.

And so we headed to St Malo instead… there be pirates there but that's another story.

Riding the Subway Ain't No Big Thing

September 4, 2013

Subway systems all over the world have their good points and bad. Coming from NYC, we complain about the MTA constantly, because it's shit and costs too much and it's dirty and they break down and the rats and some stations smell like piss. Edinburgh, Scotland was our first experience, it was mostly above ground and it was fine. You needed to keep your tickets to exit at the other end and we got caught out a few times but we worked it out eventually.Our hotel was 2 stops away from the centre of the action and we worked out pretty quickly that the train was better than the cabs. When we arrived in London we wanted to experience the Tube, but our first attempt was a total fail. The worker who tried to help us actually suggested a cab! Once we did get in there the next day, we were very surprised, it was almost pristine! The stations are clean and bright and they have glass doors that the train lines up with so crazies can't push you on to the tracks into the path of an oncoming train. Besides the fact that most of Europe and the UK now have these chips on their credit cards which US banks don't use yet and we couldn't use any of our cards in the automatic ticket machines, we found it easy to use albeit really expensive AND it stops at midnight! So be sure that date doesn't run over time or you'll be footing it home. Pack sensible shoes in that cute purse of yours.



The Cool London Underground signs



Technology everywhere



Nice comfy seats



So many seating options and poles to hang onto

Once we got to Paris we discovered an even nicer system, it was all in French, naturally but we managed to work out where we wanted to go. We still had the credit card issue but we just went to the human in the booth and used our cards. Except for the one time there was no human, and the machine was broken, so we did what all good tourists do, we jumped the turnstiles, not such a big deal, they were easy enough to get over.



Clean and safe



A safer way to travel



The beautiful station decor



There's that technology again

The train came and we got on it, for 3 stops, then we hopped off and this is where our problems really began. France has really good exit gates, and everywhere you go you must use your ticket to get out… ba-bow no ticket, no get out! We tried for a bit and couldn't find a machine inside or a way out. So we did what all good tourists do when they're stuck, we climbed out. The King went first… he's an excellent criminal, followed by Miss Gremlin who shimmied under the gates, I was hesitant, being so opposed to rule breaking that I didn't want to but I did it very ungracefully. That left Grand Master D and he was having all manner of trouble. He couldn't decide which way to do it, under like Miss Gremlin or over like Dad and he was worried, he couldn't seem to get it together. It was at this time The King noticed the booth and the man in it watching us. Grand



No need to move between cars.

Master D finally got over and we were milling around deciding what to do, buy tickets? just leave? At that moment another french man approaches up and says “I think I can help you?” I was a question but a statement as well. Perhaps his English wan’t up to par, and so we explained we couldn’t buy tickets at the other end and thought we would buy tickets here. He says, “where are you trying to go? “To which we all answered ‘here!’ And as quick as a shot, with a huge smile on his face he replied… “ And so you go” and waved us out. And 4 little tourists scurried out the door.

We are terrible criminals, too honest but we laughed all the way out the door and marvelled at our climbing skills, except Grand Master D, who clearly has some work to do!





See how badass I am?

After all our experiences, we’ve come to decide, while the New York subway is shitty and dirty … it sure is cheap and easy to get in and out of. There’s no deciding which stop to buy for, just get a card, swipe your $2.50 and as long as you don’t leave the underground you can ride anywhere all day. Just be sure to stay back against the wall, in case a crazy is in a pushing mood.

You Promised! A Way to Keep Track of the Promises You Make to Your Children.

September 5, 2013

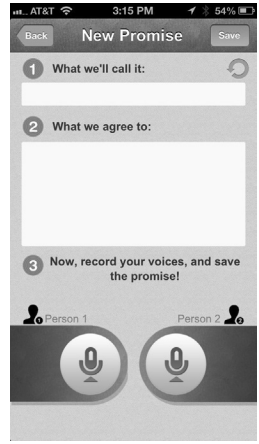


Before we went away on vacation, I came a cross a great app called You Promised. You know when you promise something to your kids just to shut them up? Yeah me too,

…well some brainiac has developed an app to keep track of that. So now we get to keep those promises we say so flippantly because they're recorded… DOH!

But truthfully, it's an awesome idea and one that my kids, especially Miss Gremlin has taken to. Getting to hear themselves make a promise and record it is a real novelty. But it's not just for the kids… I wish it was around when The King promised to take me to Paris for our 10th wedding Anniversary. It may have motived him to get me there sooner than our almost 14th ☺ Ah but that's ok. I'm patient and he did keep his promise.

I can think of a thousand uses and we used it all around Europe.



I promise to take you to an Irish Bar- check

I promise you won't fall off the Eiffel Tower-check

I promise we can have croissants for breakfast everyday when we get back to America-check

And for the kids:

I promise to remember to brush my teeth everyday-

I promise to keep my room tidy-

These last 2 are still in progress but they are working on it.

See how versatile this app is? Limited only by your imagination.

Download it **now** and help your children learn how to keep their word. Just be careful what YOU promise ☺

Also check them out on Facebook and Twitter to keep up to date with the latest developments.

And then as if by Magic…Silence

September 9, 2013

Everywhere across NYC today , if you're a public school parent, you're rejoicing in back to school. Summer is too long, the kids get bored and by September we're all ready to part ways…right?! Well in this house most definitely. As my wristband alarm

buzzed me awake this morning at 6:30, I was ready, ready to make school lunches, ready to get out the door on time ready to see my friends and ready, oh so ready for silence, quiet and peace for 8 beautiful hours.

It all ran mostly well, Grand Master D was already awake and watching something on his ipad to get him in the mood, Miss Gremlin was sleeping but arose cheerily as is her nature. While I walked the 'excited that people were up' dog, I left them to the task of showering , so when I got back we'd breakfast and go. The plan mostly worked although I will be looking for a giant shower alarm clock for his nibbs, who still seems to take forever. One that rips him from the shower physically if he isn't out in 10 minutes. Got any recommendations?

Breakfast and lunch making went smoothly and then Miss Gremlin wheeled the trolley full of supplies out. She's been organising them for 2 weeks! I let her do it without supervision but now I find she's taken everything out of the big box and just stacked it in the shopping trolley. Good Lord, one bump in the pavement and there'll be pencils and notebooks all over the footpath, so we quickly threw them into a bag and got ready to leave. Grand Master D was fluffing around in the bedroom and Miss Gremlin shouts 'seeya!' as if she's leaving to walk to school on her own with a huge cart full of supplies. No way! I'm coming too for the first day of school. I hurried Grand Master D again, 'come on boy!'

I managed a very rushed first day pic, I think I'll do it again tomorrow… Miss Gremlin was still trying to leave when I said NO Im coming, I want to see my friends too! Well this was all too much for the King who had been quietly listening from upstairs, he came down to ask, 'Did you really just say you want to see your friends?'

I think I might me more excited than the kids.

All ready finally, as we leave the building Grand Master D says 'I'm just gonna go' and Miss Gremlin tries the same. 'No I'm walking with you' I tell her but she's not happy. It takes less than a block for me to be walking to school on my own, oh well I tried.



I caught up to her at the door and took the cart for her. She went off to find her class and I took the supplies upstairs. I didn't even see Grand Master D but he's in 8th grade now, a senior at middle school, so having mum drop you off is so not cool.

First day of school is not what it used to be. Next year Grand Master D will be heading to high school. No doubt I'll be waving him off on a city train or bus by himself. They're growing up… I better get used to it.

Ireland, Fully Booked

September 12, 2013

We're not planners, nope, not, so when we decided to go away this summer we just booked and went, literally within days. The King was waiting for some business things to fall in place and then it was all systems go. I think we booked on wednesday and were flying the next monday. The only thing we booked was the return airfares to Dublin, the rest was a 'let's just do this' trip.

For us that worked. When we landed we got the best rate on a hire car because we could bargain, we had no idea where we were going to sleep the first night but knew we were seeing the relatives so we just got on the road. It's the years of travelling in a band that has taught us to just roll with it.

For the first few nights we just found B&B's along the way, the rates were reasonable and it was time to stop. We loved the free wifi! Not something you experience in accomodation in America. It's all 'that'll be $12.95 for 24 hours thanks'. Every night was a different part of Ireland, the countryside unfolding before us, the thrill of the discovery. Of course some nights we came a little unstuck because we rolled in after dinner time and had to eat bar snacks or late night fodder from the nearby service station. But that was also part of the charm, so we kept telling the kids. On nights when this happened, we made sure the next night we ate first or got into town earlier. The kids were the best travellers, they just enjoyed the scenery or watched things on their devices. We stopped to check things out, we stopped to eat, we stopped for bathroom breaks. Some days we covered hundreds of kilometres, other days we covered less. In 3 days we had seen so much of Ireland we were amazed.

Thursday saw us in a chocolate factory for breakfast, flying on the cliffs of Kerry by lunch and by afternoon we were on a boat, in the car crossing back to the mainland from an island on our way to Galway.



Assume the sleeping position



Jumping kids on the Ring of Kerry road



Flying on the Cliffs of Kerry



Chocolate for breakfast? Sure



In a car on a boat

We rolled into Galway at around 8pm. It was beautiful, a very nice place to stay and we were really looking forward to eating and checking it out the following morning. We found the hotel district pretty easily, it's a well laid out city. We parked and the King ran in, no vacancy, sorry Sir we're fully booked. That's fine, we'll go around the corner to the Hilton, The Princess ran in …no vacancy,sorry ma'am we're fully booked… hmmm ok, so we tried one more, fully booked but he kindly pointed us in the direction of B&B row, where all the Bed and Breakfasts are and the back packer accommodation. We went into one and he's fully booked, ok we started to wonder, it's getting later and we haven't eaten yet. The King and Princess headed into the next B&B and they had one family room left which would accommodate 4 but as we're 5 we decided to go eat and decide what to do.

We were heading to Belfast the next day to go to Scotland, so over dinner we decided that while we'll miss seeing Galway, maybe it's better to drive through to Belfast and get accom there. It's only 4 hours, the kids can sleep in the car and we'll have the hire car back a day early and save money and yadda yadda. So, full of food and ready for the drive the kids settled in and we headed off.

I was tired, I didn't really want to drive through but the King said he was fine and it was a better plan. My problem is that I can't relax, I feel like I must stay awake to make sure he stays alert. It was hard, I was exhausted and fighting sleep but we rolled into Belfast around 3am. We were ready for a nice sleep in a nice hotel… Navigating

around the city was a little strange, so many one way streets but we finally found the Hilton, everyone needed the bathroom so we piled out while the King went to get rooms. Oho… fully booked. That's fine we saw the Marriott around the block… and you guessed it fully booked.

By now this was becoming less funny, it was early hours of the morning, we were travel weary and sick of everything. 3 more hotels, 3 more answers 'fully booked' FUCK! What the fuck is going on? We're in a major city for fuck sake… Well my friends we just happened to pick the night of the big concert, don't ask me who was playing cos I really don't care but we were like Mary and Joseph except I wasn't pregnant and we already had 3 kids… meh details. Scrambling to make plans as the sun was coming up and it was pointless by this stage to pay for a room for only a couple of hours sleep, we located the hertz agency to return the car. No phone number and no key drop off and not open til 9… it was 5:45 am. As we drove around the corner we saw a beacon of hope. The Holiday Inn was opening up for breakfast… great! Let's eat, pee and just get on the road to Scotland already, fuck Belfast…

So we wander in like bedraggled travellers, looking for coffee and sympathy. What we met was Mr. Uptight Asshole. Breakfast isn't open until 6:30 and although the machine right there was gurgling with hot water, no we're not serving coffee. Well fuck you pal! We sat, and plugged in and hooked into their wifi… After a little while I got the kids out of the car and they took up sleeping on the couches… Mr Uptight Asshole didn't like that and so we moved them to the table beside us. Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D just stretched out on the floor instead. Fuck him. It was then that the Maitre D talked with Mr Uptight Asshole about us and she brought over a pot of coffee and some frothy hot chocolates for the kids. See there are nice people in the world.

While we drank our coffee and the kids slept, we googled ferries to Scotland and rental car return options. Nobody was hungry so after we were charged up and caffeinated we left The Holiday Inn and headed for the ferry.

There were logistics to overcome, the kids and I stayed at the ferry terminal with the luggage while the King and the Princess set off to return the car to the airport and taxi back to the ferry terminal. There was plenty of time, it was 7 am and the ferry left at 11. We were the only ones there. The early ferry had just left and so the kids took up sleeping on the seats. No food, no money and a not very nice ticket seller who wouldn't give me change or sell me tickets until 9am…Should've eaten at the Holiday Inn like I wanted to.

Northern Ireland does not have the same feel as Ireland. You see, it's part of the UK and you can really tell the difference, all over Ireland we were met with nothing but helpful, pleasant, well wishing people. From the moment our phones buzzed with the new country codes and data charges as we crossed into Northern Ireland, shit just changed. The atmosphere was heavy, no wonder they bomb the shit out of the place. It was awful.

We reunited around 8 and just hung out, using the facilities,wifi and power to get ourselves sorted. When 9am came, Mr Non helpful was so pleasant! It was like he's had an anal probe and an injection of niceness. He couldn't be more helpful, suggesting the best places to stay, helping us navigate our ferry and rail passage to Glasgow. He even printed out hotel rates and directions.

As the boat arrived and boarding got closer we had to go through security, like the airport but not quite as strict. Once upstairs there was food… and coffee.

In 3 hours we'd be in Scotland and we would find a hotel and rest, then do some discovering around Glasgow.

Just before we boarded the boat, the Princess upgraded us to a suite, we had a hotel room on the ferry for our 3 hour journey. We all took turns roaming the boat and taking a catnap. We even took showers. It was a welcome change to the night in the car.

Ireland we love you… but we got the hint you'd had enough of us… with the words 'fully booked' still wringing in our ears we alighted in a new country with new adventures to be had…

Scotland, Also Fully Booked… WTF?!

September 13, 2013



Recovering from our traumatic evening, over on the ferry to Scotland, we were refreshed and renewed when we left the ferry and boarded the bus to the train to Glasgow… wait what? Well you see they upgraded the Ferry terminal but some dickhead didn't think that the trains would no longer connect if you moved it elsewhere and so we found ourselves on a bus. Ok whatever, we're fine, we can do this. It wasn't far right? So we loaded our stuff onto the bus and headed for the train. We drove and we drove and we drove… MY goodness this is a long 12 kilometres… yeah that's because its more like 50! And so we all slept on the bus… for an hour. The deep open mouth, snoring and drippling kind of sleep that comes from complete exhaustion.

Once we arrived at the station, we bought our tickets and boarded straight away. The trip to Glasgow was another hour. By this time is was 3pm. It was fine, the countryside was different though, not like Ireland at all. No rock walls, just fences and stock, we could have been anywhere. Glasgow was announced and we alighted, ready for Scotland to show us her wares. Out the door turn right… Hotel, boom, awesome! Our night of no sleep followed by a day of cars, ferries, buses and trains was over… we were ready for discovering.

When the King came out of the hotel our faces dropped, no way, *fully booked*? Are you kidding me? But we had it on good authority that the hotel across the street always had room. We trudged with our luggage across the street. In the too narrow door, with all the bags… The lady had news, the bad kind.

FULLY FUCKING BOOKED!

How can this be? And then she showed us the entire accom list for Glasgow. Every room gone. Full, Occupado!

Well you know what we did? We said fuck you Glasgow, and went back across the street to the train station and got on the first train to Edinburgh. While we travelled, the King and I both got on the wifi and phones and searched for rooms. We were not going to be without beds tonight. It was a frenzy, we were hedging bets and booking

rooms and making deals, it was beautiful to watch, unless you were the kids, knowing it meant sleeping in the streets…The prices were terrible, so very expensive but we found a place out of the City centre, with the last 2 rooms available. We took em and then began to research why the hell everything was booked? It was the Edinburgh festival, complete with the Royal Scotland Miltiary Tattoo…

We were exhausted, we were road worn and we decided to stay 2 nights. The first time we'd stayed in the same place twice for the trip so far. And we were so glad we did. We had the best time in Edinburgh, saw so much, even got laundry done!



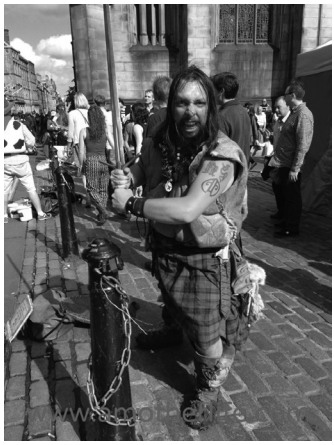
Waiting for the Military Tattoo Evening Parade



This Guy, Lord Someone??? Was a fun addition



Edinburgh Castle was breathtaking



This Guy was awesome and scary!

After that we booked ourselves at least one night ahead so we never went without sleeping in a bed again. Note to future travellers, Europe is FULLY BOOKED in August so make sure you secure your accommodation before you go… Will we? Probably not but at least we know what to expect next time.

The Piano, Sex, Shopping and things that go BOOM! in the Night

September 16, 2013

Here you are! I knew the title would get you. Sex sells, we all know that. Well stick around, you'll get your 3 minutes worth but first things first.

This is NOT the first time I've said this and it sure as hell won't be the last… *"My life's NOT NORMAL"*. At dinner on tuesday night The King mentions quietly that he's thinking about getting a piano.

"Sounds fine to me" I muse, "Where will we put it though?" Because while we have 2000 sq feet, we seem to have filled every usable space and I can't think of a spot for an upright piano to go. Mulling this over in my mind as I do, I have about 45 seconds before The king adds, "well I guess we'll find out tomorrow!"

Me: "Good Lord? WTF? You bought a piano?"

The King: "No, I acquired one."

Me: "Oh ok cool." See what I did there? Nery a feather ruffled…

Because that always goes well. The shit this man has 'acquired' over the years would make your head spin. There's always an 'opportunity' presenting itself somewhere. Once we went out to dinner in one car and drove home in two, don't ask…never ask ☺

As luck would have it I was out while the delivery took place and I arrived to a cute little piano, very non intrusive against the wall. Some furniture was shuffled but nothing you'll trip over and hurt yourself in the night without the lights.

The week progressed and the little piano sat there untouched by the wall. Then Saturday arrived and there were piano parts flying around the house like a whirlwind! The vacuum was out, the kids were fascinated and the King was fashioning tools out of wooden takeout chopsticks!

As I watched the frenzy and the kids fascination, I was transported back in time to another life, one where the King tuned and restored pianos while I patiently waited and waited. Do you KNOW how long it takes to bring a piano up to pitch? Have you heard it being done? An hour, if you're lucky, that's a good solid hour of do-dong, do-dong is several octaves, back and forth from low to high AT LEAST TWICE. And more hours of patient waiting I shall ever get back than I care to recall.

And so it began in our house, after some cleaning and regulating, the tuning process began. The children were hushed to their room, the dishwasher and washer were banished to silence and don't even think about making that noise! A piano tuner needs silence, concentration is key (pun intended) even the dog was shushed for walking across the floor, and so, knowing exactly how long this torture would take, I took myself for a walk and the dog joined me.





I arrived back in time to the playing of 'Love Story', the King's tuning song, my saviour, the signal all is over and we can pack up and leave. Nice timing I thought, but I congratulated myself prematurely because round 2 was just beginning.

Sigh, headphones and facebook only work for so long, and so out to the terrace and sunshine, I went.

Once it was all complete, it was time to polish and put back together, child labour is great for this kind of stuff especially when it's a novelty. Miss Gremlin spent the best part of another hour polishing the wood and shining the pedals and knobs…

After all these years, once again, we have a piano.

When the Victoria Secret catalogue hits our house you know the wallet is in trouble. It's a battle though to see who gets to peruse it first! I love that stuff but try my best to refrain from buying the store. I try to limit myself to 2 good splurges a year but when you get a request, then by gosh you better seize that opportunity! I got such a request. Oh be still my beating heart. With coffee in hand, I began my online shopping experience. You have 5 items in your shopping bag, checkout? or continue shopping… UMMMMM. I wanted a specific thing, but online was not letting me purchase it, so

I used the live chat thing, don't you just love those? I do, it's fun to actually get help while not ever leaving home … anyway, the online lady was very helpful but informed me that piece was no longer available! GAH That was the entire reason I even started this spending spree… Oh well, I guess I 'll check out now. But now I have a dilemma, all this new stuff but not the requested item, so what does a good wife do? Well this one wakes up sunday morning and walks herself to the nearest VS to see if it's available in store!

Bingo! I found the item I was looking for but funded another small village in the process. You try going into a store and buying JUST ONE THING! Oh well it's all for a good cause, how can he be mad if it's goodies for the boudoir right?… I'll let you know when the statement arrives. I could be on nightly duty to pay it off!

However the first 3 minute test run did go very well! I may yet get away with it! (told you there'd be sex) ☺

With the deed done, we promptly fell asleep only to be woken from our slumber by an almighty BOOM! AGAIN! It happened the night before too! Sounding like a bomb went off on Saturday night we let the neighbourhood take care of it. I spent all day googling it looking for the news story. I found nothing but when it happened again last night? Fuck it, we 911'ed this time. No idea what was going on. No pretty display of fireworks, it was way too loud for that! After about 10 minutes on with the operator, then the fire department I was informed that it actually was fireworks and the authorities were on it.

Assholes!

It's the middle of the night and they detonate these things! Car alarms and building alarms going off everywhere? I can only imagine the terror in apartments!

I hope they blew their fucking fingers off… kidding, maybe!

So how was your weekend? Do anything fun or interesting?

Blarney Castle- Fun for the Whole Family!

September 18, 2013

Have you Kissed the Blarney Stone? Have you even thought what that might be? I pictured a stone in a field, I don't know why… I certainly didn't picture this!

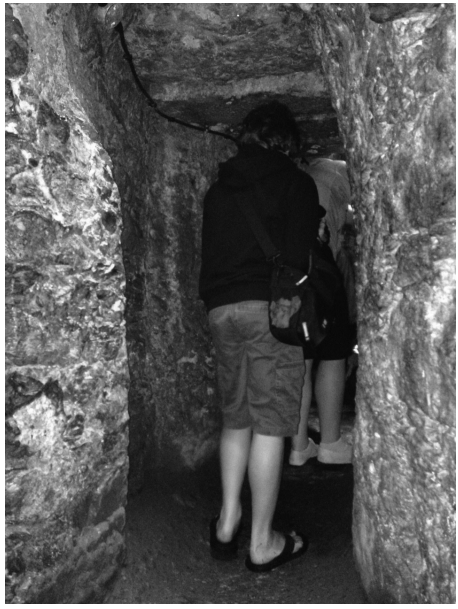


Looking up to the Blarney stone

See that gap up there? In the middle? That's the Blarney Stone, inside the Blarney Castle over 5 stories and more than a hundred thin windy spiral stone steps which cause young children to have panic attacks like this…



Ok so maybe that photo doesn't give the full effect. Try to picture climbing in this small space,



people in front, people behind, nowhere to go, trapped, being pushed up some tiny medieval stairs to the top of an old stone building and having a fear of heights. Yeah, she sobbed all the way up. I was not very sympathetic, the people in line were helpful and caring. I just said stop crying nothing's gonna happen. Mean Mummy, yep, whatever. She made it. She was proud. I was proud of her!

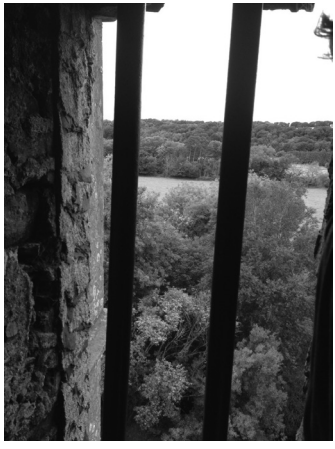


Maybe there's a skip in her step, just maybe

Again the picture doesn't show it but in years to come she'll remember and that's what counts! She'll have to return to Kiss the stone but now she knows what to expect. Who knows history may even repeat itself…



This was one of the rooms off the staircase. There were signs to tell you the uses. It's amazing that people lived in these old castles. History sure comes alive. It was truly fascinating.



A window in the stairwell to see what we can see!



Bloody long way down to the ground



Kissing the Blarney Stone ain't so easy!

The line was long but it was totally worth it. Hanging upside down over a hole to kiss a rock wall that's been kissed by millions! Yup check that box!



The witches part of the forest

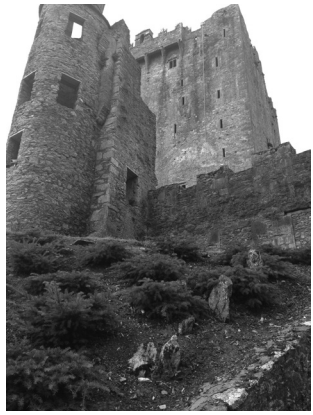


The fairy gardens



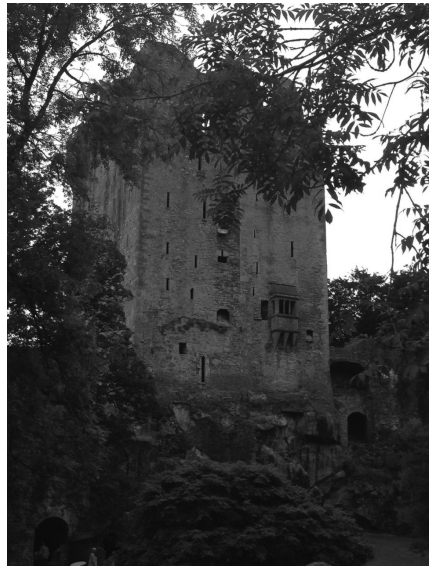
The witches oven





The Castle behind and the mansion in front, which burnt down in the 1800's only the watch tower remains





Blarney Castle



Now we've all kissed the Blarney stone, there'll be no stopping us!



Grand Master D



The Princess



The King

American Women Have Tiny Vaginas, Or Want to, According to Manufacturers

September 19, 2013

Here's a fact that you might forget but it's worth noting. If you're travelling anywhere for more than one week … YOU WILL GET YOUR PERIOD.

So be prepared. Takes some supplies, you don't have to take enough for the whole course of your monthly but at least enough to get you through a day or two before you need to purchase foreign sanitary supplies, especially if the country is not English speaking. When you go shopping please remember American women have tiny vaginas!

What, you didn't know this? Well they must because someone in marketing decided to change all the universal sizes. Or maybe they have huge ones and it's a cover up, I can't really decide.

Everywhere else in the world a 'regular' tampon is regular size, 'super' is for heavy flow and 'super plus' is for elephant vaginas! Right? This is a well known fact or so I thought.

But in America, in the same way they changed all the clothing sizes, 4 is the new 8, 0 is the new 4, 'super plus' is the same as real world 'supers' and american super is real world regular. This is important to remember. When I first moved to America and began purchasing supplies I couldn't work it out. I bought regulars and laughed when I opened the box to discover minis, tampons for 13 yo virgins! Good Lord. They wouldn't even work sideways! But over the years I've adjusted and alway pick up the 'super plus' size because super isn't so super over here.

So now that I've explained all this to you. Confused? Try and keep up Ladies, this shit's important YO!

Let me tell what I did.

While we were travelling, France got to be the lucky location of my period. Perfect, well done body! We're in Paris, the city of romance for our tenth wedding anniversary (albeit 4 years late) and boom! SURPRISE.

Anyway not to be deterred… there's other ways to enjoy each others company, we skun that cat…

(engage wildest imagination here)

cigarette??

Ok moving on… I needed to buy the required products, whatever. I made my way to a pharmacy, with Miss Gremlin in tow, and began searching the shelves. I can do this, I don't need assistance, they're in easy packaging I'm sure… looking, looking, not finding, so finally I walk up to the counter and ask. "Parlez-vous Anglais Sil vous Plait?" it's France, you've GOT to try. Luckily I was met with 'yes' and so I asked where the tampons were. Pointed in the right direction I was excited to see my very own brand preference! Yay J&J for world domination! I scooped up a package of 'super plus', paid and went on my way. Miss Gremlin looked a little perplexed and said what did you buy mum? I told her I bought tampons, she got all shy and said 'Oh, ewww". I'm still not sure about that reaction. It was an "Oh, ewww" like we were talking about sex, maybe she was confused. Oh well, no need to revisit it, she'll work it out.

With my purchase tucked neatly in my bag I forgot about it and we spent the best day wandering the Champs Elysee and the Louvre and enjoying all the French food.

Later that evening, when I opened my package, I was taken aback! What madness was this? These are MASSIVE, I could plug up a Dutch dyke with one of THOSE!

I looked at the packet, super plus, yep that's right but the size was all off and then it came to me.

This is not America! This is like Australia, I should have bought 'super' but I was so used to my revised size 'super plus' that I didn't even think about it.



French Super plus tampons



When super plus isn't super plus or is it?



US super plus tampons

So be warned Ladies… manufacturers are trying to give you a complex about your vaginal size. Check the package carefully.

Is this not confusing? You be the judge…

Fly Away …Be Free, Sid Fishious

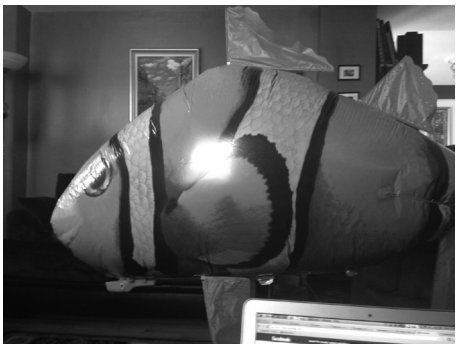
September 21, 2013

With a heavy heart, we announce that our Sid Fishious escaped up the stairs and out the door, while we were watching TV.



He was a good fish, a welcome addition to our crazy family. You can read about his arrival here. He'll be out flying around somewhere now. I hope he stays out of the way of planes. If you see him tell him to send us a post card. We'll miss his silly face…

Fly, be free Sid Fishious…





Oh look a wall!









Getting this swimming thing right **Just swimming around**

Absence Makes…

September 25, 2013

The King is away, he's in Spain for business for a week. This means life gets a little easier around here.(ahem) I don't have to make awesome dinners… the kids are happy with quick easy vegie free fare or even take out! **Bonus**.

I get the remote to myself and can watch all the cop dramas and history channel I want or even sappy movies. **Bonus**.

I get more sleep because I go to bed earlier and don't have to be available for grown up play. **Bonus**.

I can stay in bed and check my email, and be noisy and have the bed made by 7am. **B o n u s**.

All these things are things that I think I need… but then I can't sleep because he's not beside me and I keep waiting for him to finally come upstairs.

I watch exactly the same things on tv as if he was still in control of the remote.

I can't get moving in the mornings because I didn't get straight up and life is just a little lonelier because he's not around…

We think we want space and need time away until we have it and then we realise that being together is so much better.

I will get that good night sleep thursday because I'll be so exhausted from not sleeping that I'll finally pass out. I will watch the history channel just because I can but probably go back to Frasier and Big Bang Theory. And I will get time off from cooking, although I'll probably make something awesome just cos the kids love it.

Whoever decided 'absence makes the heart grow fonder' was not kidding.



Sid The Sitcom Star

September 29, 2013

So for a week now, since his escape, we've fretted and worried our dear Sid Fishious was either dodging planes, in a ditch in Jersey City or at the bottom of the Hudson river. We scanned the skies and ground everywhere we walked and in the vain hope of finding him, we kept a watch, left the door open and hoped he'd come home.

Thursday night, while the King was in Spain and I had the remote all to myself, as I was flicking I caught the last 10 minutes of the new Michael J. Fox show. I love Michael J. Fox and I applaud him for being brave enough to share his disease with the world in a sitcom. So brave and awesome and just damn cool.

As the credits began rolling imagine my surprise when I saw my boy! There he was on primetime tv for all the world to see.



I felt so proud, he's gone from us but onto bigger and better things. **You're a star Sid Fishious, a star!**





He's giving me a kiss and telling me he's A-OK.



And I see he's still up to his old tricks of bombarding people when they least expect it!

Here's the full episode in case you want to watch.

Ooh Look, There's a Rock…A Walking Tour in Pictures.

September 30, 2013

During our trip away in the summer we visited Stonehenge. It's an amazing place, as we drove along the road we could see it in the distance. It was eerie.

In the middle of nowhere there's a druid stone thing. Thousands of years old, with no real explanation how it got there or what it's purpose really was.



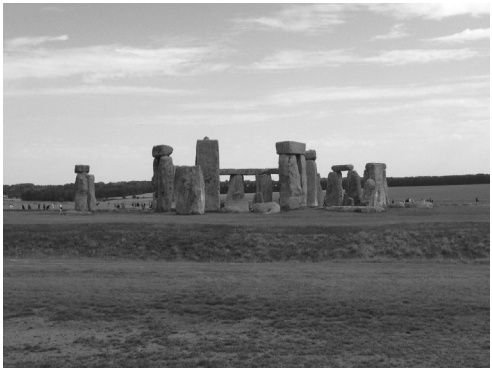
From the road, it's a bunch of strange rocks in a field.





As we got closer it felt a little strange. Like something special used to happen there. Something sacred or at least important.







From every angle this place is just incredible. It's amazing how they got there. How they were moved from hundreds of miles away to be placed here. And for what reason. Fascinating!



Can't you see the fascination on their faces? Ok it was early and we'd been touring pretty hard… but still one day they will stop and think about being there and the wonder of the place.



Yeah … HIM TOO!






If you get the chance to visit. It's worth it, I promise.

Sure it's just some rocks in a field in the middle of nowhere… But THAT'S the fascinating part!

I Used My Kids to Steal Stuff

October 3, 2013

Years ago when I was still pushing kids in strollers, back when pushing kids in strollers happened. Before the attachment 'carry your kid everywhere until they go to school' crowd took over. Not judging at all so don't stop reading and head to the comment page to yell at me just yet. I had huge babies, ok! Huge AND we drove everywhere so obviously we drove our kids everywhere too. phew dodged that… I think.

On a shopping expedition, it happened. Now first let me explain, I'm not a shopper. I've never been a shopper, ok I was a shopper when I got my first credit card but I learned the hard way, the really hard way not to shop like that. So after that, I used the same stealy will I use to resist chocolate. I just don't. Ok, chocolate has changed -but menopause people, back OFF.

I don't shop. I know if I could, I would be in big trouble. I like new things. I like the feeling of having new things, they're mine and it makes me feel good. Psychologists

everywhere are rubbing their freudian beards muttering 'verdy interrrresting', I can feel it. Sorry I digress…

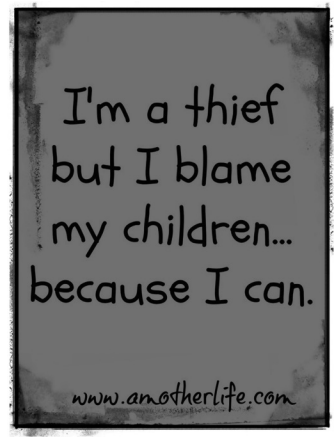
So picture it, family outing with baby in tow, wandering the outlet stores. Perusing all the nice things as you do. The King put a bag on the top of the stroller, just while he decided if he wanted it. (He has a bag thing… just let it go). We wandered some more, got distracted and generally window shopped our happy little selves until we were done. During this time little Grand Master D must have been fussing because I pushed the visor on the stroller back to check on him. Then it was off to have a nice little family lunch. We wandered a few more stores, spent about an hour or more before we headed back to the car.

By this time all the stores were closed. I strapped Grand master D into the car, unloaded all the baby crap into the seat beside him and moved around the back to fold the stroller and put it in the car. That's when I noticed it. The bag, still sitting on top of the stroller. In the now opened visor! OMG! We had stolen it. The stores were closed. Now what? The guilt came washing over me immediately!

I was a thief

This was devastating to me. I have never stolen anything ever. I am the quintessential rule follower, ALWAYS. But right at that moment there was nothing I could do about it. The stores were all closed, so resigned to the fact I was terrible, we loaded everything into the car and headed home to examine our new bag vowing to return it to the store and make things right. A couple of weeks went by and we liked that little bag. So we decided to keep it.

We found ourselves at the same shopping centre a week or so later and I said to the King, lets go back to David Jones and pay for that bag. We entered the store, had another nice little window shopping experience and found another bag the same in the racks. This time I held it in my hand, I wasn't going to fall for that again. Bad stroller.



We lined up at the cash register with all the other shoppers of the day and waited our turn to be served. When i was my turn I said to the cashier I accidentally stole one of these bags a couple of weeks ago, so I don't want this one, I just want to pay for it. I swear the look on her face was like I had told her I was an alien from the planet Waznik and I was here to escort her back for research. Seeing I wasn't getting

through, I explained exactly what happened with the stroller and the bag and that I didn't want to have the bag without paying for it. It's not like the store needed my $20 but it was the principle. After a third attempt she almost understood me but still couldn't understand why I was doing it. It's just the right thing, I offered. So finally with my transaction almost complete, a woman behind me said "You don't see that kind of honesty much anymore, good on you" to which I smiled and said something about it just being right.

I still don't know if the young cashier really understood what I'd done but I felt much better about the bag and had no guilt in using it anymore. After that, whenever I used the top of the stroller to hold things, I always checked before leaving the store.

My Child Didn't Graduate-Bad Parent Alert

October 7, 2013

Little Miss Gremlin came home last April with a less than glowing eye report from the school. She had some big long name thing but basically her eyes weren't tracking together and after 20 seconds her right eye would just check out and this was causing her blurred vision and headaches and loss of stamina for reading.

So being a good parent I began the search for the recommended eye therapy. We started that in May at a private clinic. It was just easier than the other option. We've been going every week for 30 minute sessions since then. And that's fine, I'll do whatever it takes for my children and their legitimate medical needs. No questions asked. But we don't have insurance, yes I know you had a little gasp. It's ok I've talked about this before. So far, for our family, it works just self paying, one day I may eat my words and now there's a law saying we must get coverage, but up to now we've been just fine.

It's been costing $100 a week, for a 30 minute session. No problem. She does the work every night and has progressed quickly and far since the beginning. But I think she's done. About five weeks or $500 ago the Dr told me her eyes are now tracking together again, which is what we needed to fix. Since then she has been just doing visual memory. Now I'm all for remembering what you see but it's beginning to wear thin and I think we're being had. A couple of weeks ago I asked how much longer because we had no end date and paying $100 a week forever more is not my idea of a good time. Do you KNOW how many massages that equals? Right!

So the week before last, the Dr told me the next week would be visual closure, now I'm not the sharpest pencil in the box but I imagined that meant she was done… you know… VISUAL CLOSURE…Oh how wrong can one person be. So we went, thinking it was our last visit and by chance that day, Miss Gremlin saw the school optometry clinic and passed with flying colours so I was completely taken aback when the Dr said ok you can schedule an evaluation appointment in about a month… HUH? What? And you have at least 7 visits left. I was shocked and not quite sure what just happened. That, my friends is another $1000 because the evaluation is an hour appointment @ $300.

I left, I didn't cause scene but I have had time to think about it over the week and we as a family have decided that we are not going to continue. Miss Gremlin says she's not getting headaches anymore and nothing is blurry and she certainly has the stamina to read as so far this school year she's read 15 books!

But we're not finished. We don't graduate, we will be leaving before the end of what the Dr. says she needs but I don't think she needs it. Am I wrong?



Or am I being strung along, being fleeced of my hard earned money… I'm not sure but I tend to think so. Not in a malicious way, I don't think they are meaning to rip me off but I believe it's too much now and matching block patterns after looking at them for 5 seconds and drawing boxes the same as the picture can be done at home just as easily without the $100 cost…

And so I called this morning and cancelled. The receptionist was shocked but I explained. She said the Dr will want to call me. I answered, That's fine. I will explain but I will not pay any more. If I add it all up, I've paid over $3000 already. I think that'll do.

So now Wednesday afternoons are free…Massage anyone? I'm hoping it'll help me ease my bad parent feeling ☺

Another Wedding Anniversary-Where did the time go?

October 9, 2013

On the 9th of October in the Day Time… 14 years ago we got married. **It was a whirlwind thing**, he landed a helicopter in the back yard and proposed on the 25th September and we found ourselves in the flash clothes 2 1/2 weeks later. We pulled off an awesome event. Everyone had the best time. We kinda enjoyed it too.



He got one!

Over the years we've had our growing pains… but we stuck together. Even making me move here to America couldn't stop me loving him. In fact it really brought us closer together because it was just us against the big bad world and some days it felt that bad. But we had each other and we persevered.

Along the way we make some pretty cool things…



We make cute kids

They've grown a bit, they test us all the time but we couldn't be prouder



Still pretty cute

We've also grown a bit physically but that's just the good life :P



Still two {young} lovers



And fancy !

So today we do the anniversary thing… but if I'm really honest, everyday feels like an anniversary with the King…

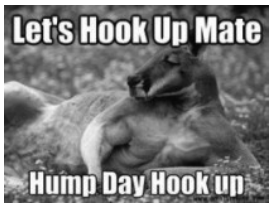


What's not to love?!

Happy Anniversary My Love!



And as an added bonus it's HUMP DAY! Come on over and ***Hook UP!***



Hate Cooking?, Let the Oven Do it.

October 11, 2013

It's been a while since I've done food on the blog but there's a few people who have been asking about my paleo journey. Ok I've fallen off the wagon a little but Europe… beer and bread people… nuf said?

So it's time to get right back to it. Super easy dinner ideas.

I'm all about the lazy cooking. I don't enjoy it. For me it's a daily chore I detest. I know Im supposed to enjoy creating for my family but I don't because there's always someone complaining about what I serve. *sigh* but with this meal everyone is happy. And it's so easy because the oven does all the work.

Sweet potato fries are the easiest thing ever and the kids fight for the very last one. Just peel and slice those badboys and put them in a dish and shake olive oil over them and a sprinkle of paprika and some salt and into the oven they go!

Asparagus is a super yummy food but it makes your pee smell weird. Strange fact!

I like to make them with bacon, so again in an oven dish… asparagus and chopped up bacon and a little oil but they mostly cook in the bacon fat, super yummy!



The newest menu addition is honey baby carrots. I like them best when they're a little burned… preparation zero, just open the packet, throw them in an oven dish coat with oil and honey… sprinkle with salt…



Oh yeah, the fried onions… don't forget the fried onions.



So while all that is cooking I get to chill out, seriously the oven does ALL the work. At the very last minute the King comes down and cooks the steaks and voila we have a paleo meal to die for that even the kids love!





What's on your plate tonight?

She's Got Talent- The Writers Edition

October 14, 2013

So Miss Gremlin has talent, it seems the writing gene carried through… The King writes, Grand Master D writes film scripts and you know I wrote cos you're here

reading it… but who knew the little gremlin was a writer too! And it's impressive, we're a family of writers. What is the collective noun for that anyway? Sorry… squirrel.

So I asked her if I could share her story with you. Here's how that went…

Mummy crawled into bed with me this morning and caught me at a weak moment. She wanted to use my story for her blog, heeeelloooo… I wasn't even awake. It was still dark and this crazy woman gets in my bed and starts talking at me! Apparently I said yes but I wasn't listening and now I have share. Whatever…

I'm Edward Jacobs and I have a story to tell you. One summer night I was lying in bed when all of a sudden 'BAM!' lightning struck the house and I passed out.

The next thing I remember, I was in a movie! I was a computer genius and I had to live the movie through and through! When it ended I felt a sudden shock and my heart stopped! I could hear a faint 'click click'. It sounded like a remote, all the lights turned off as if the tv turned off. I decided to explore. After 20 minutes of wandering I found a door. I proceeded to open it, suddenly a brilliant flash of white light burst forth and I entered what looked like a control room. I was trying desperately to get out of the movie so I 'accidentally' hit the button and the next thing I knew I was in another movie.

I was starting to get that I had to follow the story plot to get to the next control room. It went on like that for the next 300 movies so I decided to go a different way.

I followed the story plot backwards. It got a little hard saying everything backwards so I just pretended to freeze up. I got hit a couple of times But I was ok! ☺

I found another door and I was slightly more hesitant with this one because I didn't want to do 200 more movies, now I know how actors feel. Suddenly, I felt a huge shock and I passed out. The next thing I knew was my older brothers were slapping me in bed! 'What happened' I said. 'Well, you were peacefully asleep and we had to stop that!" they said

However I don't think I was dreaming because I can still hear that annoying click!!!!!

The End…or is it?

So there it is, my little Miss Gremlin has an imagination and is not afraid to use it.



Bureaucracy Is Fun

October 17, 2013

So this one time…

Don't you love it when stories start like that? Me too. This particular tale is a tale of woe for some newly landed foreigners trying to navigate a system. A system that is fraught with danger… the getting of a driver's license.

It was early in our US experience. We needed a license to close some loans, it was a dotting I's and crossing T's thing. Problem was we couldn't get a license without an SSN and we couldn't get an SSN without a US issued ID (license) Great, right! (insert brick wall here) So a few major annoyances and an education in humanity later, I got a letter from Social Security (have you been there? OMG??!?!!) to say we weren't entitled to an SSN and got ready to license up.

Now where we lived at the time in Connecticut, there was a long wait for appointments. A 2 month long wait, for a driving test! What craziness was this? Ok so maybe there's too many people living here. But we finally booked appointments in a town 100, yes 100 miles away, are we having fun yet? 'Merica… so on our alotted appointment day we loaded up the family, not unlike the Beverly Hillbillies, at dawn and headed over to the DMV in *Crapcity, Connecticut with all our paperwork ready to go. We needed 3 forms of ID and our passports and blah blah, utility bills, you know ALL the bullshit that a Government department like the DMV needs. We had to take our driving tests too because being foreigners they needed us to prove we could drive. I'm totally gonna add that NYC doesn't do that for their taxi drivers… ok moving on!

We also had to borrow our friend's car because OUR car was licensed in Indiana and they needed a Connecticut state licensed car for us to test in, which they told us on our FIRST 200 mile round trip… What fresh Hell was this? We managed to pass our written tests on that trip. Anyway, fancy pants us tested in a brand new 500 series BMW… whatever Connecticut, whatever. The actual driving test took less than 5 minutes, we literally drove out the driveway, turned left, turned right and came back. The tester was great, he could see each of us could drive before we even left the parking lot. He spent the entire time asking me about living in Australia and why did I move here?

With the practical test now out of the way, we went inside to finalise the paperwork and get our mugshots photos taken. The King was first, handing over his paperwork. He had an SSN so he had an easy time, the 3 things he presented were acceptable and he got a shiny new Connecticut license.YAY… Me, well I didn't have enough paperwork. A marriage certificate was not good enough. It had to be the extract. My Australian license, well you KNOW that wasn't gonna fly. And because all the utilities were in the King's name I had nothing. I was able to produce 2 things they would accept but there was no way they were giving me my license that day. I had passed their written test, I passed their driving test but my passport, Australian license and US visa, all with my photograph on them were not enough to prove who I was. Really Connecticut? Really? All that was good enough for Homeland Security? But you are more special, more important than that? It was totally unbelievable.



Finally the woman at the counter told me that if I had a baptism certificate… wait what? A church marriage certificate is NOT acceptable but a church *baptism* certificate is? I was in a spin. How insane? So I said to the woman, "You're telling me, I can go outside, find a church, get baptized, come back here and get my license?" She replied "Well, I doubt you can do that today but yes ma'am"

How totally fucked! I couldn't understand the difference, it was mind boggling but I moved away from the counter like a good little lemming… I was not going to go postal in the DMV, although I can so clearly see why people do!

We drove our 100 miles home, one of us licensed, and one of us scheduled to get back in the car again the next week, to our little cottage in Connecticut to marvel at the complete and utter stupidity of the country we had chosen to call home.

The following week, I got to drive back 100 miles to *Crapcity, Connecticut, while leaving the children in the King's care, all ready to get my license. I may have been carrying a baptism certificate, designed, printed and signed the night before, by the fire in our little cottage by the lake…but I really couldn't say.

And I have a New York state license now so NER, Connecticut, NER!

*Crapcity… not the real name but totally should be. :P

Monday Post in Pictures - Because… MONDAYS are hard

October 21, 2013

Today is Monday and being a Monday, it's hard to get motivated, and that being said I also have a child home sick… So in the spirit of not letting you down I'm just gonna share some old pictures I found on the weekend, in no particular order but they're fun.



On a trip to oz in 2010, the kids started off walking on the beach but naturally it ended up they were swimming. Yes it's winter, yes they're in underwear… whatever.



We stopped by the side of the road while driving around Loch Ness looking for Nessie. The girls went looking for fairies. Scotland was awesome.



On the banks of the Loch Ness stands Urquhart Castle, which has been there since the 13th century. We climbed the fence to walk the ruins because it was closed. The King and Grand Master D dipped a toe into the Loch… Nessie didn't bite.



Flat Stanley came to visit one time from Australia and we had a great time showing him 'round our city and school. We took him so many places and when he went home he had to carry so much stuff he was charged excess postage! Grand Master D was only in 1st grade and Miss Gremlin was still staying home with mama!







Don't ask, I think it was just their tough tattooed phase…
Happy Monday… what did you do this weekend?

Mouthwatering Autumn Pork Recipe

October 22, 2013

I got inspired, I felt like cooking. It doesn't happen a lot but when I do I get rather creative. This time I'm cooking pork tenderloin with Apple sauce, Roasted sweet potaotes and Bacon Asparagus. Now you know this is all going in the oven to do all the work cos that's how I roll but here's the preparation for you to duplicate. 😉

Finely chop 2 medium onions, begin sauteing them in olive oil, add 2 gloves of crushed garlic but keep heat low so they caramelise and don't burn. Add 3-4 peeled and sliced golden delicious apples sprinkle with a tblsp of brown sugar and a tsp of cinnamon. Let it cook on medium low heat until it gets soft. You may need to add a cup of water as it starts to cook down.





While thats cooking marinate the tenderloins. I used leftover apricot jam and some whole grain mustard, I also added a dash of pineapple-orange juice . I rubbed it all over the tenderloins and let it sit.



The sweet potatoes, I drizzled with oil, cut long ways down the centre and sprinkled with paprika…



Lastly I chopped the bottoms off the asparagus and roughly chopped 3 slices of bacon and threw it in the dish. I drizzled it all with oil and into the oven for about an hour and fifteen minutes… I'm cooking it slow, so I set the oen on 350f.





Here's the caramelised apple and onions…



Dinner is served, my friends…What are you eating tonight?



What's Wrong with Our Kids?

October 24, 2013

I have to ask this question because WTF!

What is going on with our country?

In the last 2 days, 2 children, and yes 12 and 14 is still considered children, have murdered 2 school teachers in separate states! It's devastating that once again we are faced with a **school shooting** and now the **murder of a teacher**, for no apparent reason, with a box cutter! What is happening? Where are these children getting the idea that murdering someone fixes ANY problem?

It's so very concerning as we go through the process of finding a high school for Grand Master D. Schools all say they are safe, some by allowing armed guards… WTF, and others by locking down the facility so tight that the kids feel trapped. I have my serious doubts that any school is actually safe anymore, or mall or theatre or any public place as long as society continues on its current track of a) being armed to the teeth and b) not looking out for those members of society who might snap at any moment.

Why is this happening? Why are we all so fucked up that we can't get along? What's causing it? How do we fix it? So many questions with no answers. I have no idea.



I am constantly worried, stressed all the time that it will happen to us. I said to The king the other night, 'If there's a school shooting anywhere in New York we're outta here!' I know it's probably irrational and the chances of actually being involved are slim but every single day another thing happens, kids suicide from bullying, kids shoot up schools, kids murder teachers. Enough already… children are supposed to be the future. The future looks too scary to me and I don't see anyone trying to change it.

I don't want to leave, I really do like our lives here (for all the bitching and moaning I do) but I don't want anything bad to happen to our family either and at some point we are going to have to make serious decisions because I don't see things changing for the better and that makes me sad all 'round.

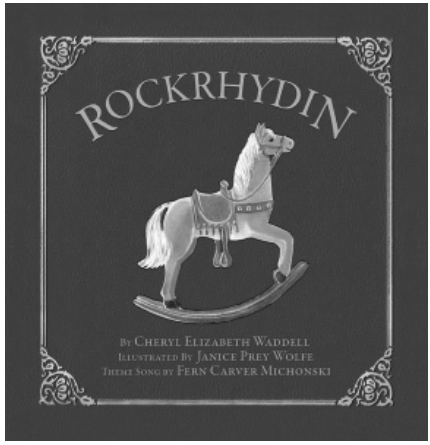
You guys got any ideas?

Rock Rhydin Giveaway

October 30, 2013

Christmas is fast approaching, how is that even possible right? Well the decorations are in the stores and the ads are beginning to plague us on tv. I swear it gets earlier and earlier each year. Why is that? Is it because we need more time to buy everything for everyone? Is it because we're expected to spend so much money that we need to start doing it in October? I don't really know but I do know that some things that become available for the Holiday season are worth getting early.

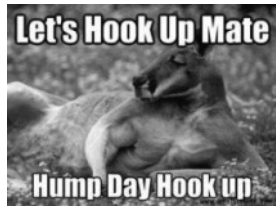
Family traditions are a wonderful thing to begin with children, its the things they remember all their lives. The way you decorate your home or whether you have a live tree or plastic tree. The songs you sing, the stories you read. This year a new book is available and there's a cd of kids Christmas music to go with it.



I have the honour of giving away a beautiful book which won the Mom's choice award this year and an accompanying cd with wonderful christmas music your kids will love. It's also getting 5 star reviews on Amazon! You can't fake *THAT* people… ☺



Fern sent me a copy and I want to share it with one of you.



Don't forget to head on over to the Hump Day Hook Up for some great reading and sharing… You know sharing is caring right?!

Ok… Happy Halloween… Whatever.

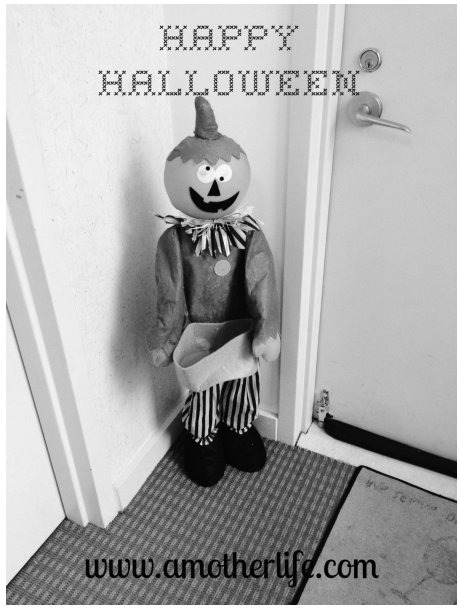
October 31, 2013

I tend to be a bit grinchy when it comes to Halloween. I know it's fun for the kids and I do what I have to for them but having not grown up with the tradition I just find it a little creepy knocking on strange doors begging for candy.

But this year I have stock piled on the candy,



I bought a little man for the front door…



Shlepped home enough pumpkins for the kids to carve



And even dressed up!



What more do you want?

The Princess is carving pumpkins and taking Grand Master D and Miss Gremlin out trick or treating so I don't have to. I'll stay here to fill up the goody bags of the kids who knock on our door… Seems like a great plan to me.

The Aftermath of Halloween

November 1, 2013

I hope everyone had a happy , safe and prosperous 'Steal candy from stranger's' day, I mean Halloween…

Here's how we did… in pictures.



I want to eat the pumpkins…



This is ooky and gooky



Let's carve these puppies



So much gunk



But can't I eat them?



Nummy!



Sir Lickalot in his supervisory role



Boo…



Boo Boo…



BOO!



BOOOOOOOOO!!!!!



Off to steal candy, I mean trick or treat



We'll be back when these are full!
Happy 'Candy Hangover' day!

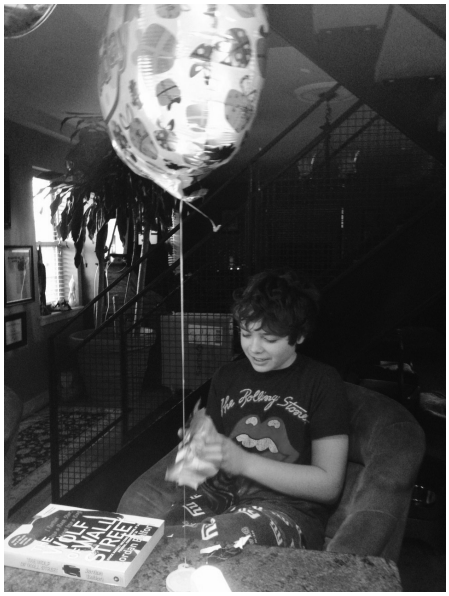
So far all this and it's only Tuesday!

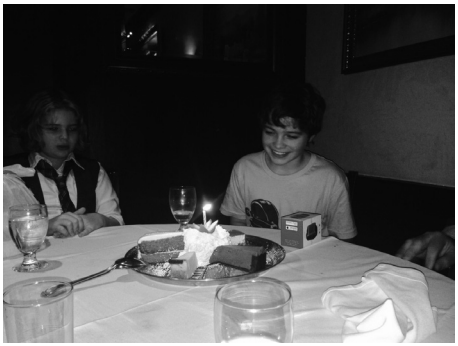
November 5, 2013

It's been a rough week. And hectic! Yesterday we celebrated Grand Master D's 13 birthday. First of all how did that happen? I now have an official teenager? Send help!



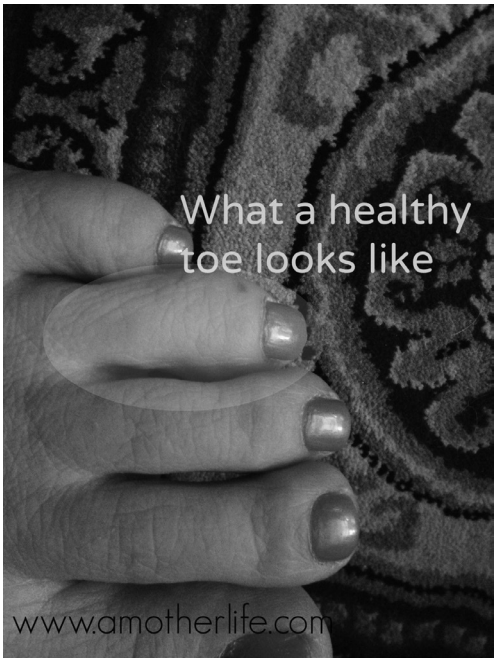






Then I really did it… dislocated my toe again! Well let me explain, sometime ago and I really can't remember exactly when, I kicked, banged, tripped , did something stupid to my toe and evidently it became dislocated. But I didn't realise. So it healed but not really and for the last few months I've been saying I really must get my toe looked at because it was causing pain in shoes, when I walked and generally being an annoyance. But you know me and doctors …

Anyway, a couple of weeks ago I went to the new masseuse in the 'hood because I like to support local shop owners… and I told him about my toe and voila he cracked that bad boy pack into place! Yay!… It was straight and not hurting but still tender I suppose and not entirely secure in it's new position because last wednesday morning I tripped up the stairs and kicked my sore toe and it hurt like a mutha fucker and damn if it wasn't dislocated again! grrrr…I put up with it for a couple of days but by the weekend I was done, so I went for another massage to fix it however this lady couldn't really do it because it was very swollen and I guess really dislocated. I was frustrated and in pain so being the good husband that he is and also not one to run to the emergency room, The King googled dislocated toes and how to treat and we decided I'd get hocked up on vicodin and he'd fix it. Awesome plan! Great idea! Until it wasn't and I was howling like a banshee so bad that Miss Gremlin came out of her room to see what was happening.





So yesterday I caved and went to get it fixed. Luckily there's a chiropractor next to the masseuse! Yay for our 'hood. I went in and they wanted x-rays in case it's broken and blah blah and I'm all don't be ridiculous, it's not broken, please just relocate it… must have been convincing because he agreed and next thing I know I'm on the massage table with a heat wrap around my foot, 15 minutes later I am once again screaming in pain but this guy isn't stopping because he knows what he's doing, as opposed to the King, and he manipulates it about 5 times.

From outside the curtain, I hear the assistant reassuring other patients that women have higher pain tolerances and that I'm ok. When he was finished torturing me he said "Congratulations, it's a boy!" Funny bastard!

Then the chiropractor let me go, saying that it was straight but not completely back in because it was too swollen and the joint was full of fluid, so I'm going back on Wednesday to finish the job but in the meantime I need to splint it to keep it straight and ice it so the swelling goes down.





And no tight shoes! So if you see me in the 'hood in my sexy slippers you must forgive me… I'm injured ☺

Funny Animal Videos

November 6, 2013

We all love those cutsie funny animal videos and memes right? I can get lost for hours looking at them. People are so clever and witty.

So imagine my surprise and joy when I found a website that has them all in one place. There goes the laundry folding again!

Funnyanimalphoto.com is the most fun you can have looking at weird animal pics and videos, ALL IN ONE PLACE! You won't be able to look at just one. Trust me… I know…



And to top it all off if you have animal troubles you can ask King Oliver, he's the resident 'doggie fix it' dog, full of great advice for pet owners having trouble communicating with their furry loved one. King Oliver is one clever little Spaniel…



Pop on over, say hi to Oliver and check out some very funny animal antics!

Today In Crappy Parenting

November 13, 2013

Today I suck, there I said it. Today was hard, it was so fucking cold when I got out of bed that i just wanted to get back in… but it's wednesday so that means kindergarten duty for me and school for the cherubs.This also means I actually have to get human and shower and wear somethign other than yoga pants… sigh, yes sadly it happens.

So after doing all that as quietly as I can because the King worked late, so late that when I woke at 2 and he wasn't there I knew it'd be a late one. I trekked downstairs to children who at 6:45, which is our new get your ass up time, were still comatose in their warm beds. Oy. This all means that getting them up will be hard and they'll be cranky and Grand Master D will come out with his doona wrapped around him… (God I HATE that) AND they'll complain and fight and battle for shower space and then someone will run late. now if you've followed along AT ALL lately you will know that the late shit ain't getting any better! So much so that we got THE letter from school, you know the one that says educational neglect cos you are the parent and you are supposed to send you kid to school every day… ON TIME. Yeah we get it , we try but you get a 13 yo moving in the mornings… Why don't we all just admit that 8am is too fucking early for school and change it.

Anyway, the morning went about as tragically as one could expect and long after Miss Gremlin had gone, I found myself being a super crazy woman and basically riding Grand Master D constantly to get ready… By 7:55 I actually made him get out the door not completely dressed and he was dressing in the hallway. Shoes and belt all while juggling his bag.



Stock Photo by David Castillo Dominici

We rode the elevator together, he got out on the street and hightailed it. He was a minute or 2 late but still marked as 'on time' so yay… But I felt so horribly bad. I texted him as I walked behind him, that I loved him. He didn't check. I know he was frustrated at me.

It was a super shitty way to start the day. I really hate that this is happening… I just can't seem to get him organised. I feel like a crappy parent.

Any tips would be very welcome. Teenagers are hard.

A Devastating Tyhpoon and A Very Cool Young Lady

November 15, 2013

We are all devastated by the typhoon in the Philippines. So much destruction, so many people in need of so much. These types of events are always terrible but when they happen in areas of the world where the population is already less fortunate it becomes an enormous problem. Remember Haiti?

Today I found out that this little cherub…



My niece, Stevie Smith, decided that she, along with some like minded friends, were going to lend a hand. They have no specific training, no particular skill sets… They are a group of 20 year olds with great big hearts! She recently connected with this humanitarian aid group. At her age I was just thinking of the next party and big night out!

This is so wonderful… in a world where teens are running around shooting each other, and knocking random strangers out for fun, it's very refreshing to see young people caring for others and taking on the big challenges. I'm worried for her and the things she'll she. You don't go to an event like that and not come back changed, but I still believe it's a worthwhile trip and I know Stevie has the compassion, work ethic and practical skills to be a useful member of a foreign aid team.

I'm so very proud Stevie B, you're a credit to your family and your generation… never stop surprising me. I love you! Be safe and do good!

Friends, please read the newspaper article in today's paper in my hometown.

And if you feel inclined to send aid here are some links to donate to help the relief effort.

OXFAM
Red Cross
World Vision

Oh Sid Fishious…

November 18, 2013

Walking to the school this morning to pick up a vomiting child… *sigh*, I happened to look up at the leafless tree and to my amazement, I saw this.



upon closer inspection I could tell what it was and my heart leapt…



And then I thought "Oh, he didn't really get very far…"
Can you tell what I'm looking at? Maybe you need more pictures…



Here it is, his final resting place, exposed, ripped open for all to see…



Laid bare in a tree, waiting for the harsh New York winter.



Here's a map… his escape to freedom was very, very short lived. Poor Sid Fishious, he is truly missed.



The Secret Language of Colour

November 21, 2013

Tonight in NYC (Brooklyn) there's an amazing event. It's a book signing…what's so amazing you might say? Well it's a book about colour, the secret language of colour to be exact. A mother and daughter team have studied colour, our relationship with it and how it works and have written a fascinating book. My very good friend One Funny Motha alerted me to this event, she's awesome like that. Here's a blurb about the book.



In this beautiful and thorough investigation, *The Secret Language of Color* celebrates and illuminates the countless ways in which color colors our world. Why is the sky blue, the grass green, a rose red? Most of us have no idea how to answer these questions, nor are we aware that color pervades nearly all aspects of life, from the subatomic realm and the natural world to human culture and psychology. Organized into chapters that begin with a fascinating explanation of the physics and chemistry of color,*The Secret Language of Color* travels from outer space to Earth, from plants to animals to humans. In these chapters we learn about how and why we see color, the nature of rainbows, animals with color vision far superior and far inferior to our own, how our language influences the colors we see, and much more. Between these chapters, authors Joann Eckstut and Ariele Eckstut turn their attention to the individual hues of the visible spectrum—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet—presenting each in fascinating, in-depth detail. Including hundreds of stunning photographs and dozens of informative, often entertaining graphics, every page is a breathtaking demonstration of color and its role in the world around us. Whether you see red, are a shrinking violet, or talk a blue streak, this is the perfect book for anyone interested in the history, science, culture, and beauty of color in the natural and man-made world.

If this sounds interesting to you, and if you're in NYC, why not go along for a fascinating look at the world of colour through a different perspective.

To find out more visit this link

10 Ways to Organise A Teen

November 25, 2013

So it has become apparent that Grand Master D has no organisations skills. None, zip, nada. Yeah I know I should have seen this coming but honestly, I had no idea they weren't teaching this stuff in school, because that makes sense right. That's where they are 8 hours a day, surely in that time there would be some instruction on how

to organise yourself to be a successful student. Well surprise… that hasn't happened, along with not learning to write like a grown up but that's another topic. So we find ourselves with a 13 year old who seriously cannot organise a pie in a bakery!



I find myself looking for ways to teach organisation. I'm organised, I'm never late but I've always been like that and I guess it's because my mother was ALWAYS late… which has carried over and probably the root cause of my travel anxiety but that's another confession :P

Now I am furiously looking for ways to teach him to be punctual and organised.

I am going to attempt to list 10 ways here in no particular order of preference.

Buy a shit ton of fun organisational products on Amazon like a whiteboard day calendar, folders for homework only to discover he refuses to use that stuff.

Make step by step charts for every activity. Create lists. They love being treated like they're 5. NOT

Follow up with him for everything he does. The naggier the better.

Let him fail. My current default but since the nasty school letter I have to do *something*.

Chase him out of the house with a big stick even if he's not completely dressed. Yes I have done this.

Yell at him, swear, get frustrated and feel really bad after he's gone. This happens most weekday mornings.

Discuss the need for promptness until blue in the face. What do you mean blue isn't becoming on me?

Add monetary reward when he actually gets it right. What, that's wrong?

Blow it all totally out of proportion just like the school does and then complain about how the school blows it all out of proportion.

Ask the King to get up at 6:30 to help ,wait what?! I'm crazy but I'm not stupid…

Chill the fuck out, it'll be fine and he'll work it out eventually… try to breathe and not get so wound up.

So this is my step by step plan. Should work right? I'll keep you posted but if you have some better ideas I'm willing to try them.

The Typhoon Aftermath-An Interview with Stevie

November 27, 2013

Last week I shared that **my niece volunteered in the Philippines** to help the victims of the typhoon. She returned home on sunday and she was gracious enough to allow me to interview her. Here's what she has to say about the experience.

1. What made you decide to volunteer in the Philippines? Did you have to fund yourself? I've always been interested in volunteer work and when the opportunity arose back in February to travel to the Philippines to build a village I jumped at it. And again a couple of weeks ago I jumped at the opportunity to travel back to the same island (Bantayan Island) and help again after the typhoon. Yes I had to fund myself both trips, I was lucky enough to have my Nan pay for my flights in February but everything else I paid for out of my own pocket. Including donations (books, food, etc) for the children on the island. **2. How did you get involved in volunteer work?** I met a man at The Bended Elbow pub here in Albury one Sunday and he told me of his project and how he was working at the pub for free (as his wages went straight to a fund for the village) and I said I wanted to be a part of it! And a few months later my flights were booked and I met him over in the Philippines. We've become friends and kept in contact and I have also made other friends through this project. **3. Can you describe what you saw?** I saw the majority of people's homes had been destroyed from the typhoon (the village the we are building stayed up, which is good), people were basically living under the rubble that was once their homes. It was so sad to see. People were and still are relying on relief goods coming in from many charities. Even though there is so much devastation in the Philippines at the moment, everybody still had smiles on their faces and were extremely happy (as always!). Admittedly though, when I arrived on Bantayan island it had been 9 days since the typhoon so I imagine some cleaning up would have been done before we arrived. There were still trees down everywhere (on top of houses), power poles and lines lying across the road and smashed concrete also. **4. What was the worst thing you saw ?** The worst thing I saw was probably how these people are now living after the devastation. They didn't have very sturdy homes to start with and they are now living under the rubble of their homes. It was also sad to see people sleeping on the streets. But as I said before the people are still so happy which was the best thing I saw. **5. What were some of the tasks you performed?** The first day we arrived on the island we handed out clothes that had been donated and also bags of food (rice, canned meat and water) that we had prepared the night before. We spent a few hours one morning clearing some rubble from one families home so that they could reuse the materials to rebuild. I thought we would have been doing a lot more physical, hands on work but when we got there it was actually more emotional support. Just being there and talking to the victims and understanding brought them hope. **6. How has this experience changed you?** Both times I have travelled over and then returned home I have been much more appreciative of what I have because people over there have nothing. It frustrates me that people here whinge about what they don't have have and how bad their life is when they haven't seen how 'the other half' live. Philipinos and I'm sure other cultures too, have nothing but are SO happy. It makes me happy to see that people in countries like that are very family orientated (because they don't have much else) whereas western countries

it's all about material needs and social status, which is sad really that the world has to come to that. So I don't think I have changed as a person I am just more able to appreciate what I do have and see things differently from other people. Everybody is very grateful of the help that we are providing which makes it all worthwhile as I feel appreciated for the work I do and time and money spent. **7. Do you see yourself doing something like this again in the future?** I will definitely be doing something like this again, and will probably return to Bantayan Island in the future. I am also planning to travel to Nepal to provide support for a charity that save young girls from being human trafficked and forced to work in brothels. **8. How could someone who wanted to follow your example get started?** There are many charities and organistations throughout the world that provide the same sort of relief services, if somebody wants to participate you just have to approach these charities or organisations. With the internet these days it is very easy.



First night we arrived, packing relief goods to take over to the Island



Me helping to clear the rubble of someone's house (they now live under this)



Electrical pole over the road (not live)



Handing out clothes to the children



Our village (Border Village)



Me with all the happy kids



Remains of a home



Children clearing the rubble from their home

And that is how a very compassionate young lady spent a week of her life helping a devastated country. Thank you for sharing your experience Stevie.

Don't forget to come over to the Hump Day Hook Up and join the fun.



The Never-ending Stomach Virus and yummy Chicken Soup!

December 2, 2013

Mondays… Ugh they're hard any old week but coming off the back of Thanksgiving and 4 blissful days of relaxing and sleeping then they're doubly difficult. Add to that the fact that you've had a child in and out of the pain of a stomach virus that just won't go away and then you know how my morning is going.

Let me plot a timeline for you… I'm not complaining, this is life as a parent but sometimes you just need more coffee or something.

6:15… ignore the alarm

6:38 … accept fate and get up

6:45 Wander downstairs , check facebook, email and generally revel in the 5 minutes quiet time

6:50 Go wake the children and hope they are A ok for school as they both complained of stomach pains last night. Walk into the bedroom to find Miss gremlin fully dressed back in her bed watching tv and Grand Master D standing up in his bed.

7:00 Serve breakfast to her while he continues his intimate relationship with the bathroom.

7:15 Dose her with stomach calm to quell the pains. Try to gauge if she's foxing so she can have a day off because he's had so much time. She plops herself on the couch under the blanket but the smile gives her away when I call her out as a faker.

7:20 Hurry Grand Master D out of the shower, offer breakfast which he refuses.

7:50 Grand Master D relinquishes his hold on the bathroom so Miss Gremlin can have a turn. I then dose her up and send her on her way… No temp, no vomit, no stay home.

7:55 Get angry and frustrated AS USUAL because he's not ready and then he announces he needs the bathroom again. sigh… What is this fresh hell I've stepped into?

8:02 Break into the bathroom because of the screaming… Find him in the fetal position, double dose him with stomach calm. Spend the next 15 minutes rubbing his back while he alternates between the toilet and the floor. Administer another dose. Finally it's does it's job well enough that he thinks he can at least get to school long enough to turn in the high school application due today. So we walk slowly to school, stopping along the way to buy a vitamin water and ginger ale to quell the dizzy spells due to no food.



We arrive at school late, naturally around 8:40, meet the Advisor in the hall and go to his office to finish the application. Grand Master D has some colour in his cheeks and feels mostly ok, so I walk him to his classroom and head home.

Knowing full well that at some point he'll be home, I stop into the supermarket to get stuff to make the chicken soup that he'll live on for the next couple of days.

Once I drop off the groceries, I take Sir Lickalot out for a walk in the park. It's a beautiful morning, not too cold so we extend into Central park and walk for about 45 minutes.

Just as I walk in the door I receive a call from the school nurse. Grand Master D has made his way to her and the pains are back, so I get my shoes and coat back on and head to school. Calling the doctor on the way. The walk home is slow as I support him.

He's deposited back in the bathroom while I get the soup going.



No word from Miss Gremlin, so she's either fine or suffering in silence.

Oh and the doctor called back… Happy Rotavirus to us!

How's your Monday?

Always Send Care Packages-They have magical Properties

December 4, 2013

Do you ever get those days when everything is too much? When 'whoa is me' seems like an option? Well I had a week last week, don't even remember why now but I was homesick and sad and tired and just crap. Oh and I think there was a sick kid thrown in for good measure. I had a whinge about it on facebook cos that's where you go for sympathy right? Well of course!

I feel better this week. I still have the sick kid but somehow the weight has lifted and I can cope. Emotions and hormones are fucked like that…

Anyway, last night in the mail a package arrived. From Australia! I was pretty excited cos I love getting packages anyway… you should see how often amazon explodes on our doorstep, actually scrap that you don't wanna know! I'm officially starting an Amazon Anonymous group for those people, like me who seem to have packages appear with such frightening regularity that you can't even remember what's in them… anyway I digress-squirrel!

So this Aussie care pack arrived, from a friend in Oz, one i haven't physically seen since high school 25 years ago but one whom I speak with pretty often and share stories and lives… Facebook is wonderful like that even when you hate it.

So I sat cross legged on the floor, by myself and opened my package…



Inside was all sorts of wondefulness. And probably only Aussies will get the significance of all the items but I will list them anyway:

A bag of twisties- Life's pretty straight without twisties- look it up!

A caramello bear-which I practically inhaled, chocolate is the great mood equaliser.

Nurofen plus- the good shit with codeine in it! Yes, this is important cos you can't get actual painkillers that work 'over the counter' here.

Timtams- The lifeblood of all pmsing women and anyone else who needs a lift. A timtam slam for breakfast is not out of the question today. More research for you!

A 3 pack of flyswatters! How did she know we have a fruitfly plague! spooky…

A squishy reindeer hangy ornament thingy dude… I don't know but he's cute and I'm calling him Herb

Vegemite in a tube and pawpaw cream- if you don't know it doesn't matter

A WTF stamp… this, THIS, could be the best thing ever! I mean NOW I can actually stamp shit with WTF!

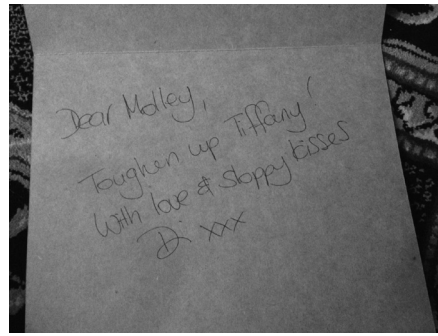


And a beautiful notebook which says on the from cover "Don't grow up it's a trap" I'm beginning to think this is true…

It was such fun and a lovely surprise and I appreciate it so much. It's lovely to receive care packages… Di you rock!

Oh and the icing on the cake was the card!





I shared my twisties with the kids but that caramello bear was mine ALL mine mwahhahahahaha. Everyone who walked in the door got WTF stamped on their hands and it was fun.

Never stop sending care packages to your expat friends. It really makes things better when you're feeling low.

Happy Hump Day! The hump will be smoothed out by timtams and coffee today. And hey hook up if ya wanna!



How to Collect a Stool sample and Not be Scarred for Life or Not

December 6, 2013

This post is a little off colour, be warned BUT our house is off colour at the moment because of this stupid virus…and if you can't laugh at your misfortunes then…

Now if you're following along, you'll know that Grand Master D has been sick for a while. This stomach bug is a tough bastard and so far he's lost 11 pounds, (5kgs) according to the doctor's scale. That's enough to make a middle aged woman jump for joy but a slim 13 you boy? That's a lot of weight loss in 2 weeks.

So we went through the standard questions with the doctor for the 3rd time in 2 weeks and by now we've decided we really need to know more, and she gives us the little bottle set and sends us home with some instructions. Of course I've done this before, you can't get to my age and not have had to collect a stool sample at some point in your life… or maybe you have and lucky you. Also I've handled more than my fair share of crappy nappies and dog doo doo and I'm not scared of a little shit

under the nails but Grand Master D decided that he wanted to do this dastardly deed himself, to save me of course ☺.

The doctor's instructions were simple, 'go' on a paper plate and use this wooden tongue depressor to scoop up a '*little* sample' and deposit it into each receptacle, place the lid tightly back on, place into a ziplock and then a plastic bag and return stool sample in the morning for testing. Easy right?

The walk home was fun, the questions about crapping on a plate were funny because teenagers plus poop is still funny.

And so we wait and inevitably nature calls. I had all the supplies ready in the bathroom:

paper plates
vials
stick
gloves
ziplock

So Grand Master D announces he's got this. I enquire "Are you sure? Because I've done this plenty and I'm happy to do it"… "Nope, I got this Mum"… "Okaaayyy" I say "But let me know if you need help." " NO I'm good"

And so I hover because I'm a parent, I walk away and then I come back, he's taking a long time to scoop some poop and put it in the vial so I call through the door "you ok?"

"Yep" comes the reply so I walk away but then I hear gagging, the smell is wafting and it's been 20 minutes… so I gently prod "Grand Master D, are you sure you don't need help. It's shouldn't take this long."

"Yeah ok…"

And scene…

I walk into the bathroom, there's a 'filled' paper plate on the floor, he has the gloves on and the stick in hand, the smell is rather overpowering as shit tends to be when exposed for a while… He has 2 of the 4 vials filled… TO THE TOP and there's shit all over the sink! I burst out laughing and so does he.

OH MY GOD!

So I take the stick, quickly scoop the last 2 samples into the vials and dump the rest into the toilet, flush, put plate and stick into a bag, take it straight outside and down the trash chute while he puts the vials in the bag and disposes of the gloves. The bleach comes out and I re clean the freshly cleaned sink that the cleaner has JUST finished. He scrubs furiously at his hands as I clean all other bathroom surfaces for the third time.

It's at that exact time that Miss Gremlin arrives home from school and is horrified by the goings on.

So for those following along that makes "4 vials of crap, 3 times for cleaning, 2 children scarred for life and a plate of shit on the bathroom floor! " (My very own 12 days of Christmas) you're welcome…I'm a sharer.

It wasn't until later on that Grand Master D actually divulged the finer 'details' of his escapade and admitted he may be scarred for life. As for those details I'm sure you're scarred enough but let's just say he didn't move the paper plate…yes he pooped on it, ON THE FLOOR! The imagery of that alone is just hilarious!

So the lessons he learned here? A sample is *not* the whole bottle, even your own shit stinks, letting Mum do it is just fine, and he's never eating off a paper plate again ☺

Kids are fun!

*this post could have had pictures but in the interest of public safety you will have to use your imagination.Again, You're welcome!

The Christmas Tree Hunt-City Style

December 9, 2013

Winter Christmas is way different to the Summer Christmases I grew up with. As a child and young adult I couldn't really relate to all the Christmas cards and images of snow and sitting by the fire. For us in the southern hemisphere, Christmas is a time for the beach and outdoor Carols by Candlelight and Christmas Day in a family backyard with a pool or the sprinklers going. So the first year we came here and it was -17 celcius with 14 inches of snow on the ground, it was a surprise!

But over the years we've adjusted and we always hope for Christmas snow, we've gone to the Christmas tree farms, found the perfect tree, cut it down and brought it home, we've done the hot chocolate and hayride thing. It's a fun day out and we alway love doing it but for the last few years, since we no longer have a car, trekking to Connecticut to the Christmas tree farm to chop down a tree is not really cost effective because by the time you hire a car, drive and return home you've spent 300 bucks to retrieve a $50 tree. We still do it occasionally for the fun but this year we opted for a city Christmas tree hunt.

We are so organised this year, everything is done. We're amazed at ourselves and so 2 weeks earlier than we'd normally do it, we decided to get our tree. We have our favourite place to go. It's the Christmas tree lot at Stranger's Gate on 106 in Central Park but they weren't there yet. I guess they set up later than 2 weeks before. They've aways been there when we needed our tree. But we've always gotten our tree the last weekend before Christmas and so we had to go in search of another Christmas tree stand.

How *do* you find a Christmas tree stand? It's not like you can google it, or map it on your smart phone. You have to just roam the streets and find some guy selling chopped down trees. But this is New York and it didn't take us long to find several stands on Broadway. The kids chose. We got a slightly smaller tree this year because the spot is a little smaller. While The King was inside paying we saw this…







There's no end to the interesting sites you'll see wandering this great city. I suppose we were a site to others, lugging our freshly purchased tree home with the snow falling all around.









But that's how you hunt a city Christmas tree.
I really love this time of year!

Deck The Halls

December 10, 2013

Now you know how we hunt our trees, I suppose I should share how we decorate too.

It's a little contentious because I'm all just hang the decorations and the King is all let's plan the look because he's OCD and the kids just wanna get it up and pretty. I stayed right out of it and let them all make Alan the sidewalk Christmas tree beautiful.



Does this look straight to you?



The perfect position waiting to be dressed



Do not mess with the man with the Christmas lights!



Icicles for the bottom of the tree



Christmas starts when the star goes on.



Ta Da!

Isn't he just wonderful? He sure is but he wasn't quite perfect so the King went on the hunt for tinsel… Last year we had that for the first time because I saw it on all the beautiful movie trees and decided we needed that shit in our lives… WHAT A MISTAKE, stay away from the tinsel people! It's sticky and you find that shit for months after, MONTHS! But not to crush anyone's Christmas spirit I just watched as he walked out the door to get the tinsel. As luck would have it there wasn't any left. There's a Christmas miracle for ya! But the miracle was short lived because in place of the tinsel, the King found fake snow! Fake snow, unlike the real stuff never goes away. It's shaved plastic and it goes everywhere! I've vacuumed 3 times and it's still all over the floor. Oh well… 'tis but once a year. However not to be satisfied with just snow, the King also managed to find a 5' animated talking Santa, yep the stuff of nightmares!



Santa in a box!



I don't even know how to caption this picture



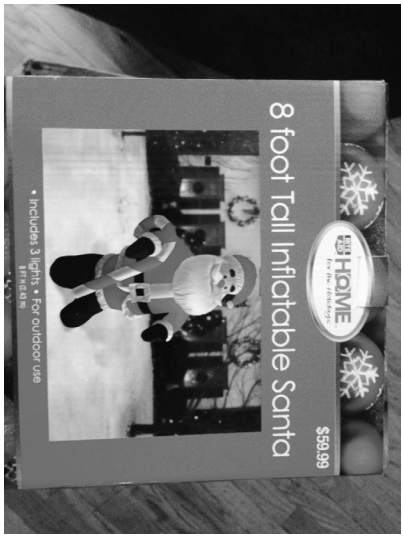
Be afraid, be very afraid!

The kids were over the moon excited! And couldn't wait to get him put together, me? Well I just watched this horror show play out wondering where the hell this dude was gonna stand for the next 10 days… But then, as if by divine intervention something was a miss. He wasn't working… They changed the batteries, nothing, they fiddled with the switch, nada. Santa, in all his 5' talking glory was kaput! Phew… dodged that holiday freak out.

But this man is nothing if not persistent and headed back out to return his 5' animated, motion sensor talking Santa. I knew he wouldn't return with a replacement because ours was the last one in the store. I was feeling safe and happy in our finished product of tree and roof reindeer and sleigh when he walks back in like a hunter triumphant from the hunt!

What did he find? Something even more terrifying than a 5' animated, motion sensor, talking Santa?

Yep, you guessed it… An 8' inflatable Santa, cos nothing says Christmas like a Santa strapped to your roof. Even in NYC.



Santa!



A job for next weekend

Christmas Is Warm Downunder YO!

December 12, 2013



image courtesy of Idea go -Freedigitalphotos.net

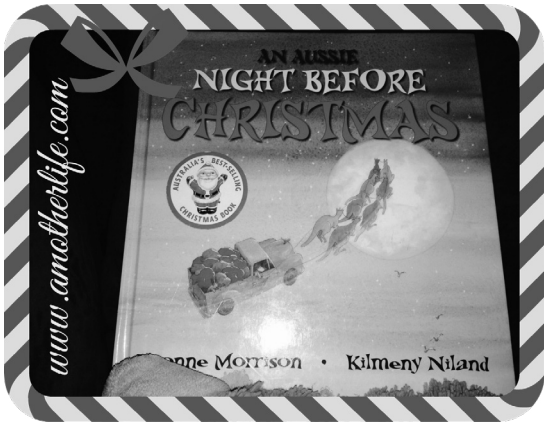
Here's 10 reasons you should have a Southern Hemisphere Christmas at least once in your lifetime. The first 36 Christmases of my life were hot! It wasn't until we moved to New York in 2005 that we experienced a cold, snowy Christmas. I can see benefits of both but I really do love the warmth.

1. **It's warm and you can have a gathering at the Beach…The Beach people!**
   Imagine enjoying a holiday party by the beach, think 4th of July but as a Christmas or Hanukkah celebration. Did I mention the beach already? Ok good!
2. **You don't have to slave over a hot stove cooking food because you just serve cold cuts and salads or prawns…yes you can throw one on the barbie.**
   Holiday meals should be easy, not hard and stressful. Christmas is about friends and family, so summer food is so much easier to prepare, right?
3. **You can do everything outside and keep your home tidy.**
   Come on, let's face it, we all love to throw parties but who wants to clean up? When you have outside parties it's easier to handle. There's less mess and your home doesn't get trashed. Unless it's one of THOSE parties… then you're on your own
4. **You don't have travel concerns or delays like snow storms to hinder your time with your family.**
   You've all experienced it, Great Aunt Myrtle is stuck at the airport and has missed Christmas dinner, if she's lucky she might get out by friday! It's put an entire damper on the festivities… especially because she always brings the best gifts and her special spiked punch recipe is a family tradition.
5. **After the feast everyone can go for walks or nap on the lawn outside.**
   You know after Thanksgiving turkey how everyone just crashes on the sofa in front of the football. It looks like the castle in Sleeping Beauty when the witch casts the spell. Well if you have Christmas in the warm weather, all those bodies can pass out on the lawn and I guarantee the neighbours won't worry because they're all doing it too! You can all enjoy the sunshine together.
6. **Most cities and towns hold outdoor Carols by Candlelight concerts. They're awesome and really get you in the Christmas mood**
   Carols By Candlelight were always a highlight for me as a kid, the local community would run a Concert, with local celebrities hosting. Crowds of people outside singing Christmas Carols and enjoying the season together is so wonderful.
7. **Going on the Christmas lights tour is warmer and you can walk the streets getting a good look at all the displays.**
   You can get out and wander around the street, many homes set up Santaland's like the Halloween tradition… but for Christmas!
8. **It's Summer!**
   I could go on and on about how wonderful the warm weather is but we all know that Summer is a winner and having Christmas in the warmth instead of the snow is really a treat. If you've never done it I suggest a trip to the southern part of the globe to experience it. Put it on your bucket list, it's well worth it.Oh and school's out for 6 weeks. N'uf said!
9. **It's always easier to shop in warm weather.**
   This time of year with all the shopping going on, wouldn't you prefer the malls to be easily accessible and parking lots not to be filled with snow and ice.
10. **Santa doesn't use reindeer in Australia!**
    He comes in a sleigh pulled by 'big white boomers! '(Large white Kangaroos). Also Australia is ahead a day in time, so you're in the future and Christmas comes there first. Don't you want to be first at something? Sure you do!

If you ever get a chance in your life to have a Summer Christmas, you should really just go for it. You might even decide you like it!

The Night Before Christmas… With a Twist

December 13, 2013



Christmas in Australia is different as I've mentioned before and that includes the stories. The Night before Christmas is a classic and I love it. I read it to my kids every Christmas Eve, after we watch the Polar Express… it's just what we do, it sets the mood for Santa ☺

But in Australia it's hot at Christmas time and Santa can't wear his warm clothes or boots and the reindeer, who come from the North Pole, can't handle the heat, so on the Down Under leg of his trip around the world, Santa's sleigh is pulled by Big Male Kangaroos called Boomers… Big White Boomers and Santa puts his winter woolies in the back of the sleigh until he's on his way to the cold!

So now you know!

Gather the kids and turn up the volume and I'll read you 'The ***Aussie*** Night Before Christmas'.

Yes it's really me with that funny accent ☺

I just read you a bedtime story! What!?

And here's a little song about the Big White Boomers… who help the reindeers in the heat.

Explanation of weird Aussie words

tucker=food
pavlova = meringue style dessert
ute=pick up truck
bloke= man
dinky di= the truth, real, wouldn't tell a lie
thongs=flip flops
swaggie (swagman)=Australian bush 'gypsy' itinerant worker
barbeque=grill
shoot through=to leave
Good on ya mates= good luck to you friends

Merry Christmas friends.

Let Me Wash that for You

December 19, 2013

It's true, I have a love of laundry. Don't ask cos I can't explain it but I like to wash. I imagine it's the clean thing or the ocd folding thing. I don't know but it's like stroking the furry wall. But in the process of loving to do laundry I sometimes wash stuff that I shouldn't. Many things have gone by the wayside but most recently the victim was Miss Gremlin's iphone…man! Nothing worse than opening the washing machine to this…



My heart sank. My little Princess loves her phone, she calls me ALL the time, she uses it for her alarm she's so responsible with it. And then this. I did this. I rushed her to get her pants in with the load that had just started. She put them in but I was hurrying her. She didn't check, I didn't check…

Because I've done this before I know to stick it in a tub of rice. For days.

This time… I could see the condensation in the camera lens.

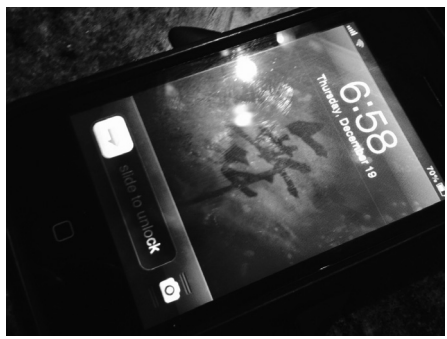
This time… luckily after 2 days there was no condensation.

So this morning I thought I would see if I was buying a new one or not.

I plugged it in… I held my breath, I waited…

And then, there it was the beautiful, gorgeous illuminated apple symbol right on her screen. But will it go further? Will it boot up or fry at start up. Worried, with my heart in my mouth, I waited some more and then… there it was the lock screen!

I think I actually said YAY! And I woke my princess up by the light of her iphone…



Today is a good day friends. I drowned an iphone and it lived to tell it's tale ☺



What have you drowned in the washing machine? I can't be the only one…

Another Year Done

December 29, 2013



Hey Friends, I've been a little absent, forgive me but it's the busyness of the Christmas season and a touch of 'I need a break'. We got through it relatively unscathed. Everyone had a wonderful Christmas and to say we were all indulged is an understatement. The kids were so excited that they got up at 2am and creeped out to see if Santa had been. Of course they only missed him by an hour cos the little shits wouldn't go to sleep but I love that they were so excited. I remember being that excited for Christmas morning too. I heard them giggling at 5:30am… I came down and shooed them back to bed but heard them on and off until 7:00 when they finally came up to wake us.

I love Christmas morning, the smell, the excitement. This year we had to wait for The Princess to come over before we could open presents but that gave me time to prepare the ham and cheese on toast for breakfast and coffee… lots of coffee. They finally arrived and we began the gift opening extravaganza that lasted until 11…and everyone was almost over it. How can you even think to be tired of opening gifts! I guess Santa went a little over the top.

The gifts that won Christmas this year were the dining table, the pirate puppet, the homemade fresh chocolate strawberries, the laptops and go pro cameras! There were many other honorable mentions but those topped the list but all being together on Christmas Day truly won all.

It's been a busy year but a fruitful one here at A Mother Life and we're looking forward to the next one which promises to be bigger and better…You know the King has things planned. Sounds scary, right? You have no idea!

Here's to wishing you all a Happy and Safe New Year.

2014 — A Mother Life

A New Year, A New You

January 2, 2014

Bhahahahahha Got you didn't I. You thought I was gonna get all new year's resolutiony on you. Well I fooled you! I am the LAST person to do New Year's resolutions. I think they're silly and they always fail. If you do them, all power to you, no judgment.

I'll admit that trying to be better, do better or give something up that is detrimental to one's self is admirable and worthwhile but it never lasts. And when that happens you feel like a failure, and therefore kinda worse than if you didn't promise to do anything in the first place. But having said all that here are 14 things I want to work on over the coming year to be a better person/mother/wife… whatever.

14 7 Things to Try for 2014



1. Be more patient with the kids.This is a tough one, I feel myself getting more short tempered with age. I am easily irritated and snap far more easily than I ever did.
2. Cook more and by more I mean cook healthy and nutritious meals and order less. And by less I mean stop being on a first name basis with the delivery guys.That's gonna be hard.
3. Stay caught up with the laundry… HA I'm adding that because today I'm caught up with the laundry and it's ALL put away and I like that feeling. I'm never gonna be able to do it but still I can try right?
4. Taking the dog on extra long walks. He's getting old and his specialness is really starting to show and we don't know how long we'll have him…He's taken to jumping down the last 3 steps and crashing into the wall… EVERY.SINGLE.TIME. Also it's a great forced fitness regime, right?
5. Write more, be inspirational in my writing, seize all opportunities.
6. Be a better wife, be more supportive and loving and …*(trails off cos no one is buying it anyway)*
7. Be more giving… of my time and my *ahem* expertise and my love and compassion

There are so many people who are in need of support. Emotionally, financially, just all 'round. I hope to be able to be more supportive for the coming year. I better get my support hose on 😉

So there… being the better person is hard. This was going to be a list on 14 for 2014…but if I change too much I won't be me and nobody wants that right? Right?!!

Happy New Year… Make it count.

The Polar Vortex - Wait, the WHAT?

January 7, 2014

Today is so cold that the chance of your eyeballs actually freezing if you don't blink fast is a real possibility. The warnings were set last night on the news, don't go out unless you have to, don't expose any skin. Frostbite can happen in 15 minutes YO! Now that's fucking cold.

Here in New York, we're used to some frigid temps but this Polar Vortex, that has our blood freezing in our veins, is bringing record temps! The likes we've not seen in our area since 1996. Colder than Siberia! I've never seen them personally.

Luckily we are warm and safe at home and have the necessary equipment to cope with a 10 minute walk to school outside, so it's no biggy, except it is. It's a huge deal. Getting going this morning was tough, prying the babes from their feather encased cocoons was a task not for the weak. My 'mean mommy' meter was at 10 really fast, especially as I slept in too… but they made it, they left looking like marshmallow children, with arms outstretched and faces covered but we braved this polar vortex.

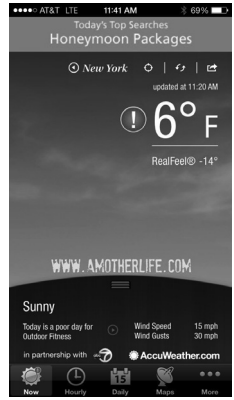
Here's how they looked.





The current temperatures are just crazy. I have to check in celcius because while I understand fahrenheit, my brain really gets how bad it is in celcius. It's just what I grew up with.





Isn't that just crazy? Very glad not to be an animal today…
Hope you're warm and cozy where you are.

Interview with a 9 year old

January 13, 2014

Miss Gremlin is my 9 year old Daughter, she is not your average 9 year old girl, she's a tomboy, to the point of being very fussy with clothes. I refuse to let her wear boys clothes. If she could she'd wear boys clothes, boys underwear and anything else boyish. She has a wedge hair cut because long hair is no good. She is awesome. Nothing gets past this kid. She's very funny, just starting to get a cool sense of humour, so for fun I decided to interview her. Here's what happened.

What is your favourite colour?
blue and green cos green is the colour of genius and blue is pretty

What is your favourite sport?
lacrosse

What is your favourite thing to do?
play lacrosse and watch tv on my laptop

What do you think about mummy blogging?
you don't have to blog everything. Eg, when I busted my chin open you took pictures- weird mum

Who do you love most?
Between? that's a weird question… but the dog cos he's retarded special and he can't yell at me.

What is your favourite book?
Charlotte's web and Because of Windixie

What can you tell me about being in this family?
The weirdest experience in the world. And I get to taste wine so I'm good with it…

Do you like school?
Yes, I love it.

What do you love?
Science and my friends and how ridiculously stupid they can be sometimes, it's amusing

What do you want to be when you grow up?
A world renowned physicist with a nobel prize hanging on my wall

Where do you want to live when you grow up?
I wanna live in suburban Australia because it's my native land and I won't have to wear sweaters in the winter

What do you love about Harlem?
The craziness of everyone and what people do on the streets. The diversity.

If you could change anything about your life what would you change?
Nothing

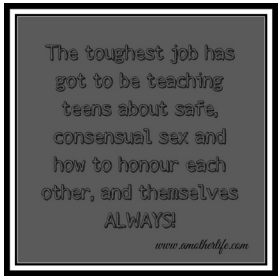
So there's a snapshot of a 9 year old mind. Should I be worried?

Teaching Boys to Respect Women Despite our Current Culture

January 14, 2014

This morning I had an interesting conversation with Grand Master D. I've been wanting to have it for a while now but there's never a 'right' time to bring it up. It's not like it's dinner conversation, you know … how was school and oh yeah don't rape girls. So I always find myself wanting to discuss limits and respect and all the things a boy should know but never finding the right time. Well it just presented itself today.We were discussing our nights sleep over breakfast, he was not grumpy and got up early, so it was a nice conversation time. I mentioned that the King watched The Wolf of Wall Street in bed last night and I had a disturbed sleep. It's a sunday night thing, he can't let the weekend go and always stays up late even though I need to get up early, it's a thing, whatever. Grand Master D knows he can't watch The Wolf of Wall St… dubbed the closed thing to porn that's not porn to come out this year. He watches R rated movies, he's a movie maker, he looks at them differently. He's seen many, I only object when they are graphic sexually. He's 13, just learning about sex and let's face it movie sex can be violent and misogynistic and very bad for women. Women are objectified way too much, used and abused and thrown away. Some movie sex is wonderful but that seems to be fading. None of it is real, it's not what sex is about. It's not how most of the world is doing it. It's also not the image I want my son to have imprinted in his

brain before he experiences it for himself. He needs to learn that it's give and take, that it must always be consensual and if there is ever any doubt then you don't. We'll talk more about that later when he goes to college or begins to go out in the world more. No always means no, even if you feel like yes. If anyone says no at any time then it's game over. Alcohol will play a part in these decisions and I briefly mentioned this too. I told him that sometimes girls will have too much to drink and want to have sex and give all the signals and then they realise that it's not in their best interests and they'll say no mid-foreplay. It happens. It's uncomfortable, it sucks when its all hot and heavy and then someone slams on the brakes but you must. I told him, innocent boys get accused of rape because sometimes girls have sex then feel ashamed or get found out by a parent and accuse the boy and then his life is ruined. Or girls are so incapacitated by drugs or alcohol they have no idea what's happening and they do get raped. There is no excuse for this. If a girl can't stand up then she can't consent to sex. End of story.



It's been in the news a lot with high school and college kids, some high profile ones too. It's a hard time but it's very important to be extra careful. We should be teaching our boys how to honour women, how to respect them, not take advantage of them just to get sex but we also need to teach our girls how to behave safely, how to not go looking for trouble or give off the wrong signal which can lead to bad situations for all involved. Crying rape because you wished you hadn't got smashed and had sex with a guy is not ok. Raping a girl because she was too drunk to stop it is also not ok. We need to teach both genders how to stay safe and respect each other and themselves.

It's sure going to be an interesting few years with a teenage son and a daughter coming up behind him.

Can you be a liberal prude? Is that a thing? Can you be open and honest about all things but still wish sex wasn't in our faces ALL the time, at every turn tempting our young people before they're ready? It's something I'm certainly about to discover. What I wish for all my children is safe, happy, healthy sexual encounters and relationships. They'll make mistakes but hopefully, mistakes that do not have long lasting ramifications on their lives.

Hypochondria is the only thing He doesn't have!

January 16, 2014

When kids get sick they tend to exaggerate a little, right? Whether it be for the extra ice pop or the extra cuddle or more tv time even when they're really sick they take advantage… It's the kid thing to do. But what happens when your kid is old enough to google his symptoms? Well I can tell you it gets rather amusing …

In the last 3 months Grand Master D has had:

A pulmonary embolism,
Skin cancer
and a brain hemorrhage.

I kid you not! Well maybe a little, he's totally had none of these conditions, of course. He's a normal healthy 13 year old, with the odd ache and pain from growth and nothing more. Well there was that nasty parasite last month but besides that he's totally healthy. But it's of great amusement every time he says he thinks he's sick.

The other night when he was trying his best to convince me he was having a brain hemorrhage because he felt a dent and it was soft on the top of his head and it felt like he was being squeezed, I laughed, I did! Yes I'm a callous mother who is skeptical of all illness or injury unless blood is spurting, bones are sticking out or you're dead… it's true. He was horrified I wouldn't believe him. When I said "Grand Master D you're being a hypochondriac!" he said "Mum, that's the only thing I don't have!".

I think I peed a little from laughing so hard and then I reminded him of the Boy who cried wolf.

But I love that he makes me laugh. Does hypochondria run in your family?

I was a tour guide, She was famous—it was love at first sight

January 22, 2014

I got to have a city playdate with the Hot Mess Mom. You guys have no idea how excited and honored I felt when she reached out to me to let me know she was coming to town. Little me, a nobody and she wants to meet me and interact. She has over 200k followers on her Facebook page and thousands of followers on her blog! She's famous and shit yo! There's probably thousands of those who live here in the city with me, but she chose me! Boom bitches! Ok I'll stop, I know you're rolling your eyes.

We did all the standard things beforehand, like swap cellphone numbers (***I swapped cell phone numbers with the Hot Mess Mom***) ahem, sorry, and made loose arrangements so we could connect. I did some planning of where to take them.

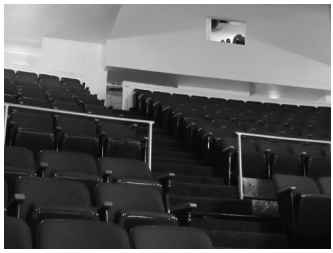
The pressure was on! Must impress, what if I'm a lame tour guide, what if she hates me… OMG the anxiety! I know, sorry, anyway, I told her how to get uptown so we could go to the gospel church right near my apartment. This place is so great that tour buses come from all over shuffling people through who want the 'Black Gospel Church' experience. You will not be disappointed.

We 'met' on the street just before but with time enough for them to come up to Planet Mills for some breakfast and the best coffee around…Meeting someone IRL after they have only lived in your computer is weird. I didn't even know what she looked like, you know cos she covers her face all the time! It's kind of like we're long lost friends who've never met. I had no idea what to actually expect but I had formed an opinion, and I was right. She is awesome!

We quickly loaded up on bacon and eggs and coffee so we could make the 9:30am service. Fully fueled we headed to the First Corinthians Gospel church, it was such a moving experience but totally lost on the boys…They were bored out of their minds within minutes. We took photos of the church but that shit was shut down in minutes by an usher… SNAP! We're so naughty.



The ornate ceilings



The auditorium



The stage and baptismal

After church we headed back home because Hot Mess wanted another cup of coffee, yeah ok I did too, and she wanted the tour of our place and meet the King, no trip to the city is complete without it right? people who aren't from New York love to see inside New York apartments, apparently.

So we were ready for our day…

She'd been posting photos of her sight seeing with her son for the 2 days before we met up and I was getting quite excited. I love seeing people enjoy our city for the first time. I made a list of fun things to do that are not the standard tourist stuff. Some secret things, things you need a local to show you… wait, when did I become a local?

Our first stop was to walk up Lenox Ave from the Church to 125th st and the heart of Harlem culture. Lenox (6th ave) is really cool to look at, it's a wide street with an island in the middle and brownstones and historic building everywhere. Every other corner has a church and as we walked I explaining that it was in the movie American Gangster. I always get a thrill out of watching movies where I recognise the locations. And I hoped they would too. Well HMM was ducking in and out of churches and running back and forth across the street checking it all out! She was loving it! We got to Sylvia's, you know where soul food was born, probably not but it's very famous. Then we headed along 125th, stopping in H&M to buy underwear, HMM forgot to pack any in the worry of making sure she had enough layers. Haven't we all done that? I know I have. FYI, H&M don't sell underwear. Moving along we passed Clinton's office and all the oil and scent sellers and scarf, hat and handbags sellers, finally reaching the Apollo.



We got some great shots outside the Apollo and HMM bought a cd for a street seller hocking his wares. He was pretty cool though. A little further down there's a lady who sells these really cute Harlem shirts. HMM got some for the nieces and one for herself. Standard touristy stuff.

We found Old Navy on the next block and went in… you know, for underwear, they don't sell it either but she grabbed some pjs. (this is important later)

Next stop midtown. We jumped on the train and got off at 59th columbus circle, a quick walk through the mall and a rub of the brass man's peepee. Grand Master D was insisting we go to the Mandarin Oriental, I mean really insisting, so we did and he was right, we had a drink and looked out the windows across the park, shared some more stories while the boys did their thing.



Whiskey Tropical somethings… (she helped me finish)



Aren't we beautiful! (I had to conceal her identity)

The boys got on like a house on fire. Which was awesome cos not all kids do. And it totally made the day better. Yeah we might not've stopped talking all day too. Pretty sure we covered all 4 decades of our lives 😉

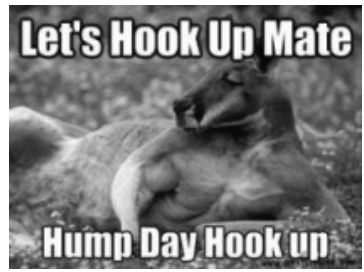
After our little drinkie up in the sky we walked through the park, discussed Tower Heist and where they filmed it… You know Grand Master D isn't gonna let you get out of discussing it at some point. A gentle stroll through the bottom of the park and down 7th Ave to the Le Parker Meridian where the secret burger joint is. It's an awesome place, this divey little place hidden behind the curtain in the ritzy lobby of the hotel, we ordered then sat in the lobby and ate our food. Great burgers, do yourself a favour and seek it out!

With lunch done we headed off for more adventure…

To be continued

part II-The revolting cab ride and we get on a boat…stay tuned

Don't forget to Hook Up … It is Hump Day after all.



She MADE me get in a Cab- Part II HMM tour Guide

January 23, 2014

After Church, Harlem and our burgers, which you can catch up on here , go ahead, I'll wait…

Ok ready? We needed to head downtown to get on a boat. Yep us on a boat. We were going to Ellis Island, Birthday Boy had never been and Hot Mess Mom wanted him to see it. Actually I hadn't been either… and they invited us along, that was their out and we were still with them, bonus. I knew serving breakfast would help 😉 So naturally I began to look for a subway as that's my natural mode of transport in the city. I refuse to get in cabs, I hate them, shitty drivers who can't understand you and are rude and generally assholey, I just refuse, nope, no cab for me, they're not good enough drivers to take my life in their hands. Did you know 7/10 of all motor vehicle accidents in the city involve cabs. That's 70 fucking %. NOPE, not doing it. Subway, bus, walk… It's also a great fitness tool. Anyway, Miss HMM drive everwhere from Florida says 'lets grab a cab…' Well the look on my face must have said it all. Probably thinking I didn't want to spend money she said 'I'll pay" to which I replied, "NO it's not THAT! I HATE cabs. After much cajoling *sigh * I got into the yellow chariot of death! In the middle. OH GOD take me quick, take me now! There was a remote possibility this guy could drive, he was pleasant and understood what we were saying as we gave directions to the Liberty ferry. HMM put her homeless cart in the trunk. She buys a cart every time she comes, for her shopping and then leaves it in the hotel. Great idea for hauling around all the loot you buy while touring the city. This is where she stored her cd, Harlem tshirts and Old Navy pj's, there still were no panties. She totally did NYC commando. This could be why I love her.

And we were off hurtling down 56th st in the great big yellow cab 'o death. Of course this asshole *couldn't* drive could he, he clearly got off the fucking boat last week and started driving. What is it with cab drivers, they use their accelerator like a morse code tapper, surging along the road almost giving us whiplash. I was PISSED! She was laughing! Like evil laughing, and we had a loooong way to go. By the 3rd intersection I thought I was gonna hurl and I told the HMM that etiquette insists that one must always vomit to the left… she was on my left. That'll teach ya! As we made our way on to FDR drive, the surging got a little less and I managed to hold my chucks for another day.

As we reached out destination, I saw all the capital works going on, fences everywhere, blocking off our entrance to the ferry. This threw us a bit, and the cab let us out a little further up than we should have been, not to worry we could walk, as we alighted, some pushy bitch started trying to get in… WHAT? Anyway we got out and off we headed as the cab careened around the corner with the new 'death ride' occupant.

Getting our bearings we wandered back down toward South ferry to get into where the Libery boats go… We're walking and talking and then it hits her… NO HOMELESS CART! Oh no! We left it in the trunk. SHIT, but we had the cab receipt and we looked up how to retrieve lost property as we walked along. Expecting a long line I wasn't sure whether we were going over or parting company there. I wasn't gonna line up for hours while they toddled off with their prepaid tickets…but as we rounded the corner, ticket line nirvana! NO line. And so Grand Master D and I decided that we would indeed join them for a lovely boat ride over to Ellis Island.

Lovely boat ride indeed, you know Sunday was cold right? It's January… but we sat outside, OUTSIDE because where else would you sit when you float past Lady Liberty, seriously. That ride was the coldest I've ever experienced but did we go inside?

No, the boys went to the edge and hung over and messed around like boys do and came back to warm up behind the bulkhead.




We sat there like little old ladies, homeless women without the cart. Oh yeah the cart! So lost and found let's you apply to find your stuff for the sum of $47 online, the stuff in the bag wasn't worth that much so HMM just ditched trying, with a request that I go shopping on 125th and send her some Harlem tshirts. I can totally do that… who knows I may throw in some spare knickers too 😉



After floating through the frozone layer we arrived at Ellis island, just in time for the last show of the day, Grand Master D was looping out a little on the boat muttering to himself, 'I'm not tired, Im not tired'. It was weird, I think he needed sugar (way to go kid, showing our weird to the HMM's)

As we settled into the warm theatre for the show he drifted off to sleep, missing most of the movie. I took this as a sign to take the poor boy home. We grown ups thoroughly enjoyed the film about Ellis island and the history, both boys napped. I thoroughly recommend it when you come to visit but I'm not joining you if the lines are long, just sayin'. When I woke Grand Master D to leave he jumped up and said 'Ok… What's next!' He continued arguing with me when I said we needed to go home, always the sign of a good time had. But it was the right call. It was dark, it was cold and it was time to be inside. We'd been running around the city since 9am. We saw heaps and had a wonderful time. It's always best to leave them wanting more 😉

We found a subway this time and headed uptown pointing them in the direction of Toysrus as we headed home to Harlem. A job well done.

Thanks so much Hot Mess Mom for allowing us to spend the day with you. Until next time, this is A Mother Life out--my feet hurt YO!…



So Much Violence-And yet Nothing Changes

January 27, 2014

In the last few weeks, there's been more shocking news of gun violence. A man was shot and killed in a movie theatre for texting, for TEXTING! Really? It was so offensive to the perpetrator, that he snapped and murdered someone? Over texting? I'm horrified, bewildered, ashamed and shocked beyond belief that this could happen. A middle school student had a shotgun at school in New Mexico, shooting and injuring 2 students, yep another school. And another crazy killed 2 people in a shopping mall in Maryland. These are not gangland streets where you might consider this type of violence could happen, these places are civilised, mainstream, everyday places where innocent people go for entertainment, education and shopping. And that's just the incidents that make national news! There are probably dozens more.

When are we going to do something about this? It is proven daily that people are too stupid to have access to or be walking around carrying deadly weapons. We live in a society where we can no longer feel safe because we have no idea who's packing and who's not. What the ever loving FRACK people. Where have all the good people gone? Children are being shot taking the garbage out, playing in the street, in their living rooms, in playgrounds, in schools, in shopping malls. I hate to harp on a topic but enough, enough loss of innocent life, enough pain. As a nation America is hurting, not just from gun violence but all violence, and yet we condone it by allowing nothing to change, we need to make more noise, way more noise. We need to shame people for committing crimes, we need to make it so unappealing that people will no longer commit them for fear of the consequences, cos right now there are none.

Gunmen killing unarmed teens get off, policemen beating unarmed mentally ill men are getting off, boys who rape drunk girls are getting off. Men shooting unarmed women who are knocking on doors for help. Who is being punished exactly? It's like we're back in the Wild West.

We're in a load of trouble, we have to sort this out. We need someone with enough balls to stand up and say enough, without pandering to special interest groups no matter how much money they promise. For the good of the people… ALL the people.

It makes me mad, frustrated, sad, worried, scared and a little bit stabby, yeah I know that's violent too, whatever.

Where are our conscientious objectors? The Malcolm X or Martin Luther King Jr of this time, our time? Someone whose passionate enough to start a grass roots movement. Forcing the changes for a better, safer America? I want them.

Any contenders?

The Oven Broke and So there's Nothing to do but go on Strike, Right?

January 30, 2014

I broke the oven, well it stopped working, I didn't physically hurt it in a rage or anything.It won't heat up. I think the thermostat is dead. We've replaced this before.

I love my oven, I use it ALL the time because I hate cooking but I'll roast the shit outta any kind of vegie and cook wedges and chicken strips and all manner of other dishes without too much effort. So now I have to cook dinner in other ways, like actually utilise my skills on the cooktop, in pots and stuff. (I have them I just don't like to use them).

Luckily we have many take out and restaurant options, and we'll be using them don't worry, but hopefully when the repair man comes on Friday, he'll be able to fix it on the spot. Home cooked meals are still the best, right?

It's hard to think of new dishes, all my standard meals use the oven these days, our eating habits have changed and now I have to really think of things I can cook using the cooktop and the microwave.

But then again, it's only until tomorrow… another night of take out won't kill us, right? We're doing our part at boosting the economy and didn't we just have a speech about doing more of that? See, Justification- I got that down.



And then We made a Brick wall

February 3, 2014

If you've followed here at all then you know, nothing stays the same for very long, we're always moving furniture, painting walls, changing things around, acquiring pianos… well you get the idea.

We've always loved exposed brick, we had it in other houses and we've been talking about how to do it here for years. We finally went searching last week for ways to make a feature wall in the apartment. We searched on Amazon, naturally because we don't every shop anywhere else unless we are forced. Yes we have a problem, whatever, moving on. It arrived in the usual way and Saturday was make a brick wall day.



Before the bricking

We cleared everything off quickly and washed the wall. Amazing how much dust accumulates behind the pictures and got to work. Unfortunately this was real wallpaper which required glue. A little messier but it was fine.

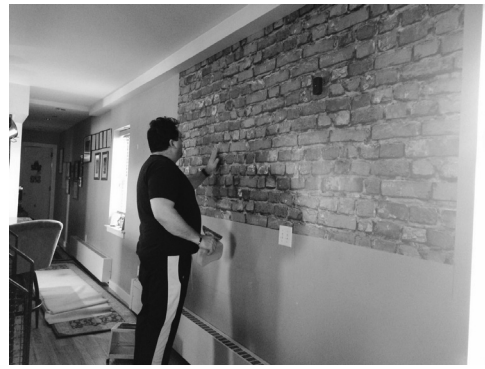


A brick like substance

I'm not going to describe the step by step… It's wall paper, put the glue on the back and stick it on the wall BOOM! Oh just make sure you match up the pieces.



**It's time for the grey to go.
(sounds like my hair)**



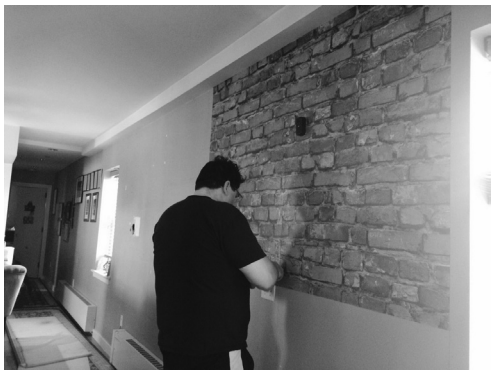
And 4



And let's begin



adding the bottom row



3 pieces up



Those windows were a bastard

Almost done…



Really looking good



now to put the pictures back
Tada…



Night time, we've been at this a while.



looks great

Fancy aren't we? it took all day, there were a couple of hiccups and the 2 packets didn't match up as a continual piece so there was a join we couldn't make match but we covered it with pictures ☺ we're clever like that. Can you tell?

All in all a really spectacular result and at $100, very cost effective. Can we DIY or what?

It's Valentine's Day, So why does it feel creepy?

February 5, 2014

So the 14th is almost upon us again. The day for lovers … St Valentine's day. The Victoria Secret catalogues are coming in thick and fast, so why are the children at school making cards for it? It's creepy. When did it become a holiday for kids to make cards for everyone? I hate that commercialism has taken over and ruined it. Actually no, it's not even the commercialism because sexy presents are fun.



"Image courtesy of Master isolated images / FreeDigitalPhotos.net"

So why are we involving children at all? Except for maybe the making of them… ☺

Supplying gifts for the whole class, Valentine's cupcakes, pencils, candy, goodie bags, Valentine's day bake sales… it's WEIRD. What about when it gets all political in the classroom, so and so didn't get enough cards, the popular kids got them all, feelings get hurt and then we have to go and make everyone feel special. As if teachers don't have enough to do without navigating that. I have a problem with it. St Valentine's day is a day for romantic love, for lovers, and Lovers are adults, or should be. Romantic love should be revered by those who have it, marriages should be celebrated on that day, lovers should celebrate each other, spend time, go out on dates and be together. In my mind it's not children making their parents cards and cards for their friends and teachers and making it a 'friend' holiday, that's just odd.

It's probably me and I'm sure it's all been done for so long that it's just accepted here in American culture but it's still weird. I know, I know, I'm being a Valentine's grinch but I really find it creepy. I just do.

Am I being weird?

10 Reasons We Should Be Selfish for a Change

February 7, 2014

Every day I look around, read articles, talk to friends, live it… and I find that we women really don't look after ourselves enough. The kids get sick and we dote on them and God help us if the husband goes down,… no not like THAT! I'm talking about 'manflu'!

We don't take enough time out for ourselves. Time to be us, me, Molley. Not mum, not wifey, chief cook and bottle washer, or laundry queen and not alpha dog. Yes I'm a damn alpha dog, whatever, Sir Lickalot needs someone to guide him. He thinks I can do it.

We get lost in the day to day grind of life. We're all suffer from lack of sleep. Yeah alright let's call it what it really is, pure exhaustion, especially with all this snowmaggeddon and polar vortex shit keeping the brats home from school more days than we'd care for. Well, I'm calling bullshit.



Image courtesy of Stuart Miles / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

And so I'm declaring February, Selfish MUM month. I have no known authority to do such a thing but at this point I don't even care. Here's my plan. I've listed 10 things we probably never do but should and by damn it we're gonna, at least once each!

Here they are in no particular order:

1. Get a massage
2. Have a spa mani pedi
3. Have a night off cooking at least once a week, whether you go out or order in, doesn't matter.
4. Go out with friends, for cocktails or a movie, leave the kids with dad, they're his too 😉
5. Have day time coffee out with girls, on a weekend if you have small kids not at school. Again Dad can be on duty.
6. Take bubble baths
7. Take naps, sleep in
8. Go to the mall, shopping or just window shopping, without any kids.
9. Let Dad be in charge for an entire weekend. Don't judge or interfere, just let him do it. The kids will Love it 😉 And he'll get a new appreciation of what you do.
10. Chalk up some time on the sheets, where YOU'RE needs come first 😉

Let me know how many you get done… And whether you feel a little more refreshed. I know I'm going to do the whole damn list, maybe even twice 😉 !

Then we'll be refreshed enough to put the gloves back on to start all over again. Maybe…



Image courtesy of Ambro / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Bedroom Chemist - Talking about Sex in a Box this Valentine's Day

February 9, 2014



Recently I received a special package from The Bedroom Chemist. Let me tell you what it's all about. You can buy fun packages that get sent to you to spice up your relationship. As time goes on, we get into a rut and a bit of spice can help enormously right? Well some people, not us of course… we're awesome in the sex department. He suggests it, I roll my eyes, banter ensues and he usually wins, except when he doesn't ~ and winning can be anything from a big romp we both enjoy, to me just being there.

Oh come on! You're not really shocked.You've heard me say it before and we've all done it, ponied up the goodies just to get the job done and keep the hubby happy, or for more spending money… wait? what? …ahem anyway…

Back to the bedroom Chemist and the fun in a box both can enjoy.

Having no idea what was arriving, I waited with anticipation…The King was mildly interested too, when it finally arrived, I was unavailable, naturally. But that worked out

ok because Saturday night is the right night for sex isn't it? ☺. In the box is something for each stage, getting in the mood, getting the juices flowing and finally the fireworks! Each package is different and is designed to change up any dull romp. All you need is a little inspiration and maybe a few cocktails.

In our box was a purple feather boa, a buzz toy, some body art and chocolate paint…



Now I'm gonna let you use your imagination here because

a) describing exactly what happened would be weird and
b) you're all weirdos, weirdos!

But what I will tell you is the fun lasted way longer than 10 minutes, I was pretty happy with the result and The King, well the King didn't manage any chatting afterwards 😉

As a treat, just for A Mother Life readers! Experience romance, seduction & irresistible delight this Valentine's Day with Bedroom Chemist. Their kits are overflowing with products, tips and games that are perfect for couples seeking pleasure and intimacy. Use the code "BC20" and receive 20% off your first kit. Go at it kids and Happy O's!

Find Bedroom Chemist on Facebook and Twitter for your very own O updates.

I Think I've Created a Monster!

February 11, 2014

Recently I texted a pic of my cowboy boots to the King when he was at work. They were new and he hadn't seen them yet. They were expensive, so by way of justification and softening the blow, I did this:



Now as it so happened, he was in a meeting in his board room (yes he ACTUALLY left the house) and the board saw his attention be diverted to his phone and a smile cross his face. Naturally he was fine to share and this is what I received by way of answer:



I'm rather cheeky like that and it totally worked, he thinks the boots rock and hasn't asked how much they were. ☺

So last Friday, as it was board meeting time and The King was once again in the office, I did it again:



So now it's become a thing… How far will it go? Mum reckons 11.

The Valentine's Day You Should All Be Jealous of

February 18, 2014

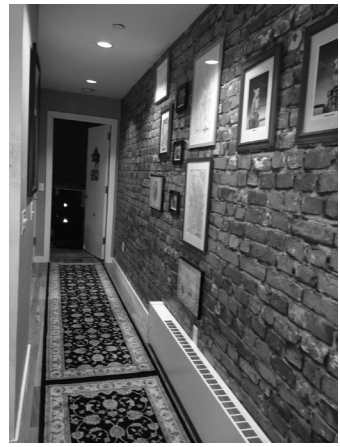
The day started out like any other, the morning routine, coffee, breakfast, school run. The King worked late on Thursday night but was still up early because he had his weekly board meeting. We exchanged gifts… I bought him romantic stuff- he bought me lingerie. *sigh* you know where that's leading.

We joked that he was cooking me dinner (which ALWAYS means steak) and that means the crew were coming over. As it turned out the Spaniards are a romantic lot and sent him home to do his husbandly duty alone.

And so you know what we did when he got home? Wallpapered the rest of the hallway with the brick paper because of course! Who wallpapers on a friday night at 6pm? Who does it on Valentine's Day? We do but you know that about us already.



After spending the day home sick, Miss Gremlin helps prep.



Here's the finished product…now for dinner!

By the time we finished it was after 8 and the butcher was closed… bah bah bahmmmmm… NO STEAK, and so we set about deciding what to eat. It was snowing, it was cold and every other couple in the city were invading our restaurants so we opted for delivery. I'm good with that! You don't have to dress up for delivery 😉

But Valentine's Day is not a time to find new restaurants.

a) they don't know where you are and so there's often delivery issues.
b) what if they're popular and too busy to cook our food?

But The King knew best and decided we were having Italian and he set about ordering. I love italian food and I was pretty hungry. He set the table, with candles and napkins … the whole nine yards in the romance department. And we waited…and waited… and waited.

After an hour we called to find out where the hell our food was. I was ravenous by this time. It was 10pm, on Valentine's Day! I should have been wined and dined and bedded by now and yet we were still waiting to dine…

The restaurant assured us it was coming and finally at 10:45 we were seated and enjoying our candle lit dinner.

After dinner we watched a movie, we should have gone to bed but we didn't. Actually, The King watched and I fell asleep as usual. Seriously if I ever get insomnia I just have to put a movie on after 11:00 and boom lights out.

Finally as we settled into bed, I braced myself for what would be a very difficult romp. (It was late and I was really tired, ok) but the King, being the thoughtful caring man that he is said " I think we should save our Valentine's sex for the morning…" such a thoughtful chap 😉

I think I was already asleep.

Doesn't that sound like a dreamy date? Don't you wish you led a glamorous life like me?

We didn't go to Panama but we're still having a holiday

February 19, 2014

We didn't go to Panama, we should have but there was a passport glitch…so stupid, it's good until May but countries don't allow you to travel into their borders with less than 6 months validity in most cases, some cases it's 3 months but we missed that by 2 weeks. We were going for 4 days but a 21/2 month valid passport wasn't enough. Anyway whatever. She'll have a new one by next week. Sometimes we just can't pull off spontaneity.

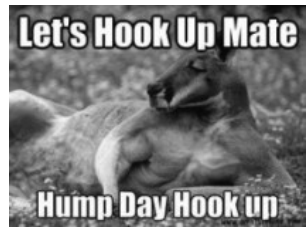
The boys are in Panama, it's 90. We're in NYC and it's 30.



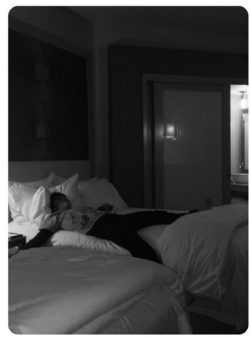
But we don't even care, we're gonna eat out every night, go shopping and maybe even have a salon day… We can totally rock the winter with all this snow.

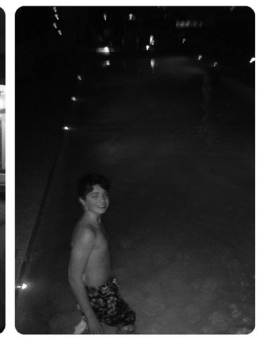


She's missing Daddy, I promise even though it doesn't look that way
We still feel like we're having a holiday 😉
It's Hump Day, you know what that means? Hook Up Time



Update: I woke up in the night with a bad dream and couldn't sleep, these were in my email. Grand Master D washing away snow and loving the digs.





So here's the Thing about Collective Power.

February 20, 2014

We're having a showdown here in Harlem at the moment. There's a local family list serve that people use for information and discussions, which is great. I find out many things happening in the area. It's good to be informed. I know about the recent hold ups for iphones in the park and can now avoid that area. I know about local attacks and crimes and things that I need to know. For the last two days there's been a thread running about a local pizza restaurant, who apparently cancelled a large party booking because the majority of the guests were children. Now I don't know all the details but it seems to have gotten way out of control.

I have dined there and although I don't frequent the place I have no problem with it. From the information I can get from the list serve there is no issue with children dining perse, just that a large group like that at a certain time is not cost effective and being a private business the owner has the right to decide his clientele within the law. Here's the problem. People are going batshit crazy and trying to organise 'eat ins' and protests and wanting to bring the business down because they choose not to

serve a large party of unruly children. This is disgusting to me. Children do not run the world. Children need to behave in a certain manner as to not disturb other diners. That is a given, unfortunately these days some parents feel that their children are more important that anyone else around and allow them to run unsupervised in a restaurant establishment, annoying the waiters, bar staff and other patrons, who, by the way are not spending 5 bucks on a slice.



image credit

I am offended that people feel it is their right to bring a business down because of this. Teaching children to behave politely in society is important but sadly it seems no one is doing it anymore. I feel like I want to patronise this place more just to support them in their endeavour to conduct a business.

If your toddler or young child can't sit still, go to a place that serves pizza while you roam, like Chuck E Cheese or some other child friendly place. Better yet teach them to behave. Stop inflicting your asshole kids behaviour on others who wish to dine in a fine dining establishment trying to improve the neighbourhood.

I'm deliberately not mentioning any names. If you're local to Harlem, you'll know… Please support this business.

End of rant.

The Really Big Awesome Workaholic Home Improvement Weekend

February 25, 2014



Phew, Well that was a weekend I don't want to repeat every weekend. That said, it was spectacular weather in the City and we did enjoy not freezing our asses off or being

buried under 6 foot of snow for a change, if only for a day or two. But we seem to be on the home improvement kick. Which is great because we're finally getting things how we want them after 8 years but it's hard work. This weekend we installed speaker in the bathroom and lights int he living room.

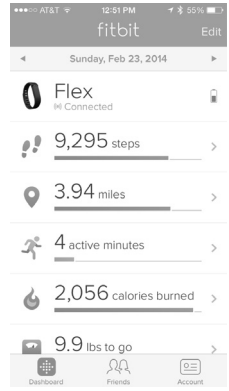
Who doesn't want to play tunes while they scrub the goodies? We can get our disco moves perfected, especially now the King has moved the mirror INTO the shower… Don't ask! So naturally when he does these things he wants it all tidy… because OCD, and that's where my work comes into play. All the wires must be behind the walls. He makes the holes and I get to patch them. I HATE patching, hate it. I will paint houses all day long as long as there's a prep crew that comes in before me and I just open the can and start rolling. But unfortunately that's me in this house.

And because he wants it done and wants to enjoy it quickly, he just chases the wires with a drill or router rather than snaking it through and using 2 smaller holes. Even more fun for me! The entire length of the bathroom wall needed patching but only and inch wide. *facepalm* Of course when you patch you can't just do an inch because you need to feather the edges to reduce the sanding. That shit is so messy Yo! And so when I finished, the compound mark was 8 inches wide along the wall. But this time when I sanded I wanted less mess and held the vacuum up. It actually helped with the spread, sure there was plaster dust but the vacuum cut it down by more than half. I was finished to bathroom in about an hour, including cleaning. Not too bad.

While I was still working upstairs he was getting going downstairs with the second row of lights. We had put the first row up on Saturday and once again he chased the wires along the ceiling and down the wall. *sigh* another 10 feet of patching… For the second row I said, "Can we please snake it? Patching and sanding makes SO much mess. I know it's quicker for you but it's so much more work for me." He didn't want to but I kinda insisted and it really didn't take much longer and the holes are so much smaller, one was completely covered by the light cover strip!

The sanding of the first strip was a disaster though. The vacuum did not work the same way and even though I had everything covered there was white plaster dust over everything, including me.

So after I sanded and painted, with the job finished I spent another 3 hours cleaning . That's a lot of steps for someone who didn't leave the house. I'll take the exercise I guess.



By 8pm I was ready for bed. No more home improves for a while …ok?

But now, after 8 years, we have actual lighting instead of lamps… I will never understand the lamp thing here is America. I suppose I should be grateful he can do this stuff and we didn't need a handyman/electrician…







Do you have a handy husband? Are you the helper? It's rewarding, I guess. Well having it finished is.

Seriously, Don't Try This at Home

February 27, 2014

There has been much discussion in this house about the necessity of hair, you know… down there. Here's your warning, If you're squeamish about this type of information, don't wanna know, are male or generally not into talking about personal stuff you might wanna move along. In fact if you weren't born with lady parts then you should just go now, to the man cave, open a beer and we'll call you later.

This is about Brazilians and not in an exciting, might get to see some way, so just don't even try to continue.

It is not for the faint of heart. I promise you can't unsee what you're about to read

so don't try and kid yourself. You should go and read up on how to be an awesome DIY man or something. Seriously, GO AWAY!

Jeez, finally, some people are really hard to convince that there are things they just don't need to know about women. Sheesh.

Ok , now for the rest of you, this is your last chance to go and read about puppies and shit…

Still here? Well, look at you … pervs.

Alrighty then here it is, men seem to have a thing about clean, shaved noonoos. I blame porn but whatever and of course it is becoming more frequent/popular and normal for women to sport a bald vag. Each to their own and great if you like that but I don't, there I've admitted it. I think it's weird, creepy, child like and ick. We were blessed with bush for a reason right? To keep us warm, to keep us clean, to add a bit of mystery, whatever but the King has been on my case. Over the years we've experimented and I've shaved etc but that's terrible because when it starts to grow back it's like you've got a bad case of crabs with all the scratching (I'm imagining here, having never had lice in my pubes) so I don't do that shit anymore.

I do keep a tidy lady garden, trim the hedges and keep the grass short but I prefer some ground cover. But he's been relentless in his suggesting it. R E L E N T L E S S, seriously shut the fuck up about it already.

Ok, I've had kids and procedures and stuff. I'm not modest. I can throw my legs up in the stirrups and talk about shit as well as the rest of them but I baulk at taking my panties off in the nail salon and having the girl whose teaching me spanish, while she scrubs my feet, get all up in my vag with hot wax. Call me a prude but we all have our limits!

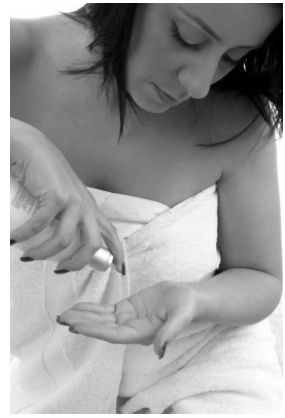


image credit: imagery majestic

In a weak moment, yesterday, only God knows why, (I'll be discussing that with him later) I decided to go and see if there was anything available to give this brazilian wax thing a try at home. Oh I know, **what the hell?** It must have been the euphoria of the massage that had me thinking I wanted to get all 'husband pleasing'.

So I walked into the Rite Aid and there it was. I've never seen it on the shelf before

but there it was 1 single jar of hot wax especially designed for Brazilian and bikini waxing AT HOME. OMG, what is wrong with me? I bought it and then I saw the bikini zone cream, an analgesic designed to reduce the pain, so I bought that too! It was like I was possessed. Like The King had entered my purchasing self and was going to town on buying crazy products to make me smooth.



This looks like a good idea-it's not!

SO munching on my snickers and getting all brave on the way home, I decided that the perfect time to do this was immediately. I am one of those people, when I get an idea, I need to act on it immediately if not sooner. I'm annoying that way ☺ . So straight home and out with the instructions… It was luckily one of those rare days that the King ACTUALLY left the house and I was alone. Thoroughly reading the booklet enclosed I figured, I know whats going on, I've dabbled in hot wax before, I use nads strips all the time. I got this.

Microwaved hot wax in one hand and a gut full of snickers and courage I ascended into the torture chamber AKA my new speaker endowed bathroom. Getting the mood set, I put on some good hard rock and with the ice cream stick in wax, I began. Now I know the shorter the hair the better and easier and less painful. I also know enough to just do small patches at a time, lest you get into trouble and the wax dries quicker than you can work. Starting at the top, the least sensitive of the vag area, I began… apply, count to 15, make an edge with which to grab and rip! MOTHER FUCKER… that hurt!.

Nope it's OK I can do it, I can and I've started now so…next section, going down not across I did a smaller patch, yep still hurts but I kept going. Now at this point it's all about the flattening of areas that are used to being round and plump if you get my meaning and so it started to get awkward but I was working it out. Not so hard.

Third patch in a more difficult area to flatten and I think in hindsight that I should have trimmed just a little more and … get a grip and ripppppppp…OUCH! Well that didn't work, get another grip and riiiippppp… AAAAAHHHHHHH. Nope, nope, cold sweats, LOTS OF silent swears.

Hmm now what, oww, nope stop, hmm shit. The wax was hardened. It warned of this in the booklet, don't take more than a minute because the wax will get hard and make it more difficult to remove, great. So there I was naked from the waist down with dry wax stuck to my hairy nethers and it was too painful to rip.

So what to do? I'm a problem solver, from a long line of problem solvers and so I got out the nail scissors and slowly and extremely carefully, I gently snipped and pulled and swore and sweated though the next 15 minutes to get the quarter size piece of wax off.

Now at this point you'd think give up don't do it any more but nope, not me. This puppy was gonna be bald, I'd committed. And so learning from my novice mistake I used very small amounts and worked quicker.

As I worked across the less sensitive areas again I regained some confidence and the job was getting done. And then in the curve of the other side it happened again. Holy Shit! There was no way back, only forward to the finished product and so with the scissors in hand and careful ripping I finally got done. The pain was intense, I've never waxed that particular area before and so the shock to those little follicles was profound. I'm so glad I bought the lidocaine bikini zone cream.

OMG, as I lathered that shit on more liberally that recommended, the sweet numbing sensation of barbiturates brought me stupendous relief. And every hour after that when I reapplied!

The King, oblivious to all the trauma and after receiving several unheeded hints, finally made the great discovery and like a little boy at Christmas could not contain his 'growing excitement'. My 'look don't touch policy' was not gonna fly no matter how strongly I protested but luckily such incredible excitement can never be contained for more than a minute or two ☺ (see what I did there?) and after what I'd just been through, and several doses of lidocaine, I could handle two minutes of pretty much ANYTHING.

Things I learned through this experience:

Some jobs should just be left to the professionals.

My status as awesome wife has been elevated to 'Supreme Being'.

No actual tears were shed but my vag is not really speaking to me right now. (applies more lidocaine)

I have no idea if I'll do it again. Maybe my brain will block it out, just like childbirth until it's time to do it again…

But somehow I highly doubt it. He better enjoy it until it grows back in, and that's all I'm gonna say about that.

So tell me, do you have any beauty fails to share?

Mondays Are Hard

March 3, 2014

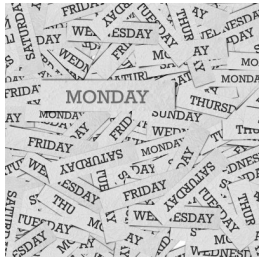


image credit: arztsamui

Ok, so who had a "I stayed up to watch the Oscars and didn't get enough sleep" day? Yeah me too. Add to that 2 vomiting kids and only 4 hours of sleep with which to handle it all. Stack on top the fact we had no food in the house and even though the

snow missed us, it's frickety-billion degrees below zero outside but still the vomitrons needed their chicken soup.Like a good mummy, I bought all the goodies to make it fresh, with all good intention of doing just that, when I stumbled on a new gluten free variety and all reason went out the window. I was sleep deprived, no judgments.

The deli lady tipped me right over the edge, when she didn't listen to my order and then got it wrong and gave me the look of death when I questioned her and added another item. I did have another item to add but she was in such a hurry to get rid of me that she slapped it on the counter and began to serve the next person. But I fixed her. I tweeted it out when I left the store.



A little while later I received a reply:



Take that Beyatch! Yep THAT mood, anyway, I got home and the wolves were circling, so I opened that pre made soup, made grilled cheese sandwiches and shooed them back to bed.

After that, I set about making food that would not make them vomit… (I swear it wasn't me to begin with) and slipped my headphones in to try to smooth out the mood. Music soothes the savage beast right and I really was feeling rather savage.

Several hours later I finally sat… dinner was ready and they were feeling a little better. My mood had subsided too but only a little.

They better be better tomorrow. With the tests coming up they need all the classroom time they can get.

Monday you suck, I'm going to bed early.

Feeling Overwhelmed

March 5, 2014

Nothing exciting to report here. Well both kids are at home sick again today. Grand Master D went yesterday but I had to force him and he still called at lunch to come home. I don't know what's wrong, both are complaining of stomach pain and diarrhea and vomiting on and off. Last time Miss Gremlin had this she was diagnosed with constipation… WTF? Anyway, I'm treating it as such this time too. They haven't eaten anything to make me think otherwise. Grand Master D as you probably know had serious 'shit' happening in Nov/Dec, stomach bug, parasite, constipation all on top of each other to exacerbate the situation and keep me guessing.

I'm not feeling very nurturing, but they're not needing anything either, they either

sleep or do some online work but I feel trapped. It's strange, I feel like I have failed because they're not at school absorbing what's required to pass the stupid tests and keep the attendance up so the state will pay the schools but on the other hand I know that they are not seriously ill and so I'm frustrated that I can't get them to go.

Yes they are genuinely in pain, the 'double over' isn't a fake move but I'm annoyed at them and then I'm annoyed at myself because I should have more sympathy. I found Grand Master D asleep on the bathroom floor this morning because he was vomiting overnight so he's genuinely ill but I still want him to buck up and go to school.



Photo credit : stock images

What's wrong with me? Am I just being a whiny ass? I'm just so frustrated all the time. I even went to bed early… it doesn't help by the way.

Oh yeah, Happy Hump Day. Maybe that's my problem. Hook Up over here if the mood strikes you. ☺

And the Wheel just keeps on Turning

March 10, 2014

We've had a huge roller coaster of a week and weekend. If you know us at all, you know that normal shit just doesn't happen here. We have things going on that few people would believe. Sometimes they come off, sometimes they don't but it's all kinds of crazy pretty often.

The King's business is going really well and transactions are starting to happen. If you need any type of real estate transaction you should try us at Locate Real Estate (Ok gratuitous plug over). Friday was a celebration because a big deal came off! It began quietly enough with a nice dinner that the King cooked. Yes it was steak,

but it ended like this!



Family time is certainly interesting around here.

On Saturday morning, Miss Gremlin went off to chess, and the King and Grand Master D went to the butcher to film dressing a side of beef. You can watch that here if you want. I finished painting the ceiling where the lights were installed and then we enjoyed the glorious sunshine. Spring is on the way I think.

Sunday I woke up to news that the Princess was punched for "being white". Long story but reverse racism is alive and well friends. She's fine. If you follow on facebook you may have already seen this. We really need to do better co existing.

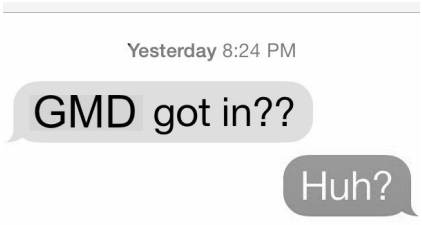
The sun was out so we took full advantage and walked nearly 7 miles and discovered Randall's Island.



Cool place! We cabbed home though. I think that's enough walking for one day.

The kids wanted free range dinner and so they headed off to get it from the store. I love how independent they feel in the neighbourhood.

After they both went to bed exhausted, we sat down and enjoyed our steak, The King had been salivating over the video all weekend and so needed a big chunk of meat, when I received a txt from the Princess:



That girl is faster than me! So I had a look and sure enough Grand Master D was accepted into the school he auditioned for back in December.



So we got him out of bed to tell him but you know when you're a kid and your parents say come out and have a seat, you think shit is about to go down and you're in some kind of trouble, well the King drew it out and drew it out until the poor kid was almost beside himself and then I showed him the facebook post and we congratulated him and from sheer relief, fear, worry and every other emotion in between, he cried.

So like all good parents, we toasted his success and gave him chocolate! Parenting win… teaching him, of course, booze and food are NOT emotional crutches. Wait… um…oops.



Anyway we're all very proud of him, and he has time to come to terms with it all and embrace his chosen career path. He just needs to not have us fuss about it. It's hard to be sensitive in this world.

I'm looking forward to a quiet week, thanks.

So now it's your turn, how was your weekend?

Explosion in Harlem

March 12, 2014

Sitting quietly typing away, continuing the search for health insurance this morning, and still in my pj's, I heard a huge explosion and felt the building move like the subway was going underneath. Then friends started saying the same thing online and so I took to the little blue bird to discover what I could … I quickly found that there was an explosion in East Harlem and went outside to look.

I posted a picture and then the chaos ensued.



As the sirens screamed and the helicopters arrived and the world media scrambled to discover the news, I was contacted by NBC, CBS, CNN, Wall St Journal, Brazil TV, Metro, Danish News, an Irish news channel and Huffpost UK to see what I knew. Phew!

The funniest part is the image that half of twitter is retweeting and crediting to @ amotherlife, isn't even mine! Which I've mentioned and then given my images.

Twitter totally exploded, then my phone started. I've done 4 live to air interviews and 3 print interviews…As expected the coverage is ongoing.



photo credit : Linda Roy



Photo credit: Linda Roy

We were entirely safe, being 5 avenue blocks west but we sure heard and felt the blast and had a pretty good view of the action.

Thanks to all those who reached out to check on us.







At this stage they suspect a gas explosion, and 2 people are dead. It's a tragic accident. You just never know when your number is up.

I'll keep you updated when more is known.

In Search of Healthcare

March 17, 2014



photo credit: apple's eyes studio

This post was put aside because of the excitement of last week with the terrible explosion and the craziness of the media that followed but finally, here's how we faired with the ACA aka Obamacare!

Post starts here:

So the time is drawing near folks, if you don't have yourself all locked into some sort of healthcare then the men in black suits are coming to your door to take you away…Ha, not really but because of the law passed, like it or not, The Affordable healthcare Act requires everyone to buy some sort of health insurance coverage. I kinda hate that but there it is…

Since living in the US we have honestly only had healthcare coverage for one 12 mth period in 8 1/2 years. While not covered, we've had 2 emergencies and about 6 doctors visits, so it's not like we are healthcare hogs or a drain on any social system. I totally understand the need for cover in emergency situations where hospital stays are required. The cost can ruin you but it's still a flawed system because those insurance companies that you pay chose what they'l cover and how much they'll cover and so it becomes your insurance provider and not your physician who ultimately decides your care… um wait. what?

I could talk for hours about the inequality, the lobbyists for the Pharmaceautical and health insurance giants and how they are all only in it for the money and not a healthy society. I could go on about how this system isn't a fix and in fact by accepting this model, America will never, ever get a single payer system. But it could so easily be attained. If everyone was taxed 1% of their gross income then it would be funded. The rich would pay proportionately and the poor would be covered. If you want cosmetic or non emergency treatment then you buy extra coverage. It's how most of the free world does it. There are no death panels, there is no denial of care . If you have a heart attack or cancer or delivery your baby you are covered because you have contributed your part in your taxes. The Government would have huge buying power and the healthcare companies would have to give better rates. See fixed… it's gonna be great in my Utopia…

But in the meantime if you haven't already then you will need to jump through the hoops that require you to get covered before the end of this month. And that my friends is going to require a lot of coffee, booze and patience. It's a jungle out there. You go to Healthcare.gov site and begin by selecting your state. Well I've seen the tv ads and I just went straight to the New York marketplace. Made sense to me. I was half way through their arduous signing up when I needed assistance from the King, well he got the shits because this was my job and blah blah and what the hell am I doing on this I should be on healthcare.gov… so I went because he put self doubt into me… I went to select my state and it wasn't even there! The computer knew I had already done the right thing and refused to let me do it again. So the system has some intelligence. You can go to healthcare.gov but it will direct you to each state's market place because each state has different providers and different rates and that makes sense! Amazing. So after I said I was right (sometimes I can't help myself, he pissed me off!) we continued on but the sign up is cumbersome, it crashed at one point , you can't go back and change stuff when you realise what they're asking isn't what you thought they were asking, that's kinda dumb.

I finally got through to the part where you can select plan, now here's where it gets even more frustrating. According to the calculations, the children qualify for Child Health Plus, which is a program that covers everything for a reasonably low monthly fee per child but that means you can't have a family policy. Which to begin with we thought was kinda stupid and so I had to search separately for family plans outside the Marketplace … because you know, research. I found plans but they were hideous and along the way I had to learn terms like copay and HMO EPO and PPO and I don't fucking know. Oh and deductible! That's the one that really makes us laugh at this whole fucked up system… so you pay thousands of dollar a year for insurance but if you get sick or injured, you have to pay the deductible before the insurance company will even begin to pay your medical bills so what exactly is the point again? Some of the reasonably priced policies had deductibles as high as 12,000, yes that's 3 zeros! Unbelievable! For a family like us who don't go to doctors or take regular prescription medicine that makes NO SENSE AT ALL. It's a total waste of money and fuck wasting money right?

I am not ashamed to say we called in reinforcements on this one! Thanks Dan

So after extensive searching, I went back and looked at the market place for a 'couples' policy. The kids really are covered well on Child Health Plus. We don't need any bells and whistles, we really only need coverage for emergencies and accidents but finding the right thing is so difficult and then once you do, you have to find out if the doctor you occasionally use is on it, which by the way they're not, neither ours nor the kids' but seriously the amount of times we go we'll just pay and keep the insurance for broken arms and split chins because, for serious, if I get hit by a CITY bus then the City is paying every fucking cent of my care!

The wrap up? We have healthcare, which we don't actually feel we need but it's now the law so what are ya gonna do. Two separate policies, but combined they are the best over all value with services that work for us… AND a surprisingly low deductible on ours. It's a totally painful process taking hours of searching, making decisions and phone calls so get to it kids, there's not much time left.

Sir Lickalot's Gone Social or Viral- There's Shots for that Right?

March 19, 2014

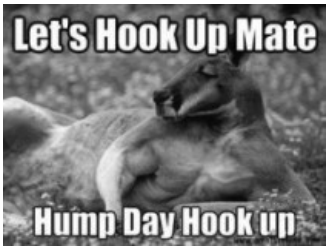
You all know our dog, our special needs dog, Sir Lickalot, whom we all love dearly, who is a total nutcase and a furball . I've written about him several times, explaining his rescue and his issues and his idiosyncrasies. Well now I've gone and unleashed him on the world. How can I be selfish? How can I not share our boy with the masses, his thoughts, his actions, just him.

So here it is Sir Lickalot is on Twitter and you should follow him! He is the happiest dog when he meets new people.



He makes us laugh everyday. I know he'll be able to make you laugh too!

Oh and because it's Hump Day you should go and hook up! And if you're not a hooker then at least you'll have some great things to read!



And so begins another long stretch of Single Parenting

March 21, 2014

The King left on a business trip this morning. He's off the California for a week to close some business deals. He's meeting some potential clients and catching up with old friends. It'll be all go for him, a busy time. For us back home it will be the usual, but with a few challenges thrown in for good measure. It's just how it is. Things tend to happen when he goes away. One time Miss Gremlin split her chin before he even left the airport, that was a fun drama. There's been others too.

This time I'm hoping for a drama free, peaceful time. Is that too much to ask? probably but I'm gonna ask it anyway.



We'll hang out, walk the dog, eat out, sleep in. Have skype calls and facetime chats.

I'll get the bed and the remote to myself, that's always a bonus! It's only temporary and for that I am thankful. I couldn't imagine having to do it permanently by myself.

Safe travels My King.

Local Atlah Church want to Stones Gays

March 25, 2014

I had all big plans of writing about this church that happens to be in the 'hood. I first saw what was going on on the yahoo group I'm a member of, I watched with interest as people bitched and moaned, with little real interest, then it started to get more serious and I read what was really happening and I was appalled. That's not the behaviour of a Christian church. Jesus preached love and tolerance. I think they took a wrong turn not unlike Westboro Baptist.

It caught some media attention and then a young lady went and asked for her stoning! Gutsy move. The clergyman had no idea how to respond. It was almost comical if it wasn't so awful.

So I thought it would be a good topic to cover, seeing as I'm local and I wanted to see the sign for myself. So on Saturday I took my little self on a walking tour to the sign. Passing so many beautiful buildings, brownstones, churches and architecturally stunning displays. Harlem really is a spectacular area.

When I got there, I found this.



Police on scene… Hmm why? We're they guarding the church, I wondered? Was the situation that out of hand? As thoughts went through my mind, I got a closer look.



Vandalism! The sign was blank, the words of hate and discrimination were gone and in it's place was black graffiti.

Someone paid them a visit under the cover of darkness. And while I'll never condone crime or vandalism, I did give the perp a mental high five and a fuck u to the Atlah Church… intolerant fuckers. I hope they've learned their lesson, that our community will not tolerate their hate speech or discrimination. It's an ever changing community, with growing pains for sure but generally speaking everyone gets along without too much trouble.

Timtam Slam- It's a Vlog day!

March 26, 2014

Happy Hump Day peeps, I'm home with a sick child…AGAIN and every time I try to get a run at work and the creativity starts, she needs something. *facepalm*

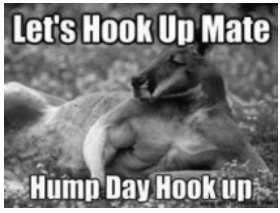
Oh well, so for my sanity (chocolate fix) and your enjoyment, I'm going to share an Aussie tradition. The Timtam slam.

It's a *VLOG! (please disregard the bad hair day, and pretend I look super glamourous… m'kay!)

If you're looking for this delicious goodness you can order them online at Simplyoz.com or bribe an Aussie to smuggle them in for you.

*camera credit goes to Miss Gremlin

Happy Hump Day, and don't forget to hook up!



When Will We Ever Agree on Vaccines- They're Important

March 30, 2014

This last week saw another outbreak, this time measles, another controversy, more antivaxers speaking out. Sprucking their pseudo science and non factual mantra about vaccines. The time has come to draw the line in the sand. Diseases that were thought of as wiped out are surfacing again, endangering lives of the vulnerable.Rights and responsibilities are not separate, yes you have the right to choose what works for you but also a responsibility to the common good. You have the right to choose what you want for your family but a responsibility to your neighbour. Society has certain rules, being protected from diseases we can prevent should be one of them. Obviously I believe in vaccinations.

Here's why:

My dad and his brother contracted polio in 1952, prior to the invention of the vaccine. He was 14, his brother was 11. It was at a time when they didn't understand how to treat it correctly and so believed they needed to keep the muscles still. They were kept in isolation after being rushed by ambulance to the Prince Henry Hospital in Sydney. At the time Australian nurse, Sister Kenny was trying to use hyrdrotherapy as a treatment but Doctors refused to listen, she was after all, just a nurse.

They spent 5 1/2 months in hospital rehabilitation, my dad in a frame with his arms strapped up and a hip to toe leg cast, my uncle with leg frames. They were surrounded by other children in similar frames, casts and iron lungs. The iron lungs made noise, breathing for the affected patient. The loud humming was something to get used to and it wasn't until it stopped and the occupant had lost the fight that they were really even noticed. That happened often according to my uncle. Dad talked a lot about those times, how the nurses were bitches and wouldn't come when they buzzed, how his brother became his minder, doing everything including scratching his nose by scooching around the room on a hospital chair! One time my uncle had to spread newspaper around on the bed for dad to pee because the nurses ignored the call button and never came with a bedpan, oh how he got in trouble for that!



My Dad with his new dog and the chest and arm frame he had to wear, in the family back yard

My grandfather bought them both a puppy and showed them to the boys through the hospital window, as an incentive to keep going and want to come home. Can you even imagine the trauma all this caused the boys and their family at home?

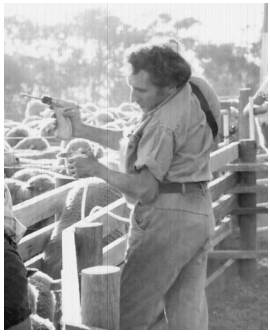
18 months of hospital, rehab and body frames, can you imagine it?



Here's the boys before the were infected.

Stuck in a hospital bed with both arms strapped up in a frame. He was around Grand Master D's age, a fit, able, good looking, strong young man, when he contracted polio. He was convinced he got it from the public swimming pool, they had just started swimming lessons.

He was told he'd never lead a normal life after, his body was very deformed from the waist up. His shoulder muscles on the left were wasted away, this caused a severe curvature of the spine and a hump where his unaffected shoulder blade was. He had weakness in his left arm and both hands. He couldn't lift his left arm above his head. He couldn't lie flat on his back, he lost overall height because of the curvature and twisted body frame. I can only imagine how difficult life after was for him, kids are cruel, bullies rife in that era and discrimination the norm. They both had to learn to walk again, learn to use those twisted, damaged bodies. He proved them all so wrong, He worked for decades in a physically challenging industry, he worked the farm, grew sheep, erected miles of fencing , built sheds, cut wood, fixed cars, drove tractors. He did everything an able bodied man could do and more, he always provided for us. But he lived with pain and body image issues and physical limitations every.single.day. He never complained and he was always open about discussing it with us, telling us about his experiences, good and bad. Teaching us empathy and acceptance of things you cannot control.



Working the farm like a Boss

He also emphasised the importance of immunisations, of protecting yourself against diseases. We saw first hand what the alternatives were. As the years progressed his physical limitations became more, even though he survived 2 different bouts with cancer, lost the tip of his finger and a forklift accident crushed his already damaged chest, the curvature, causing restricted lung capacity in his ever decreasing chest cavity with a hunch back, minimal use of hands and thumbs, shortened trunk and problems with his lungs and heart, it was this now preventable disease, that ultimately took his life through it's continued life long complications.

Although polio hasn't really resurfaced as yet, measles, mumps and whooping cough have in many western countries where it was once thought to be entirely wiped out. Not many remember what it was like before we had vaccines to protect against

these diseases. Those generations who suffered are growing old and losing their fight but this new movement, the one where people are screaming foul of vaccinations, those who put the fear into ill-informed parents, those people, are endangering lives, not only of their own children but the lives of others, condemning them to a lifetime of medical problems caused by an entirely preventable condition. I find them abhorrent. It makes my blood boil.

For the preventable, like rubella, measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, diphtheria and polio, why wouldn't you want to protect your child from deafness, blindness, unborn child defects, brain damage and/or lifetime physical deformities? I just don't understand this thinking.

Furthermore you're endangering those who are not yet able to be vaccinated and other vulnerable people in the community. It makes no sense and it's entirely selfish and quite frankly, counterintuitive. The evidence is clear, vaccines save more lives than they harm.

As for some of the others on the market, more testing needs to be done, like the HPV for girls, and now boys (who by the way don't even have cervixes with which to contract cancer) this is preventable by safe sexual practices and I personally don't believe requires vaccination. It's not like you can catch it from an airborne virus but that's another argument for another day. ☺

For these diseases, the benefits outweigh the risks and for the good of the entire population it's time to get tough.

While I was writing this article, Croatia has made the bold move to make vaccines compulsory. It's a step in the right direction. Now if only the rest of the modern world would follow suit so no child ever has to experience what both my father, uncle and countless others did in the generations before prevention.

The Sleep Deprived…

April 2, 2014

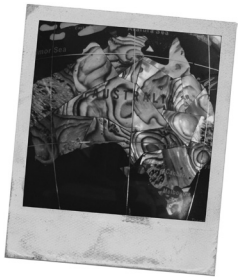
Today I'm over guest posting at my friend Starr's blog The Insomniac's Dream. Now as the name might suggest, she's got a sleeping problem. Sometimes I have a sleeping problem too. My sleeping problem, however is slightly different…

Please head over and check it out. Say hi while you're there. Starr's really lovely 😉 click the link below to transport yourself there.



Australia ~ Wanna Go?

April 3, 2014



It's almost travel time, well, I mean start planning to book time. Summer is a mere 12 weeks away, summer break, end of school, time to get the hell outta Dodge!

Time to go home for an accent refresher and taste of the life we left behind.

Here's a montage that will help you understand the call of the Wide Brown Land…

Of course it's far and you'll feel a bit rough when you get home. But it's worth it I promise

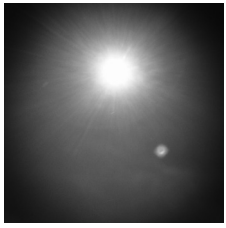
So here's the question…

If you need me I'll be booking the flights and packing the thongs 😉 In Australia they're flip flops…pervs

Wanna come too?

Here Comes The Sun

April 6, 2014



Sitting in the sunshine with the warmth of the rays on my skin, I feel an awakening. A renewal of spirit. It's incredible how the sun and outdoors lifts your spirits.

This winter has been hard. A snow storm nearly every week bringing double digit inches of snow to blanket the ground, trapping us in our fully appointed stiflingly warm cubes of urban living.

I love the snow, it's still a novelty. We'd never experienced snowfall like this. Before moving here the children had never seen it. Our snow was only on the ski fields, hours of driving away.

During the storms we love to watch it pile up and to see it immobilise an ever moving, never silent city is an incredible experience. I never tire of it.

But it's also the winter that makes me miss home the most. Being trapped inside for months is depressing. I've never been so pale in my life. I've always had some sunkissed colour on my skin, my body charged with vitamin D. It never gets this cold in Australia, even on the coldest night in the dead of winter. The coldest areas experience temperature equivalent to a North Eastern November at worst, with the Northern Australian states enjoying 'Florida winters'.

This year I feel it. If I had my vitamin D levels tested, I'm sure they'd be depleted. Vitamin D is essential , every living thing needs the sun.

I need it like oxygen, for health and peace of mind. I can really see how seasonal depression affects people.

I long to lay on the beach in the heat and sand. I want to be covered in sunshine and warmth . You won't hear me complain about the heat this summer, I rarely do. I love it, my dry skin goes away, the stuffed nose and asthma disappears and the great outdoors, parks, hiking, bike riding and leisurely strolls bring me closer to nature and renew me.

But by the end of the season we'll be ready for cooler days and cozy nights, bringing relief to the frayed tempers which spill out onto the streets on humid summer nights, of the stifling subways and the putrid stench of dog piss in the city.

By the time the leaves change, we'll be excited for the first snow, excited to put our boots and hats and scarves back on because life is an ever changing season and as of today, the season of sun is well on the way.

I've got sunburned boobage from sitting outside today…That's how I know 😉



In a Boat on a River…

April 8, 2014

I got talking to someone recently about the Crocodile Hunter, it was probably in an interview I did, and it reminded me of an adventure we had just before we left Australia. So I thought I'd share it in case you ever get to go. Because you know you want to…

The King travelled alot for his work in Australia, he was in radio and jingle production, so had to visit different radio markets around the country, do shows and get clients. On one such occasion we tagged along. I had never been to Darwin and it

made sense to check it out. The kids were little, Grand Master D was about 4 and Miss Gremlin maybe 14-15 months give or take.

Anyway after the function was over we decided to stay on for the weekend and have a look around Darwin. There's quite a tourist industry up there. We walked all over town and witnessed the drunks in the parks and streets which is so Darwin, unfortunately the Aboriginal people have problems with alcohol, it's a curse the white man brought with them.

At that time Grand Master D was totally absorbed by Steve Irwin, The Crocodile Hunter, dressing up like him and wrestling his 6' stuffed crocodile by jumping out of my laundry basket onto the croc in the river, among other things… so it seemed like a no brainer to go and see the jumping crocs tourist attraction out on the Adelaide River just outside Darwin. We hired a car and headed out. I don't know quite what I expected but it wasn't what we saw. We arrived to a tin shed on the side of the river with a couple of 16' tin boats with canopies on them.

I was horrified…



Crocodile Hunter wrangling a snake

What on earth were we thinking? There was no one even there when we arrived despite the fact we'd booked a tour. But within a few minutes someone arrived and and we went through the typical procedure of paying the money and preparing for the experience. We saw all the pictures around and the tourism pamphlets, Grand Master D was getting very excited. I was feeling less so. As we headed to the river I really believed we'd made a horrible mistake but I didn't want to disappoint Grand Master D and of course the King was all 'it'll be fine!'

Against my better judgement we boarded one of theses….



photo credit:

http://www.jumpingcrocodilecruises.com.au/

Now I'm not saying I'm a scaredy cat but we were in an open boat like this, with a 4 yo and a 14 month old…

As we took off out into the middle of the river, the driver gave us the safety speel. No standing up, no putting your arms out beyond the boundaries of the boat. I may have gone grey…

What the FUCK were we thinking?

We kept driving out to the middle, the Adelaide is a huge river. Then the driver got his fishing rod out and loaded up some chicken carcasses. It was at this point I moved to the very centre of the boat and held Miss Gremlin almost in a death grip, holding her arms down by her sides. I had no idea how high those bastards jumped, I had no idea how close they got.

It didn't look like a very long fishing rod to me. But nothing seemed to happen, the driver explained that sometimes the crocs didn't come up or they were off doing something else…



And then this



made me



crap my pants!

The King and Grand Master D were at the edge of the boat to get a better look.

I couldn't wait to get to dry land. I was at the edge of full blown panic.

And then he surfaced, high out of the water, grabbing that chicken carcass in his huge jaws with nery a care in the world. One false move and he could have had an entire boat load of tourists for lunch!

The boys were on a high after our 20 minute ride. Grand Master D raved about it for days. The croc put on a great show, I can't remember his name (of course he had one) he was the biggest croc they fed as part of the show.

I will never do it again, I was too freaked out, especially with small children but don't let that stop you, it certainly is an excellent experience and well worth a visit if you're in the top end.

http://www.jumpingcrocodilecruises.com.au/

He Loves to Cook, therefore He's a Keeper.

April 9, 2014

The King loves to cook, which is great because I really don't. Well no that's not true, I just don't like the pressure of cooking dinner every night. I know that sounds whiny but it becomes a chore and not a love, especially when I cook it and the kids won't eat it and when they ask what's to eat then turn their noses up. I get really annoyed at that. I'm taking time and effort to make something that's not mac and cheese or hotdogs and chicken nuggets, something nutritious and delicious for the whole family and then I have to fight to get them to eat. I think that's my biggest frustration. By the end of the day I'm tired and irritated and don't want the fight of dinner. I think I might need an Alice.



Sure some nights we get take out but that's hard too because Miss Gremlin doesn't like some of the regulars so I still have to make her dinner.

Other times the King will cook but he always wants to cook steak and again Miss Gremlin is the problem, also steak gets tiring after a while. I love steak but every other night is a bit boring. And he's messy, Oh Lord is he messy!

But I always appreciate it when I don't have to do it.

Here' s what he cooks me! I'm very lucky.



steak with peppers and onions and bean and bacon



Spicy peppers



Steak with spinach and carrots and mushrooms



steak with creamy cognac sauce

If only he'd expand the repertoire just a little ☺

The Big Egg Hunt in NY

April 14, 2014

Yesterday when we were out we found all these easter egg statues down in Battery Park. They were pretty cool but then we noticed they had a QR code. After scanning it, the King discovered there is an easter egg hunt all over New York called The Big Egg Hunt New York.

There's an app with a map of all the eggs and in that app it tells you the artist and the inspiration for each statue.

But even better, every egg you crack you go into the draw for fabulous prizes, up to 5 entries a day!

The app looks like this:





So our Sunday Brunch turned into a mini scavenger hunt around the City. We got 27 of the more than 260 to find.

It was fun!

The egg hunt goes until the end of April and you can post on twitter, facebook and instagram with the hashtag #thebigegghuntny. If you're in the city this April, looking for something different to do, why not try this!

Here are some of the ones we found.













There's also a Where's Waldo one which travels throughout the burroughs each day to a different location. Yesterday he was on Brighton beach, today the clue is he's off Manhattan heading to another island, where he's taking a ride to amuse himself… Maybe on the Staten Island Ferry?



Sometimes He Amazes Even ME!

April 15, 2014

Some days you just have to step away and shake your head. Those days when everything goes wrong, the pressure is mounting and there's no relief in sight.

It's those days you turn to a nice bottle of wine, when you finally finish phase one, before you have to work into the wee small hours of the night on phase two of the day.

But that's what it takes to start a company from scratch.

So imagine the frustration when the cork explodes like a peanut shell in the wine.

The words "Do we have a strainer" are said through gritted teeth. I instruct him where to look and tentatively wander over to offer help.

The strainer wasn't working. I suggested a tea towel, he retaliated "Get your knickers off". Ah NO! Not one to offend easily, I reached over to the clean laundry basket, stationed in the hall and threw him a pair…



mmmmm… fruity! (not using the crotch)

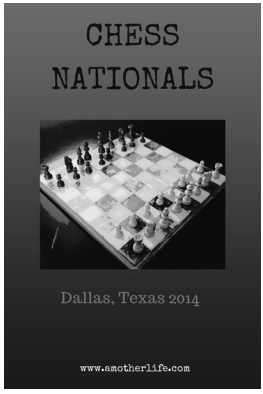


Sometimes I just have to walk away shaking my head, after I take pictures to share with you of course!

All the Cool Kids Play Chess

April 17, 2014

I can announce it now, I've been holding it in for a while, Miss Gremlin is going to Chess Nationals in Dallas next month. She was selected along with 9 other students from her school to compete against children from around the country. It's a pretty big deal. Approximately 7000 children attend and play chess for 3 days straight in a conference centre. They live and breathe chess and stress. There are several rooms going at once with different level players competing. To say she's excited is an understatement.



Parents are invited to attend. We have to pay our own way but we can go and support our children. Obviously I haven't experienced it before but apparently it's super stressful. Kids cry, teachers, chaperones and parents all freak out and some even cry too!

I'm not going, even though I'd love to. Miss Gremlin wants to do it on her own. She's the independent child, she has been right from birth. She's the one who didn't need mummy with her every second, the one who waved me off on the first day of school, with a "seeya mum"

I know I could have insisted but the King and Princess will be at a conference in Vegas at the same time which means Grand Master would be on his own. And although he's mature and responsible and capable I wouldn't leave him alone at 13. I know I could find a person to come and stay with him but when Miss Gremlin said she wanted her 'freedom' as she put it in her best Braveheart imitation, I figured, well I'll just stay in the city with my boy and Sir Lickalot and we can have a peaceful weekend.

Not to mention the 1000 bucks I won't have to spend on flights and accommodation.

I'm so very proud of her, her chess playing abilities and her independence. She's a rock star, this kid!

The Well travelled Teddy Bear

April 22, 2014

When the kids were babies they both received Teddy bears from a place in Australia called the Teddy bear shop. It's sort of like Build-a-Bear except you don't build them. They are ready made with names given but these bears come with birth certificates and passports. Grand Master D has a bear named Stanley and Miss Gremlin's little man is Hammond. These bears have been everywhere! You know how it goes, have passport, will travel.



Whenever we go anywhere the bears come with us, although Grand Master D might be a little past that now. Stanley didn't come to The UK and Ireland last summer. Hammond however was almost not admitted into Ireland 😉 the immigration official told her he looked like a dodgy character and to keep him under control. I love it when they interact with the kids and make that process more fun and less intimidating. And he wasn't wrong because when we flew back into Dublin from Paris on our last day, Hammond got lost at the currency exchange and it was quite an ordeal getting him back, not to mention almost losing the duty free he was guarding!

Sometimes immigration is grumpy, like in Vienna, on our way through to Italy, when I asked for the stamp the officer was very mean, he did it but I was rather scared. And they had armed militia dudes walking around the airport with very scary looking guns! We couldn't wait to get out of Austria.

The Americans don't really like to play either but we do get a good agent every now and then, mostly when I ask they glare at me, stamp it and wave me off. Another reason to hate the TSA. Why do they have to be so mean. ☹

One time coming into OZ, Stanley was searched for illegal contraband, it turned out the weight in his bum was sand and they were worried it was foreign and disease containing. When I explained he was a homegrown Aussie, they let him go. Phew.

But mostly, the bears are well behaved world travellers and have racked up quite a large amount of frequent flier points… if only we could use them!





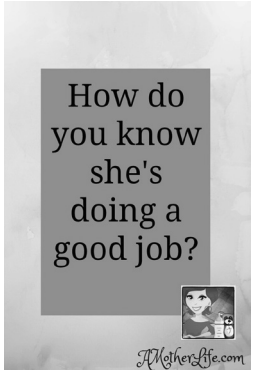
How to Tell If Your Cleaner Does a Good Job

April 24, 2014

So you've hired a cleaner, you finally decided that a) you hate housework and b) you don't have time to do all those jobs.

But how do you now if you've hired a good one? Cleaning is fairly standard, right? You mop, dust, vacuum scrub and tidy.

Wrong!



Not every cleaner does things the same. And not everyone's expectations are the same. Paying for a service is different than doing it yourself. Like most things, nobody does it as well as you do it yourself. But with a bit of patience and guidance you can get your cleaner to do pretty much everything you want to your standard.

And sometimes they even do things that you would never expect!

Like theses things…If yours does this, you have a winner. If not… keep looking my friend because this is totally worth paying for.

1. Cleaning inside/on top of the fridge. Ok who does this? Um not me! Ok fine, I clean the fridge, not every time I shop but I'll give it a wipe if something spills.
2. Dusts the venetian blinds. Whoever invented venetian blinds, and I doubt it was the Venetians, they've got bigger worries, like Venice sinking, was an asshole! Seriously, these things collect dust like its gold! I hate that about them. I love the look, especially the timber ones but seriously, the blinds are awful to clean.
3. Fold the toilet paper like a hotel. This is spectacular, it feels like you live in a hotel! I never get tired of this. I could do it myself I know but that would just be weird.
4. Wipe the faucet spouts and shower heads. This is how you find out if you have dirty water. I have never thought to wipe the spout of the water tap (faucet thingy) What is that anyway… faucet is a dumb word. But when you have black algae type stuff growing out you know that you should probably wipe that shit.
5. Dust the legs on the table and chairs. Now I'm all for dusting, well someone else dusting actually because dust is bad and sneezy shit… but I've never dusted table legs and chair legs. But it makes sense and I'm glad it's done.
6. Mop and vacuum under the furniture. Do you know what you can find under couches? It's like a gold mine! Especially if you don't really clean under them. But now they get moved and mopped and vacuumed under every single week. How will any self respecting dust bunny gain size and stature… Seriously!
7. Vacuum the couch. This one I get, and have done because skin… gross, and crumbs and dog hair and why oh why did we buy a dark fabric couch? STUPID. But making sure the nap is going the same way on all surfaces? Who has time for that? You guessed it. My cleaner… and it's not cos I pay her by the hour either. 😉
8. Wipe the walls. This is one of those jobs that you do with a bucket and bleach every six months right? Unless you have my cleaner, every week she wipes the walls, and it's amazing how clean a place can look when you just wipe the grubby marks off the walls.
9. Dust the light fittings and lamps. All the shiny things need cleaning… duh!
10. Unpack your dishwasher. And figure out where everything goes! That is a super talent right there! My family are still mastering this.
11. Change bedding. While I enjoy the workout that bunk beds gives you… I'm so glad that the beds are now separated. It really is tons easier. When I change their sheets, in a 14' sq room I actually walk 2500 steps just changing bedding! Did you know what a great work out that is? I still change the beds most weeks but some weeks I just don't feel up to it and my lovely cleaner just does it. Without prompting.
12. Do laundry. If I asked her to, she would totally do my laundry. I would have to translate the washing machine for her but that's a small price to pay right? But I can't bring myself to do that, I actually don't hate laundry and I'd rather her spend the time on the rest of the things that I really don't love.
13. Teach me Spanish. This is the entire reason I hired her… truly! Well that's how I got it past the King … I'm a great justifier.

She's here today and I know by this evening the entire place will sparkle. The kids LOVE coming home to a clean and tidy room. They love her and tell her so in broken Spanish. See even they are learning the language. Last week Miss Gremlin asked me how do I ask her where she put my computer? Without hesitation, 'Donde esta mi computadora por favor' just rolled of my tongue like a native, look at me knowing that without google translate! …

Totally worth every cent, right?. Just agree, it's easier that way.

Anzac Day Traditions

April 25, 2014



Today is ANZAC Day, a day in Australia where we honour the servicemen and women, who fought for our freedom and those that have fallen. We remember them with a dawn service and marches in all the cities and towns around the nation and football and two up and beer!

It's the Australian way. We also honour them by eating Anzac Biscuits.

Anzac biscuits were invented during WWI, when the women back home wanted to send care packages to the soldiers fighting on the front. There was food rationing at that time, so these humble anzac biscuits were made out of ingredients readily available in the pantries of Aussie women.

The name ANZAC refers to soldiers of 'Australian and New Zealand Army Corps'

Theses humble biscuits make you feel warm inside. Nothing better than eating one warm out of the oven with a cup of coffee.

Here's how you do it:

Anzac Biscuits (Cookies)
1 cup oats
1 cup plain flour
3/4 cup sugar
3/4 cup coconut
1 stick butter
3 tbls boiling water
3 tbls golden syrup (substitute maple)
1/4 tsp baking soda

Mix oats, flour, coconut and sugar together. In saucepan melt butter and add syrup and boiling water. Once melted add baking soda, when it foams up pour into dry ingredients. Combine and roll into 1 inch balls, flatten on a greased baking tray with a fork. Leaving space in between.

Bake in slow (350f) oven until golden brown. Approx 10 minutes but watch them so they don't burn.

May you have a safe and Happy Anzac Day, honouring those who served so that we may drink and gamble and enjoy sport on tv without fear.

May you win at two up and get home safely. Remember to take a designated driver.

Oh and Go the Hawks!

Aussie Aussie Aussie, Oi Oi Oi

Why We Should Teach Our Sons to Sew: When Women Raise Boys-Guest Post

April 28, 2014

I'd like to introduce a new friend today, Fiona from Coffee is Black. She writes about all sorts of crazy life stuff and was just starting to enjoy posting to the Hump Day Hook Up when I shut it down, so I wanted to share her work with you. Please enjoy and go over and take a look at her other work at Coffee is Black.

I have two younger brothers, both of the handsome persuasion, but on significantly different ends of the scale. We fondly refer to S as a "big blond buffoon," whereas M has been "our little coffee bean" since he was a little dweeb. S is 8 years older than M, and thus significantly closer to his three older sisters in age. Of course, this means that we take 100% credit for the man he is today!

S grew up tagging along behind his three sisters as we donned princess dresses, failed at T-ball, made secret clubhouses in the woods, and learned to sew. My older sister L and I were deeply interested in things that we could create with our hands, and the wonders of sewing machines opened up a whole new world of purses, skirts, and names stitched into things (we weren't advanced sewers, ok?). A family friend began coming to our house weekly to instruct us in the craft. Slowly, we learned a little more of the ancient art of making things from cloth, though we required all the modern machinery to do so. Our tomboy sister C wanted nothing to do with the whole process, but lo and behold, young S found the sewing spiel as fascinating as we did. S soon became a staple in our sewing lessons. Before long, he was as adept at sewing as a five-year-old can be with the best sewing machine that sends a very sharp needle flying at high speeds at the tap of a foot pedal.



The sewing lessons were hardly an isolated example of S's absolute confidence in ignoring gender roles. During dinner one night, my sisters and I became engrossed in a discussion about famous feminists. S suddenly burst into tears and sobbed, "I want to be a girl too!"

"Why?" We asked, puzzled.

He told us through his tears, "I want to be a feminist!" Once we had assured him that men could be wonderful feminists, he became secure in his gender identity once more, now happily tacking on a "feminist" label. S contentedly returned to his pile of pots, pans and spatulas, which he was assembling into a "kitchen warrior" suit of armor.

As S grew and spent time with male friends his own age, he acquired some interest in more boy-leaning activities such as sword fights, violent card games and later, basketball. When I turned around one day, S was suddenly man-sized, and he was rather handsomely man-sized. His female peers certainly noticed.

My sisters and I all rolled our eyes, convinced that S was now going to take the route boys of a certain age inevitably end up taking. He was headed for jerk territory with his pedal to the medal. He would become gruff and scornful of "female" pursuits. So long S-baked cookies!

We should have known that we raised him up better than that! Despite looking like the kind of guy who could get too big for his britches, S continues to be confident in his interests, basketball and cooking alike. As the years passed, girls continued to flit around him. We sisters have watched him with eagle-eyes, waiting for a slip-up. However, I concede that S never caves under pressure. When teenage girls are at their teenage-girl-ist, S is sensitive, respectful, and understanding. He continues to ask us for advice. Wise man! He plans romantic surprises based on a girl's interests, not clichйs. He wears purple shirts when he feels like it. He goes stag to prom so as not to cause drama among friends. And he always, always asks his sisters for advice. S is proof that boys who learn to sew make the best boyfriends.



Future son, watch out!

Fiona is a redhead who likes to write about challenging topics, like white privilege and being disabled in an able bodied world. In college, she couldn't choose just one academic discipline, so she got a BA in Global Interdisciplinary Studies from Villanova University. She drinks coffee and dances to crazy Latin Music while attempting to look glamorous. She and her Haitian-Dominican fiancй are applying for a shiny US visa and hope to be together in the US soon.

You can find her on facebook and twitter or at her blog: Coffee is Black

Easter, The Bunny, A Zombie and Kale

April 30, 2014

Over Easter, we jetted on down to the Jersey Shore to Atlantic City, the poor man's Vegas. And by jetted, I naturally mean hired a car and drove, cos flying to AC from NYC is just dumb. It's less than a 2 hour drive. But jetted sounds fancy.

The King booked it all online. We still went to the airport but to hire a car. It's actually pretty cool jumping on the train to Newark and then driving from there. No city traffic to contend with and Airport hire car locations alway have a better choice.

Roadtrip…

We're an excellent road tripping family, we all have our devices and just jump in and go. Along the way we went to a Grill restaurant for lunch. It was an odd experience, we felt so out of place but the food was good and the price was right. New Jersey is weird.

We don't gamble. So to us Atlantic City is kinda better than Vegas cos at least there's a beach and boardwalk and plenty of fun for the kids. We stayed at the Borgata, which is pretty fancy but The King decided to put us in the 'Water Club' and the kids in the Borgata hotel. Which meant we were on the same property but we were in different hotels. I thought this was weird and didn't really like it, how do you have a family vacation in separate hotels? But as it turned out it was pretty cool and the kids loved it. They were all about having the freedom to kinda roam the hotel, heading to the pool and Starbucks on their own and coming across the lobby to visit us in the other room. The Princess was staying with them, so there was a supervising adult.

And the bonus for her was she got a free vacation AND when the kids went to bed she went out bar hopping. So it kinda worked for everyone. It's still weird though.



view from our window of the water and the kids hotel. (bottom right)

Even the Easter Bunny enjoyed scattering a trail of eggs is two separate locations! Luckily I'd emailed him on the road



We hung out in the hotel, swam, used the spa facilities and we had a great day on the Steel Pier going on all the scary rides. Miss Gremlin wanted to go on the pirate ship until she was on it. She's a fraidy cat but she totally loved the go carts and all the arcade shooting games. Grand Master D won the family a blow up zombie, he named him Harold.



Go carts way more fun.



Get me off!



I don't like this



Ahhhhhhhh



Whip lash selfies.



Cousin It!

On the trip back home, coming in from the airport made it feel like we'd just flown in from some further afield location than Atlantic City. It's a thing ☺ don't ask. The zombie almost didn't survive. But that's another story.

Upon returning home I decided that I just needed to have a juicer, we have always had one and the kids loved their 'noisy juice' but ours died several years ago and we have never replaced it. But I wanted to get back into it and so began my search on Amazon, because where else do you see all the available products and get to read all the reviews?

Having the usual discussion with the King via chat between floors, because why communicate with the spoken word when you can use a computer? We to and fro'd with different products. I wanted a juicer, you know the loud ones that do it fast and get the job done. It's the type we've always had and they work. Several years ago, I bought a wheat grass juice, which we've since sold because we stopped using it, but before we did I tried to juice fruit and vegies but it was no good, too pulpy, so I was very hesitant when the King suggested to get a masticating juicer simply because they were quiet!

Now let's face it, we all know he has his weird ways and being annoyed by appliances is definitely one of them… it was one of the major factors in me hiring a cleaner because he would never let me clean for the noise of the vacuum.

Seriously the man has issues…

Anyway he convinced me by way of , 'if you don't like it you can send it back'. I wasn't happy and already hated it before it arrived but decided to at least give it a go. With the produce sitting on the counter ready to juice for 2 days awaiting the arrival, I was kinda pissed with the whole thing. I kept thinking 'I'm totally gonna hate it and I'll have to send it straight back and blah blah'.

Well it arrived Friday and that bad boy came out of that box faster than a ferret looking for rabbits and I was a juicing queen, and you know what?

It was fucking fantastic. The fear of too much pulp was gone with the first taste, the kids were so excited to have noisy juice again that they had 3 different combinations. I even admitted straight away how wrong I was. This thing is the top level of masticating juicers and it's awesome! and shhhh it's whisper quiet…

Since Friday I've been to the supermarket 3 times to get more stuff to juice, and on Saturday I got all crazy and decided to get on the kale 'superfood' bandwagon. Well shit, everyone is sprucking about how fucking fabulous this shit is and I didn't want to be missing out!

So yesterday I juiced some, with cucumber and apple. It was gross, tasted like I was drinking grass juice. It was all I could do to swallow it, so I added pineapple and more apple and orange and ended up doubling my juice intake just to wash that shit down.

Kale the superfood…?

How can you people even say its yummy. Bleck, but not to be deterred (and I have a whole fucking bunch so I don't want to waste money) I juiced again, this time with lots of yummy fruits and a smaller amount of kale, it was drinkable and I think I've found the right ratio. But then I got brave and thought well maybe I need this in my body and today put it in a salad, my usual salad with my usual dressing… The stuff tastes like bitter ass. There's no way to dress it up.

It's HORRIBLE. I don't know how you can say it's awesome and you love it. I'm pretty sure you're all lying! The King said he loved kale salad?! Well he can have it cos that shit will only be in juice and only half a leaf at a time… and I ain't buying it again. Screw the health benefits!

I'm just not convinced. I think this says it best:



photo credit

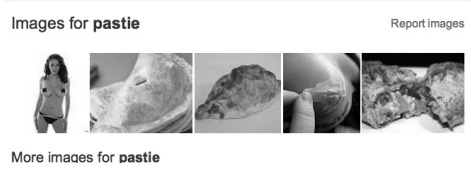
So what'd you guys do for Easter?

Talking Sex Again? More Like Definitions of Sex

May 1, 2014

Ok this week I have come across three things worthy of mention. Firstly I had to tell the King what pasties were. Which is pretty funny considering… Oh he knew what they were just not the name because pasties to us are, meat and vegetable filled pastries like pies. Imagine how confusing that would be visiting OZ or England and seeing a sign outside for pies and pasties!

You see my point. However, google the word and the confusion continues!



He was totally cool with nipple tassles, and I'm in agreement. Perfect name.

Anyway… that somehow set the tone of my radar and thing just kept popping up.

Next thing I see is a post about steel balls you insert into your hoo haa to exercise your pelvic floor muscles. Now I'm all for strengthening body parts and seriously I would love to not 'stop and hold' to sneeze and once again enjoy the freedom of bouncing on a trampoline. I do my kegels, when I remember, but these bad boys are used by the geishas… so you know they've been time tested. Here's the deal, you need to be able to keep them in for 10 minutes aday. In the hilarious post I read, the post woman was lucky to make it a minute the first day but as practice makes perfect, within a week she had improved.

I think I'm gonna go for it… Thoughts?

And then as if my mind wasn't blown enough I came across something called Karezza sex.

Wikipedia says this:

"… Karezza signifies 'to express affection in both words and action,' and while it fittingly denotes the union that is the outcome of deepest human affection, love's consummation, it is used technically throughout this work to designate a controlled sexual union." So that in practice, according to Stockham, it is more than just self-control, but mutual control where the penetrative partner helps the receptive partner and vice versa. According to Stockham this is the key to overcoming many difficulties encountered in trying to control sexual expression on an individual basis.[5] Stockham's contribution was to apply this same philosophy of orgasm control to women as much as to men. A form of birth control, the technique also prolongs sexual pleasure to the point of achieving mystical ecstasy, according to J. William Lloyd, a practitioner of Karezza, whose own experience of cosmic consciousness appears in Cosmic Consciousness, a book written by the Canadian psychiatrist Richard M. Bucke, a friend of the American poet Walt Whitman.[6] In this practice, orgasm is separated from ejaculation, making possible enjoyment of the pleasure of sexual intercourse without experiencing seminal ejaculation, while still experiencing orgasm.

So now you know, it's like tantric and other stuff where it's all about touching without the orgasm. Sure maybe an orgasm at the end of a lot of touching and kissing and caressing etc.



photo credit

So all for keeping it spicy, I mentioned it to the King last night, now remember, we're still laughing about pasties, so when I suggested sex without orgasm the poor

man's eyes rolled so hard I know he had to have injured himself. But I pressed on, like a good wife should, explaining that it's the connection and the touching and the kissing and when it gets too hot and heavy you stop and slow down and start again etc…And then he had his lightbulb moment!

'Oooohh, you mean like sex in the ads?' sigh, 'Yes, like sex in the ads'

And THAT my friends is what I deal with on a daily basis.

But it's good to know nothing is new to us, we know all the kinky tricks, we just have different names for it.

Little Toes, Big Trouble

May 6, 2014

Today was the day, the day of days, I guess. It was my first use of the new health insurance. And since we got the fancy pants one, I'm not afraid to use it.

It was time to finally consult with someone who really has a clear idea about how to fix this stupid toe!



I walked there, through the 'hood, above 125th st which is a whole other level of crazy than where we live. Dog fight in front of me, one owner grabs hers while the other tries to get the enthusiastic puppy under control. As I walk behind the woman and her unleashed dog, he poops, she's 15 feet ahead, she knows but she doesn't care…I wanted to tell her to pick it up, I wanted to abuse her for being an irresponsible dog owner but I was acutely aware of where I was and that's the kind of shit that gets you shot, and because Miss Gremlin was babysitting herself (the neighbour below knew she was there in case of the zombi apocalypse) I wanted to be as safe as possible. I passed her as she turned into the store with the dog hightailing it inside behind her. Health violation much?

When I arrived at the podiatrist, 25 blocks up, (exercise, check), I announced my arrival and was greeted with the 30 forms required to be a new patient.

Have you ever smoked, did any family members have, cancer, high blood pressure, heart disease blah blah, are you allergic? (I'm allergic to answering the same questions 25 times.)

Anyway all that done, and payment out of the way, I was escorted into the little room aka torture chamber… (I heard the lady before me scream!)

And another round of questions. The same. Then the fun part, I got to wear the lead apron so my feet could be x-rayed. I had to remove my toe ring, that bad boy hasn't been off my foot in 10 years!

The nurse was very enamoured with it!

She took pictures of my left foot from the top and side and my right foot top and side, then allowed to put my toe ring back on, I waited.



Not long really, I managed to answer Miss Gremlin's request to eat pie, of course pie is an acceptable food when your home alone sick and my friendly doctor wandered in. He was lovely, he's a sikh, with his headdress on, he has family in Sydney and he's going there this summer. ME TOO! Except the sikh bit.

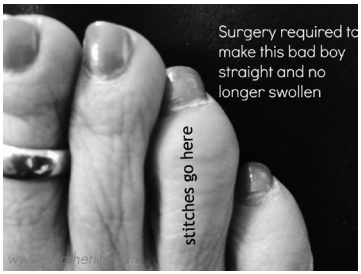
With the pleasantries out of the way, we looked at my toe, then at my x-rays and what I thought was the problem was correct. It was out of whack, I told him the whole saga and he explained that I probably broke it initially. So it's healed in a deformed way, the bone has grown and pushed the other bone off to the side. NO amount of manipulation will fix it. This bad boy needs surgery.



Now there are two options. One which can be done in his rooms, will take about 20 minutes and I can walk out afterwards… with vicodin because the King requested the good shit. *eyeroll* It'll fix the problem and reduce the swelling and straighten the toe but there's a chance it won't stay straight. I'll be in a boot and stitches for 3 weeks.

Or option two, have surgery at an outpatient facility and have a pin put in the end, same scenario but a guarantee to have a straight toe. Now straight isn't really my worry, they're toes and as long as I'm pain free and back to normal I don't need the fancy pin.

So I'm set to have option 1 on friday, I'm told it'll be easy and painless. I'm not worried but I'm not convinced it'll be painless either. I've have many procedures before so that doesn't bother me, the fact that he can do it so quickly and in his office is surprising and kinda awesome!



I told you I was gonna use my insurance, if they approve the surgery of course because apparently they're in charge of my health now… *eyeroll*

In the mean time I better get a pedicure because with stitches and a boot for 3 weeks, that shit won't be happening again for a while, right?

Priorities people, priorities.

An Update of the State of Affairs

May 10, 2014

Things have been quiet around here because I'm incapacitated.

As you probably know I had my toe surgery yesterday. It went well but as expected it I'm in a lot of pain. To top it off I have been sick and went to the doctor in the morning and was diagnosed with bronchitis. That was fun…

I'm full of codeine and just sitting with my foot up. But I'm here and once my brain clears I'll be able to think again.

In the meantime here's some pics of how it all went.

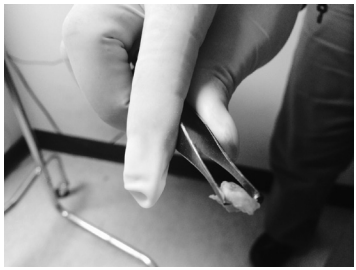
Thank you for all the good wishes.



Waiting for the anesthetic



The closed up incision



Here's the offending piece of bone growth



And my sexy new foot wear for the next 2 weeks



A close up

The Chess Champ Returns

May 13, 2014

The return of Miss Gremlin from Chess Nationals went much more smoothly than her departure. Storms and tornado watches were once again forecast for the Dallas area but the plane took off on time and got them out of there unscathed. Obviously I tracked the flight, because that's what stalky good parents do, and when I could see she was almost here I went outside to see if I could see he fly over head.

We live right under the flight path to La Guardia airport. On a summer evening, there are no less that 15 planes circling in different stages of landing at any one time, so it was a pretty sure thing I'd see her plane fly over, and I did!



I waited a little while because baggage takes forever and then I began to hobble the 5 blocks to collect my baby. I should have caught a cab I know but I needed cash and the bank was 4 of the 5 blocks to school away so I just went slowly, telling myself that we'd catch a cab home. I hate cabs, they drive like shit and I hate wasting money on them.

When she finally arrived out front of the school in the airport shuttle, we hugged and collected her stuff and walked home… (I know, bad for my foot but whatever).

When we arrived home she was so glad to be there. She showed off her medal and talked about the huge trophy they got for 14th place. She was happy to see her brother too! She chilled out, had a snack and grabbed her ipad to watch some much missed tv.



By 5:30 her eyes were drooping and so I ordered their dinner and by 6:00 I could see she wasn't going to last long.



"Don't fall asleep in the chair" I said "Because I can't carry you to bed"

"I won't" was her response but within 10 minutes she said "I think I'll go take a nap." And I knew she was down for the night.



She didn't move all night.

This morning she was so hard to get moving. Tired and road worn are not a good look on a 10 year old but I told her she had to go to school because how else was she gonna brag about her trip… She informed me she was taking a nap at school. ☺ I imagine the teacher will cut her some slack because he'll be just as exhausted.

They came 14th overall but that's pretty good. Only 6 points separated them from 14th and 1st place. Miss Gremlin didn't win any of her games but she had an awesome experience and will remember it for a long time.

She wore her medal to school so I'll have to take the picture when she gets home.

I Think I'm Going out of my Mind

May 14, 2014

Day 5 of being stuck at home with a boot on my foot with limited movement can suck it! I might be going out of my mind with boredom, I am unable to really string 2 coherent thoughts together because the codeine fog I'm currently living in has me perpetually swinging between staring idly at the dog or not watching whatever day time tv they seem to serve up these days, so writing anything thought provoking is pointless.

The King is away again so I'm stuck here alone with 500 channels, an endless stream of deliverable food and a computer and yet what I really crave is someone, anyone to just come and hang out, and do stuff for me and feed me and do everything but be here too.

I might not want to talk but I want the ability to have a human here in case I might want to.

Ok I think maybe I need to sleep now .

Being home sick, alone, blows puppies.



Hookers-The King does this Stuff so your Husband doesn't have To.

May 19, 2014

After the second week away, the King flew into JFK 5 hours late due to the torrential rain we had Friday. What is it with us and bad fucking flying weather. Anyway, he forgot his keys, which means I get to receive a lovely early morning phone call to open the building door and then hobble down to open the door. Yay! I love it when that happens, ok I'm lying. So I just left the keys outside in the air conditioner control. (Shhh forget that, if you decide to break in and murderate us) So all I had to do was answer the phone, which rang at 2 am, now I'm not sure how you react when you're dead asleep and the phone rings but I have difficulty functioning properly and often take a long time to register what's even going on. So when he called the second time, I was almost coherent enough to dial the number to let him in.

He was greeted at the door by Sir Lickalot and then came up stairs, stripped and stumbled into bed.

He was sick!

WTF!

Great, just what we need, I'm recovering from bronchitis and toe surgery and he comes home sick from sleeping with air conditioning blowing on him all night. Sleep returned very slowly due to the snuffling and snoring, I might have gotten used to not having another human in the room.

In the morning we caught up on the trip, the wild sex I was planning was shelved because he was sick, and if you think I was gonna let him slobber all over me with that lurgy you'r crazier than I thought! We spooned, you elaborate…

Afterwards he told me about his Vegas part of the trip, it was very successful and they had a good time. One evening as he left the partiers and headed back to the hotel, the hookers were out in force and he was propositioned a lot, I mean how could he not with all that charisma and charm, right?!

I'm never worried about these stories, you may wonder but honestly, if your

husband is coming home and telling you what happened then you know nothing did, it's when they come home and don't tell you then you have problems…

So walking along trying to grab a cab in the early hours of the morning in Vegas, a car pulled up with 2 lovely young ladies, naturally he accepted the lift because he'd been waiting for a while for a cab. Now these girls were beautiful!

The King explained they had vagina dresses on, you know the ones, that only just cover their business, and while they were driving one of them was trying the get some action. The King realising what was going on pretty fast, was pushing gropy hands from his crotch from all directions, and then one of the girls lifted her dress and said. "oops my vagina fell out!"

OMG! who even does that? Well obviously a hooker looking for work but yuck…

The King, a little shocked at her forward behaviour but knowing this was not happening said "No we're not doing this , sorry I just want a lift."

"Why not?" they said. To which he answered "Because I'm married and I don't do that." (Everybody say awww…) One of the girls said to him, "but you should because it keeps your edge…"



photo credit

Just ewww. No judgements of course but gross! Who even thinks like that?

Finally they arrived at his hotel and they said "Well can you at lease give us some gas money?" which he didn't have cash for, so he said "No but I can buy you drink at the bar…"

Fortunately the girls declined, saying they weren't allowed in the bar, which confirmed they were, in fact Hookers, just in case the previous events weren't clear enough.

WOW, just wow, since when did hookers start cruising for business? The world is a changing place my friends.

Takeaways from this story?

a) The Hookers in Vegas cruise in cars…

b) I'm very proud of my husband for remaining true to me (not that I was ever worried)

and 3) now he can check off "seeing an African American girl's vagina" from his bucket list.

If that was on there…you know every one has different bucket lists ☺

And this my friends is why I blog, because these things just happen to us…

I Live with Piglets- Which you'd think would be fun… it's not

May 21, 2014

The alarm goes off, I tap my wrist until it shushes.

Next thing I know the bathroom door is closing and Grand Master D is stepping in the shower.

I look at my phone, SHIT I slept in, I slept on the couch downstairs last night. The King is sick and had chills but I was hot.

I couldn't put the air conditioner on or open the window so I grabbed my pillow and left. It happens, no one's fault. The couch is comfortable too.

I rush, bleary eyed, to wake Miss Gremlin, she is not amused. I knock on the bathroom door as I come back past, "Time to get out".

Will I every not have to kick this boy out of the shower?

I pour her cereal and grab her spoon, she's big enough but I've always made their breakfast before school. I feel like I should. It's what 'good' mothers do.

Tag team, she finishes and heads for the shower while he slumps into the chair in front of his cereal. Another day in that hell hole. 'When will it be over' he muses.

We exchange pleasantries , then he shuffles off to finish getting ready.

I hand out the lunch money and prod them both, they're cutting it fine, we don't need anymore late notes…

Oh yeah, make coffee, they finally leave barely on time.

It's over, the morning rush, they make it even though we slept in. I pat myself on the back and move on with my day.

After working most of the morning dicking around on facebook I need to use their bathroom, upstairs is too far, you know sore foot and all.

I haven't been down the hall since they left but as I do, I see this,



followed by this,



and finally this…



Oh eM Gee, how many times have I reminded them to put their clothes in the basket and hang up their towels? 5 trillion? NO exaggeration there. NONE.

I pick up the towel in the hall, then something comes over me… fuck this! I'm not doing this anymore. I'm leaving it.

They'll be home in an hour and they can fix it.

Question: How am I gonna get through to them the pick up after themselves? Seriously! The age old question…

Clearly reminding them doesn't work.

Kids are so annoying!

Franken Toe- Not a Musical

May 23, 2014

So today was the day, the final day, getting these stitches out of my foot. No more surgical shoe, no more uncomfortable bandage, back to normal. I booked my appointment for 9am because I knew that I'd just want this over with by the time 14 days was up and yes, I wanted it over with. This week has been the longest week ever. Trying to walk more and get better, I inadvertently made my foot swell and the bandage became tight and almost unbearable. Several times I've wanted to just rip it off. I got as close as unwinding it one turn around my foot and rewinding it a little looser but that's it because I'm a good patient. Yeah right. The nurse took me in and x-rayed so we can see how it all healed. I have to say I was a little nervous about my toe ring because last time she made me take it off, this time it was firmly ensconced under all the bandages. What if it blew my foot up? That would be rather annoying right? Ok whatever, I had a freak out moment, work with me.





After he came in and checked out the x-ray, he unwrapped the foot for a good look at the result. It was a relief to get the bandage off. He made a joke about my toe ring being an issue but I didn't get it. We made small talk while he tugged away at the stitches, I may have mentioned that I removed the King's vasectomy stitches… He looked at me and said "I don't even know what to say to that and I'm not usually stuck for words" We laughed and laughed. There's noting better than putting your Dr at ease while they're working on you. I think they should enjoy their work 😉 Literally 5 minutes later I was all done and putting a shoe on for the first time in 2 weeks. I couldn't get it on properly and half way home ended up replacing it with the boot for the rest of the way home. This will be my footwear for the next week or so.

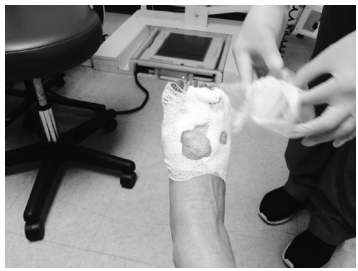


All in all, I'm pretty happy with the procedure and result, once the rest of the swelling goes down.

Yay healthcare, yay getting it finally fixed, even though right now it feels like a Far Side boneless chicken and wobbles in a weird way. This too shall pass as they say.

Here's a gallery to peruse of the unveiling and the end result for all you ghouls 😉















Looking forward to actual shoes very soon.

I Might be Done with Society. How do you even go off the grid anyway?

May 28, 2014

Every day it's something else, gun violence, stabbings, babies found in dumpsters, teens killing their children with abuse, kidnappings, gang rapes, cops bashing people, shooting innocents, teachers having sex with students.Sports stars being assholes.

Our rights being whittled away, reproductive rights, fighting for equality, fighting about the minimum wage, health care, people who die because they can't afford health care. Going bankrupt and becoming homeless because of health care.

Massive, uncontrollable national debt, countries going bankrupt being propped up by other countries.

Wars finally ending only to have another antagonist provoke the giant American war machine because war makes money.

It's too much!

It's really sad to see that we're on a slippery slope and things are getting worse and will be worse in my lifetime. I worry for my children and the future generations.

Everyone's on pills, all the kids are nuts because of the pressure placed on them to attain goals they're not ready for. Everything is rushed and immediate and there is no thought of consequences… Just do it.

We're eating chemicals and penalising farmers for growing fresh, local, chemical free raw food.

I dream of a Utopia where there are self sustaining gardens and we all grow food and the homeless have permanent shelter and no child goes hungry or dies from a water borne disease, where we think of others and look at their situation before we judge, where we ask questions first and shoot last.

Where police and politicians are entirely trustworthy and are only there to serve and protect and work for all the people's best interests and not lining their own pockets.

Where prisoners have to work a farm or grow food or make textiles or some other productive collective service to society during their incarceration, where children have an abundance of free food and healthcare and fresh air and exercise and safe places to play.

Where the cures for cancer are allowed to be used, where homeopathy and naturopathy go hand in hand with the latest scientific breakthroughs and our goal is to cure the ill, not profit from the illness.

Where people with mental disorders are treated and addiction is understood.

Where our returning soldiers are revered and treated for their medical problems without financial worry.

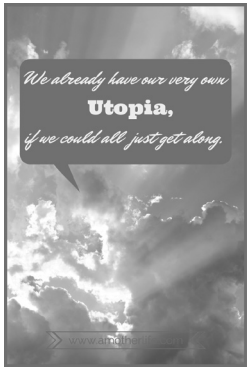
Where the elderly are treasured and learned from, not stuck in nursing homes, forgotten, waiting to die.

Am I really asking for unicorn farts here? Surely we can get to a better place.

And then I wake up and realise it's an impossible task…

Or maybe we need the aliens to come so we can work as a team of humans against the invaders instead of fighting each other over petty things.

Yes, that's the answer, it's time for the Aliens to invade. (See what happens when I have too much time to think?)



Middle School, High School and Beyond. How Did this Happen?

June 1, 2014

With less that 3 weeks until the end of school and in fact the end of an era for Grand Master D, he graduates middle school and in September when school starts again, he'll be in high school. Of course this has been foreign to us because we don't do middle school in OZ, although they have started it in some states in recent years. So starting high school in 9th grade will make it go faster I guess.

Miss Gremlin will choose her middle school soon, which will be less daunting because at least we've done the crazy New York process before. But of course, different kid, different academic requirements, so maybe it will be just the same… Ack!

In Oz you go to primary school from kindergarten through 6th grade, then head off to high school from 7-12. I don't mind the middle school/junior high idea though because being a little kid in a sea of huge high schoolers is pretty intimidating, or at least it was for me, so separating the younger ones from the 17 year olds is a great idea and helps to alleviate bullying to a degree.



Grand Master D will ride public transport to and from school each day, which is also a new experience for all of us. His school is 40 minutes away by subway and requires 2 different trains. Long gone are the days of driving or walking the kids to school. In a couple of years Miss Gremlin will probably be subwaying to school too. This city living is so different.

But first we have to get through graduations and award ceremonies and end of year field trips and activities and orientation for incoming high school freshmen.

Freshmen, it's a funny word but it describes them aptly. They are fresh men on campus! It's all new but I know he'll do great, and from what I've heard it's actually a little less stressful than middle school.

Although that remains to be seen.

Doctor, Doctor Give Me the News

June 3, 2014

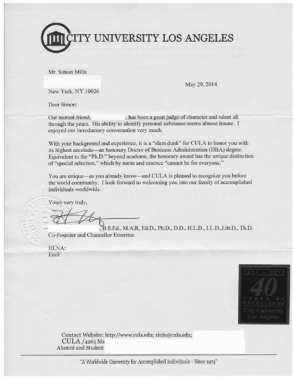
There's is some news that I need to share. And because nothing is normal in this household EVER, this is not your normal type of news.

Noooo, I'm not pregnant…That'd be hard to explain given the vasectomy performed just after Miss Gremlin arrived, performed by himself.

While he was away recently, he received an email from someone in California. His tireless efforts to carve out history as an Aussie Entrepreneur in the US just keeps going from strength to strength. He's flying somewhere nearly every week now and making excellent connections.

Of course the stories he tells of his travels entertain us all, like his recent Vegas trip but this particular one is going to be hard to beat.

While sitting in a bar in DC earlier this week, this is the email he read:



CITY UNIVERSITY LOS ANGELES

Mr. Simon Mills

New York, NY 10026

May 29, 2014

Dear Simon:

Our mutual friend, has been a great judge of character and talent all through the years. His ability to identify personal substance seems almost innate. I enjoyed our introductory conversation very much.

With your background and experience, it is a "slam dunk" for CULA to honor you with its highest accolade—an honorary Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree. Equivalent to the "Ph.D." beyond academe, the honorary award has the unique distinction of "special selection," which by nature and essence "cannot be for everyone."

You are unique—as you already know—and CULA is pleased to recognize you before the world community. I look forward to welcoming you into our family of accomplished individuals worldwide.

Yours very truly,

D.S.Ed., M.A.R, Ed.D., Ph.D., D.D., H.L.D., LL.D.,Litt.D., Th.D.
Co-Founder and Chancellor Emeritus

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Seriously!

A Doctor of letters?

How are we gonna live with him now!

In addition, The Princess bestowed upon him one Christmas, a deed, which entitles him to the use of the title Laird (Lord) …



So from now on he'll be referred to as My Lord Dr King, no not that Dr King.

Aren't I so lucky?

But seriously, it's great accomplishment and we're all very proud of him.

His company COO protested that after what he himself had spent on his college education, The King received his Doctorate in a bar, but might I suggest that My Lord Dr. King has spent a 'college education' equivalent in bars and therefore it's a fitting place to receive such accolade?

The Highest of Highs and the Lowest of Lows- It's a Lesson we all Learn

June 5, 2014

Last nights performance at Jazz At Lincoln Centre was awesome! Miss Gremlin rocked the place along with 90 other kids from 8 local schools who utilise the program of Midori and Friends. Midori, a japanese violinist of note, had a passion and 23 years ago began a program to work in public schools in the city to bring music curriculum to children. It has grown from strength to strength and over 200,000 city kids have experienced the beauty of music and learning an instrument of their choice.





This year was the first time that the program had a performance at the prestigious Jazz at Lincoln centre and my baby was part of it!. She had her face front and centre on all the programs and the huge 4'x3' poster adorning the lobby and elevator!

I have requested one of the posters, I didn't want to steal it so we'll see how that goes!



It was a huge day for the kids, they were bussed down the 70 blocks to Columbus circle around 2pm where they met with the other kids and spent the afternoon rehearsing and eating and getting into the vibe. Brooks Brothers donated concert shirts, shoes and pants to any child requiring it and in fact almost every child received a free high quality shirt! I didn't need to run around getting stuff at all yesterday after all but you just don't know these things.

We didn't see her before the show and we were excited to see her. It was a very impressive space!

When they came on, I was excited, nervous and I may have teared up, ok I totally did but I was worried for her, she was so nervous! It looked like she was gonna hurl on stage!

They performed, it was spectacular, then we got to see the rest of the students perform with the evening finishing with renowned woodwind artist Paquito D'Rivera…

Afterward when we collected the kids, a drama unfolded which unfortunately put a dark cloud over the performance and now I understand why she looked so nervous. They had all been crying just prior to walking on stage.

It sucks when adults behave inappropriately towards children, and their experience will forever be tainted by this.

We get to write reports and file complaints now, when what we should be doing is reveling in the unique opportunity!

But we'll try not to dwell on it, and hopefully the buzz of the experience can over come the shitty part.

We're so very proud of all our school's chosen performers, they really did a wonderful job. But I'm proud of my baby girl the most, she handled herself very well under very trying circumstances.

As for the huge poster with her drum playing self right in the centre, I did the right thing by asking if we could have it, so we'll see what the next few days brings.

When Your Opinion Drives Friends Away

June 12, 2014

Julie Deneen recently wrote a post about being a Christian and her struggle with prolife vs pro choice. She raised some very valid points, and admitted she's lost good friends over her beliefs. I couldn't help myself, my fingers just started typing and the next thing I knew I'd produced this!

I had this very conversation last night with my husband. It's a really hard part of being a Christian to follow blindly what we are 'supposed' to believe. But life isn't black and white, it's all shades of grey and the decisions we make, whether others agree or not, we have to live with and in the end, if we are believers, have to make our peace with God.

However, also remember that God forgives our sins and he knows us. We're fallible and imperfect because that's how he made us. So if a woman or girl finds herself in a situation where for whatever reason, an abortion is an option she might choose, I don't think we have a right to judge her. And if it can be performed safely

with little to no risk to the mother then isn't that better than seeking a back alley quack who will willingly take her money while possibly risking her life and/or future fertility?

What makes it so sad is that those who yell the loudest are often completely ill informed. It really is a polarising topic and which ever way America swings, I hope it is remembered that saving the life can't be the end. The parents of that severely disabled child will have enormous healthcare debt forever and continually fight an ever decreasing funding pool for services or the mother already living on the poverty line, who couldn't afford protection in the first place, really can't afford another mouth to feed, or the emotional trauma a 12 yo rape or incest victim must work through being forced to bear a child.

That can't be what Christians want either. In the end, none of it is clear cut or easy, whatever side you take. Thank you for writing this.

I worry about the changes and the judgements being made. It frightens me at how unfeeling the people who are opposing a woman's right to choose are.

Some of them say the dumbest things, like a woman's body can shut down and not conceive if she's raped, like really? Are you kidding me? We're not kangaroos, no wait, they can't even do that!

I worry that while people are trying to do what they think is right, they could be ultimately endangering more lives and affecting those who weren't asked to be born into severe poverty or deformity.

Unfortunately we still live in highly sexualised times that are totally unequal. We blame the victims of rape and sexual assault, we worry about the ruined lives of offenders and then we force women to be submitted to all sorts of unnecessary testing and humiliation prior to any procedure they may decide is in the best interests of their lives. It's not like they haven't thought of every angle before they made the decision they have.

Why do we do this? Why are women treated so badly? What's so threatening about us? Why must we be controlled, beaten, put in our place, made to feel fear and inferiority, be a man's plaything? But at the same time, not be allowed to make our own decisions regarding our bodies?

In ancient cultures women were revered, worshipped.

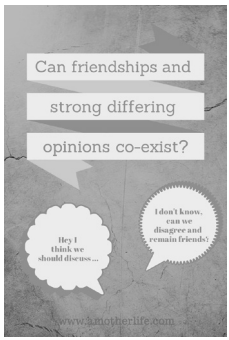
Even in other modern societies, women are held in higher regard than here in the US, they are world leaders, hold positions of great power and yet here, I feel like we're taking giant steps backwards, losing ground, hard won by our mothers and grand mothers!

But these issues are so complex and opinions are so polarising that adding religion into the mix is a recipe for no-win arguments and loss of friendships!

Sad really because shouldn't we be able to have healthy, civilised debate and still remain friends? It would be preferable of course!

However, if you can't, is it best to shut up and not voice your opinions or lose friends?

I wonder, what would you do?



Father's Day or A Knight's Tale?

June 15, 2014

Having Father's Day is June is something we've had to get used to over the years we've been here. In Australia it's celebrated in September.

It has taken some getting used to and there have been a couple of do overs because we didn't get it right. Hey, I've called do overs on Mother's day before so I'm not mad.

It's not the day, it what you do with it and so if you don't do it right then a do over is totally acceptable.

This year, like every other, we struggle with ideas for gifts for Our Lord Dr. King. He's incredibly difficult to buy for.

One year, while strapped for cash, we made him a beer bouquet. It was fun, filling a bucket with different craft beers and chocolates and cheese and nuts he liked. The kids enjoyed making it for him.

Having no idea what to get, I asked him on Wednesday evening what he'd like, and the next thing I knew he had it all negotiated and was booking a zip car to go and retrieve his gift!

But then as fate would have it the seller decided to deliver it instead, saving us a trip out to Long Island.







And so around 9 am Saturday, Sir Ponsonbury arrived. He seems happy to be here…guarding the stairs to My Lord Dr. King's office.

After all every King needs a Knight right?

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY to all you Dad's out there!

And to the mom's pulling double duty.

Bureaucracy at its Finest-A Tale of License Woes

June 16, 2014

Getting a driving license can be a pain in the ass. Here's a story I wrote for Live Work Travel USA. Go and check it out along with some other fun stories of ridiculous red tape.

Arriving in the USA in 2005 made for interesting times. We were in the throws of starting a new business with partners who decided to rip us off, we've since fought a court battle and won, but that wasn't a very nice start. After the rocky start in Indianapolis we headed East to New York, where we had an apartment we purchased as an investment. It wasn't finished yet and we were having difficulty getting a mortgage. We were stuck in the new laws of the Patriots act of having to prove where every cent came from as well as being foreigners without credit scores. It was a tough time. Brought us to our knees in prayer for the first time.

During the process of getting credit and a mortgage, we needed to obtain drivers licenses. Not for the driving aspect but more for the identification box needed checking. You know America is ALL about checking the box. So while we were waiting to close on our Manhattan apartment we were holed up in a century old stone cottage by a lake in Connecticut. As luck would have it, that make things a little easier. We sought information on obtaining licenses and discovered that we would be required to take a written AND practical test, however we wouldn't be required to do any classes. The closest DMV to our little cottage had no openings for months and as we needed the licenses quickly, we found a larger center with earlier appointments, unfortunately it was 100 miles away…

To read the rest, follow the link below.
Getting a Driver's License Again… Live Work Travel



Scabs And Other Gross Things

June 17, 2014

Sunday was a special day, yeah sure it was Father's day and we all honoured those blokes who hang out with their kids and love them and do gross stuff with them, like teaching them all about fart jokes and putting worms on fishing hooks, but this post isn't about that.

This is about other gross stuff. Exciting gross stuff.

My scab fell off! I showed the My Lord Dr. King but he thinks I'm weird so I'm sharing with you because YOU understand me.

Wait, what? If you're catching up you need to read this, this and this… I can wait.

Ok for the rest of you, everything is healing very nicely!

I'm pretty sure that scar will fade to nothing over time and look how cute and skinny it is!



Next week is the check up appointment and damn it if I'm not going straight for a pedicure after he ok's it.

I'm a sharer and I knew you wanted to know. ☺

Cute shoes and pedicures here I come.

And then, just like that… He graduated

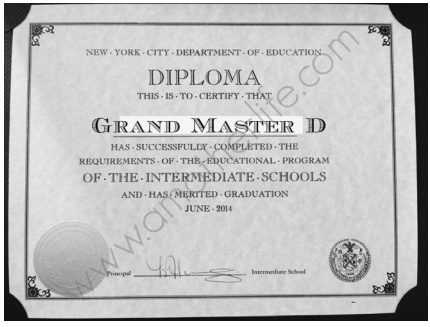
June 24, 2014

School, that place where children go for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week for not enough weeks of the year as some would argue, to learn. In their time at school they learn about all the required english and mathematical things they must but they also learn about themselves, who they are , what they want, how they perform under pressure, what motivates them. It's a journey we can't take for them . We guide them, we sit and do homework with the (only when they're very young) and we get mad at their lack of effort, we beam with pride at their achievements, their moments of excellence in a sea of everyday mediocrity.

We're there to pick up the pieces when it all falls down and we're there with a tear in our eye when they come to the end.

Yesterday Grand Master D graduated middle school, the 8th grade. His first actual graduation, not a moving up ceremony.

Elementary and middle school is over, done finished, he's moving onto the next stage.


NEW · YORK · CITY · DEPARTMENT · OF · EDUCATION

DIPLOMA

THIS · IS · TO · CERTIFY · THAT

GRAND MASTER D

HAS · SUCCESSFULLY · COMPLETED · THE
REQUIREMENTS · OF · THE · EDUCATIONAL · PROGRAM
OF · THE · INTERMEDIATE · SCHOOLS
AND · HAS · MERITED · GRADUATION
JUNE · 2014

Principal _____ Intermediate School

It's a strange feeling, watching your baby grow up. But here he is doing it in front of my eyes, measuring each day to see if he's taller than me yet, he's close, OH so close. We're currently eyeballing each other. I imagine my vertical dominance will be over within the month. And I can't wait to kick his ass from my new shorter position, and for him to bend down to hug me because that how it should be.



Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D



Let me fix your tie for you!



Nice work, Class of 2014



Getting a hug from the Principal



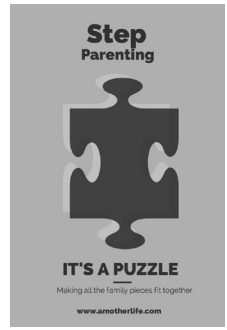
No caption required. Or better yet, you guys caption it!

And now we do high school…(wipes tears and puts big girl panties on)

10 Easy Steps to Being the Perfect Step Parent

June 30, 2014

So you've found yourself the perfect partner. Congratulations, cos that's a hard thing to do. You've dated, you're compatible and you've decided to join together in Holy Matrimony until death do you part or until 'this shit's too hard, I'm out'. Whether it's your first time or you've done the marriage/couple thing before, let's be realistic, there's a good chance one of you, if not both, already have children.



So how do you navigate the blended family? There are options I guess, you're either all 'Brady Bunch' togetherness or you have some kids full time and some kids half time… or you have all kids sometimes. Whatever the configuration, you have to learn how to become a family unit and that's not always an easy thing.

I've been a step parent since our marriage in 1999. The Princess was Miss Gremlin's age and just the prettiest flower girl there was.

Along the way there have been mistakes made and difficult times but honestly, isn't that just part of parenting? Step parents need to give themselves a break, no one's perfect and trying to be will only cause you heartache.

But here are 10 things that might make the transition easier for all to be successful as a new family unit.

1. Remember you're the adult and they're the child, try to be kind, everyone is going through shit.
2. Never bad mouth their other parent to them, keep your opinions of your partners ex to yourself. If the child's other parent has died, remember you're not the replacement. No one can ever replace them, but you can share the child's journey too. Never be afraid to talk to them about their parent, children need a good listener.
3. Don't try to change them, love them for who they are. And in doing so, they may just return the favour!
4. When new children come along, or if you have your own, try really hard to be equal in your love and care. Don't play favourites.
5. Expect to make mistakes, forgive yourself and them.
6. Expect resentment from your partner's child/children, but remember time heals all wounds.
7. Don't get involved in arguments with the ex, stay out of it and let the child's parents sort it out, being the support person is important too.
8. Don't try and compete with their other parent, don't compare … You can set rules for your house and that's fine. Kids adjust and actually prefer to know what their boundaries are. Even if it is just so they can cross them.
9. Take a step back often and try to see the bigger picture. Things are often not as bad as they seem.

10. Love is the key, everybody just wants to be loved. Many families succeed in blending like the Brady Bunch, but if yours doesn't, just know you can only control what you do. You can't make anyone love you. But if you're kind and thoughtful and considerate… it'll come.

Being a step parent certainly has it's trials but is just as rewarding as parenting and no less frustrating or heartbreaking than if they were from your very own body. But they'll also make you just as proud and a better person for having had the experience.

NYC Pools-Strictly for Swimmers Only

July 3, 2014

The other day we decided to go to the pool. It didn't go as smoothly as planned. Here's what I wrote while baking OUTSIDE the pool. Consider this your PSA.:

The weather was fine so we headed to the pool. In the winter it's an ice skating rink but in the summer it's an awesome, free swimming pool.

But there's a catch. Firstly you can only go in if you have a lock and a guy at the door wants to see it before you go in. Then you cannot take anything onto the pool deck besides a towel and your bad sweaty self. It's a big round concrete cancer creator, there's no shade and not a solitary tree overhanging for any protection. You can't take your bag in, you can't wear a hat and by God you better be wearing swimwear or you can take your bad self elsewhere.

I knew about the lock, but I'd totally forgotten that you couldn't sit by the pool and watch your kid unless you wear a swimsuit and sit in the blazing sun, without a hat. I wonder what the American Cancer Council would have to say about that! NYC is endangering lives with their policies!

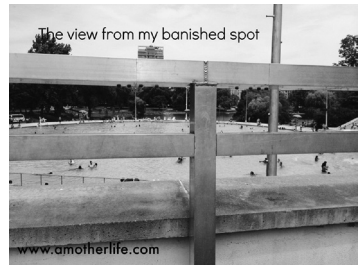
So after having a heated discussion with the girl, who immediately said "Do you want to speak to my supervisor ?" as if to intimidate me, I said "YES, I do." He sauntered over. I guess he was about 25 and he was hostile too. All I wanted to know was why couldn't I sit by the pool and watch my kid? And the only thing they could tell me was because it's the rules.Rinse and repeat, no real explanation. But why is it the rules? Why is there no shade? Why MUST I wear a swimsuit onto the pool deck even if I'm not swimming. I wanted to read my book and be nearby while Miss Gremlin swam.

After a few more minutes he just walked away, having decided he'd given me the rules and his job was done, so I turned the the girl and said "So where would you like me to sit? " "Outside" she answers, "Or inside the building." I very nicely asked if I could sit up the top on the deck to which she changed her tune immediately, like it was her escape from the crazy white lady who don't know the rules and said "yes you can!" Well alright, great, I'll sit up there. She smiled with relief when I didn't get snarky or mean and I headed upstairs.

As I was settling in, a guy came up to see what I was doing because there were barricades across the entrance which I just went around… he started towards me then thought better of it, I guess it was my 'don't fuck with me' demeanor.

Finally I relaxed in the sunshine, with my hat, ate my salad and watched Miss Gremlin frolicking in the water somewhere down there. I wasn't worried, she's water safe and there were 8 life guards on duty.







But I may still send a letter to City Parks, I want to know why these ridiculous rules exist. They don't make any sense at all.

Grief, They Say it Gets Better But then…

July 9, 2014

Yesterday was rough, one of those days where if you could just stay in bed and not interact with anyone then it would be the ideal thing to do. But that's not how it works. I have responsibilities, I'm a parent and I was needed.

The reason it was all so hard was because it was the 3rd anniversary of my Dad's passing. Here's the thing about losing someone, grief is a fickle bitch, one day you can be totally fine talking about the person, listening to songs that remind you of them and then that one day on the calendar, which is really just a day because everyday is a little suckier since they've been gone and boom you're a walking time bomb.

I was so angry yesterday, quiet and isolated and so damn angry. Scarily angry, at everything. I don't even know why, well I do but there wasn't a trigger point, I didn't have anything happen I was just really mad, irrationally so.

I just wanted to rage all day and that's not me. I wanted to smash things and kick things and inflict pain. I was nasty and lashed out and it wasn't nice. I knew I was doing it but I couldn't stop. So I tried to stay away.

But why? Why was I angry and not teary, why didn't I just have a cry and be done with it? It was strange and scary but oddly comforting.

I tried to spend most of the day alone, I walked in the park early to use up some

of that aggressive energy, Sir Lickalot was wasted when we got home, then we went to the Pool again because Miss Gremlin wanted to, I had my alone time up on the deck, it went mostly uneventfully, I even wore my swimmers, which made me realise I needed new ones and so with a knot in my stomach so tight, I took myself swimsuit shopping!

Honestly, it was probably the best time to do it, my attention wasn't focused on the pale whale in the mirror and I was like, fuck it they'll do. You can't go wrong with black right?

But then I decided to just have a look around the store and I splurged on myself. I had some retail therapy, by myself and it helped. When I got back home I was still snappy but maybe a little better, I made dinner even though I wanted the order in and go hide in my room, we talked at the table and I started to feel better.

After the kids went to bed I told My Lord Dr King that I wanted a movie with boobs and car chases and all the swears! He was surprised and asked why. I told him how angry I was and I just needed it. He wisely said nothing and put on the appropriate viewing, and after a block of chocolate and the movie I did feel better. I was even able to look at the picture on the wall but only sideways and only a quick glance.



His eyes just bore into my soul sometimes when I look

I finally went up to bed but couldn't sleep so I read for about 2 hours, I could have kept reading but you know, kids on no sleep is never good even when they're older.

Today I feel much better, not perfect but not really angry anymore.

One day at a time right?

Big Banana Breakfast - Paleo Style

July 14, 2014

I saw a recipe the other day, unfortunately I can't remember where but I wanted to make it. I love pancakes and being paleo (mostly) I don't eat them anymore.

I sometimes make coconut pancakes but they are a little work and I had enough to do today without adding extra cooking into the mix. Seriously I did not sit down all day.

But I managed to get these banana pancakes made, with only 4 ingredients.
Banana
Cinnamon
Eggs
a dash of milk (you could use almond or coconut, I just didn't have any today.)

Just whisk the eggs and mash the banana, add cinnamon and enough milk to make mixture a batter consistency.









I hope you enjoy them as much as I did. And they kept me full for hours!

Everyone Wants a Piece of Me!

July 15, 2014

Working out itineraries are hard! We're headed home in the first week of August for the month and everyone wants a piece of us. Well duh! We are pretty awesome but it's never long enough and someone is always disappointed. But We have to do what works for us, right?

The kids want farm, they want to run and dig holes and light fires, inside and out and climb fences and trees, drive cars, stay outside all day and do crazy stuff with their cousins and Uncle. That's always their request. "Can we have most of our time on the farm?" Well sure, but then we get to the beach and they're upset that we didn't have enough time there to see our friends there, this is where they were born and remember living. *facepalm*



There's honestly never enough time but they really love doing it all. It's a fine balance, then there's me, I have friends in Sydney and they have grown since I've started writing, cyber friends are real too and the prospect of an 'IRL' meeting is exciting.

And of course there's Grandma and Auntie and cousins on the other side of the country too, we went one time but it's so expensive and so far, (always try to avoid flying from Perth to NYC in one go) it's always cheaper for them to meet us somewhere and have a mini holiday with us. And that's what we usually do but we had fun in Perth the time we did go and there was another farm to explore. We also have friends who would love to see us. It's tough, but hey I'm complaining about something that people never get to do in their whole lives! I'm not really complaining, we're very grateful for the ability to afford such a trip. Priorities.

The kids are very excited so I have to remember that it's a great privilege to be able to go home and see everyone we can, next time hopefully we'll catch others. We're just little old us and we can only do so much and this is our bi-annual fix so we have to make it work for US.

So if you're in Sydney, near the farm, or on the Gold Coast then we're around for August, if you're elsewhere, bummer, maybe next time. We also do airport meet and greets ☺

If you're in NYC, My Lord Dr King is staying behind and you know the terrace will be rocking extra hard!

If We Must Have a Period, At Least let us Have Fun with It

July 16, 2014

I've been waiting for these since I saw the kickstarter campaign way back in February. Period Panties, what a brilliant idea!

Finally they arrived, yesterday, after some delay… and because I didn't recognise where they were from or what they were I just opened the package. Miss Gremlin saw and was a bit weirded out, then Grand Master D came over to see what was going on and laughed heartily…It's a fact of life, no point hiding it. One day he'll have a wife and maybe daughters, so all the more reason to be aware and not afraid.

When My Lord Dr King got home, Miss Gremlin said "Show Dad what you got"… so I did, …it didn't go well.

He saw one pair and the distain on his face was enough for me to retreat. NOT IMPRESSED.

Whatever, I think they're hilarious and can't wait to wear them…well, you know what I mean.

Can you just imagine the future reaction from My Lord Dr King? It's bad enough I have a period but to make jokes, well…clearly, it's not done. *eyeroll*

And so I'll be rocking these bad boys on a regular basis, every 21-28 days.

We all have a period, so we might as well have a sense of humour about it.





You want yours? Then just go to harebraineddesign.com. They have designs to suit everyone.

It's Finally Here, Blogher 14

July 23, 2014

So the biggest geek out blogfest we've all been waiting for has finally arrived. Some are already there warming up the bar stools, others are enroute and still others, like myself are getting up at the asscr**k of dawn , the middle of the night to catch a flight across the country to attend a conference to meet up with all the friends that live in our computer *ahem* learn how to be better bloggers and make money at this thing.

It's so exciting I can hardly stand it. For those of you who understand… yay, if you don't I'm sorry, you should probably just enjoy the scenery until Monday!

But after that there will be stories, I promise… I'm unattended in another state. My Lord Dr King has done so many solo trips this year it's totally my turn and I'm not afraid to enjoy it!



Come find me! I wanna hug you all!

Blogher, What an Experience

July 29, 2014

After finally arriving home last night around 7, I came in exhausted. Being on the road is rough.It was all I could do not to fall asleep on the 'A' train from the airport but that shit's illegal in NYC so I held it together. My Lord Dr King was sympathetic because he knows. He's the one travelling all the time, he's the one having to get back into the groove that is normal life after being away on the road but this was my reentry and it was hard. But it was so worth it.

So much fun has been had since Thursday that I can't even begin to describe it but let try anyway. When so many of your friends live inside your computer, the thought of getting to meet them in person is so exciting it's difficult to contain yourself, and that includes nervous pee, because that totally happened. Heading out of my house at 4am on Thursday morning like a big girl, I headed to Chicago to meet my blogging bestie Lucy Ball from My Life at Lucille, we were rendezvousing in O'Hare and catching the flight together over to San Jose, cos it's good to get to know who you'll be sleeping beside for 4 nights, one doesn't want to be murderated (it's a word) in their sleep right?

So I landed without incident and set about waiting for her arrival.I made friends with the baggage counter clerk because I was hanging out so long waiting!



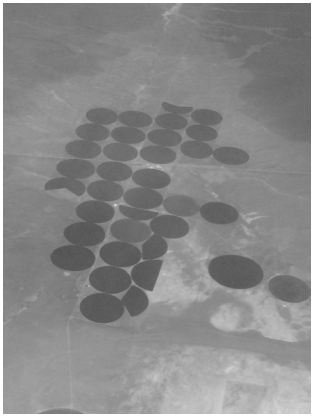
Once together it just fit like an old glove, like we've alway been together and so being still super early and knowing we had tons of time until our next flight we headed to Wolfgang pucks for breakfast. We ate and chatted and then found ourselves heading towards the gate, with still plenty of time. When we got there it was full of people for the flight before and so we positioned ourselves at the opposite gate so we could keep an eye on it and get our flight. We talked and I facetimed Miss Gremlin and we talked more and laughed and then Lucy needed something to quell her anxiety, as she got up to leave she said "Did I just hear my name?", dismissing the thought she wandered off while I engrossed myself in twitter, she came back and we settled back into just loving being together and then we both heard it, both names over the loudspeaker, we looked at the gate lounge which was empty and realised yes we were summoned and we ran to the gate. Shocked, we were informed by the openly annoyed attendant that

they close the plane 10 minutes before take off and that time was now. HOLY SHIT! We nearly missed our flight? Laughing so hard, we did the walk/run of shame onto the aircraft, walking down the aisle to stares and mutterings of 'asshole'.



They closed the forward doors and we took off. OOPs.

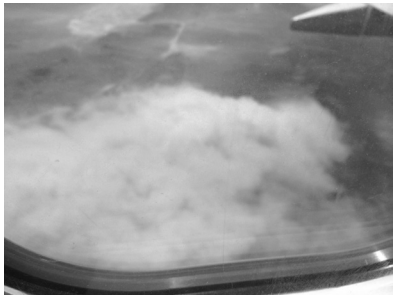
The flight over was uneventful unless you count the weird crop circles we flew over, which had me wondering what the hell they were and naturally I took to social media to find out the answer. We also flew over a wildfire.



This is kinda creepy.



What are these things?



Fire!

When we arrived and checked in we set about registering and finding people we knew.

We fangirled JC Little first and I'm not sure she fully recovered but she was gracious and lovely and she's so talented.

Then we got ready to meet the others for dinner but that needs an entire post all of it's own. So much to tell. So many fun experiences… stay tuned!

Boobher, Wait That's Not Right

July 30, 2014

It happens that when I get together with friends, I get a little silly, it used to be that I could blame the booze but as I no longer imbibe, I just have to accept that I'm a crazy person. Blogher14 is the mark on the calendar I've been waiting for to meet dear Lucy and so many other friends. We booked our tickets immediately following the announcement that Jenny Lawson AKA The Bloggess was a keynote.

There was no way I was missing meeting her because obviously we were going to become best friends and chat everyday on the phone. The excitement I felt the day she followed me on twitter brought my inner fangirl out so imagine knowing I was going to get to meet her.



And so I set about reminding her how wonderful I was so that she'd know me when we met face to face. And by experience I've learned the best way to be remembered is to stand out and so @thebloggess received tweets on a very regular basis letting her know that we'd be getting her to sign our boobs at Blogher14 … because why not, right?



We even bought the book again (I had the electronic version but paper is better for signing) and counted down until the day. We totally skipped the newbies breakfast

so as to get a good seat in the auditorium for Jenny and were not disappointed when we were the second row back.

She was hilarious, humble, real and above all awesome !

At the end of her segment, they announced she would be signing books in the exhibition hall so we hauled ass to get a good spot, patting ourselves on the back for already having a book and not having to line up to purchase one!

When it was our turn to be with her Lucy got all fangirl and thought she was going to pass out which naturally she shared and got all flustered and forgot to ask her to sign, but I reminded her and Jenny said "Well I wasn't gonna beg", because she totally remembered and I think secretly looked forward to it. My turn and I presented her with a kangaroo scrotum purse, which she loved! She said she was making a kangaroo and this would be perfect! I offered up my sharpie and unsigned flesh and she did her thing and then held my face lovingly for the camera, don't ever let anyone tell you scrotums won't get you places!



She loves me



I brought my own sharpie



Wanna see my boobie?

We left to raucous applause, knowing those left in line were pissed they didn't think of it. We spent the rest of the day showing anyone and everyone our boobs because we're classy like that, even going back to the room to put on more revealing tops! We were to talk of the day…

Later on at the Angel Soft booth, where we got to sit in a bathroom together and discuss our habits, the girls suggested we get David Tutera to sign the other one, yeah I don't know him either but never let that stand in the way of a good boob signing!



The following day, with fresh flesh (sharpies really do wash off) on the exhibition floor we bumped into the Militant Baker, and if you don't read her you really should cos she's FAHunny! We asked if she'd sign our boobs, of course she agreed and that's how she popped her boob signing cherry! You never forget your first.



Lucy seems bored with the whole thing, clearly boob signing is getting old :P

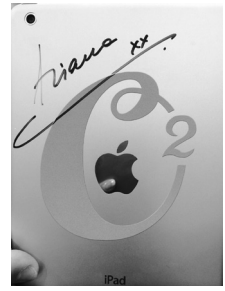


She wrote “Great Tits” with an arrow down… I’ll take that compliment

On Saturday we met Arianna (Huffington duh), and we figured she was too posh to sign boobs but then again maybe not, she did tell us all to sleep to the top. We didn’t ask but she did sign Lucy’s ipad mini. Sometimes I get other good ideas.



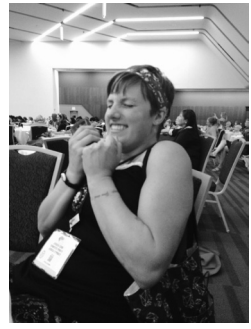
Where’s your book dahling?



An ebook, how novel.

Later at lunch, with boobs still the theme for the day our new friend Jessica from Domestic Pirate, was using our room as a dairy because her hotel was blocks away and she was pumping to keep her supply for the little tit mouse at home, (phew, long sentence, take a breath) heard a baby cry in the back of the room and BAM did her boobies let down!

So naturally we laughed and took photos cos we’re super supportive like that!



Let's face it boobs are funny and fun, we've all got them and should get them out as much as possible, possibly… or not, yeah I'll show myself out.

Rev Run's Peeps were Packing Heat

July 31, 2014

I'm over at Lefty Pop this afternoon, talking about the Rev Run gig we attended on Saturday night. It was all fun and games until I spotted Mr Muscles from the private security company with a side arm. Does he even have training to carry one of those?



On The Road Again-Australia Starts Now

August 4, 2014

Today's the day, Australia here we come. It's a long way, but so worth it. The excitement of getting there almost blocks out the fact that we will begin travelling today at 3pm and not be there until tomorrow at 5pm New york time. 22 hours in total …That's a long time in transit.

But it's time, we have things to do, people to see, weddings to attend. Accents to refresh, pies and timtams to eat! Good drugs to stock up on! (wait did I say that?)

There will be radio silence until we land and get connected.

Until then my friends, until we're in the land Downunder…(excited dance)



The Dawn of Flight

August 8, 2014

We arrived safely, our flights were great, and actually we arrived in the land down under quite well rested with everyone having at least 5-6 hours sleep. We were comfortable even though we didn't get any spare seats and I have to say it was one of the best flights I've done, I guess these well travelled kids are really getting to the right age. As

the dawn broke it was so beautiful to watch the sky change colors over the course of a couple of hours from the very first glimmer of light to full blown morning. The flying kangaroo took us safely across the Pacific without incident and we sighted land about 7am Wednesday or 5pm Tuesday New York time. We're in the future now and so far it looks bright. They have made a few changes on QANTAS over the years since I've been doing this trip, they don't play "I still call Australia Home" on taxi into the gate anymore which is fine because after 14 hours my emotional state is a bit weak anyway and they don't hand out the refreshment bags, instead opting for the self help bar at the back of the plane, stocked with water, apples, nuts, power bars for between meal hunger and toiletries and comforts like sleep masks and socks for your tootsies, this makes sense to me because I can only imagine the waste of giving every passenger a bag they may not even use and I'm all for keeping the prices down.

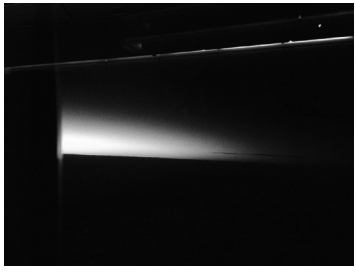
This was also the first trip Miss Gremlin wasn't offered a child activity pack, sniff, she still gets the child meal though.

The pictures of the dawning don't do it justice but you can see how beautiful it really is.







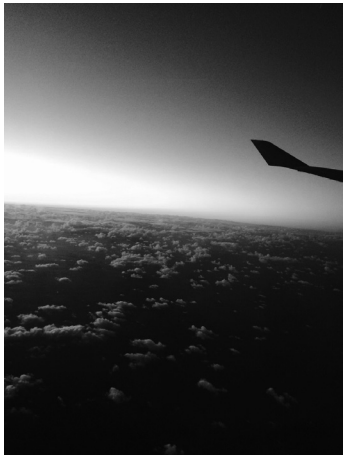




















Ladies and Gentleman, welcome to Sydney.

Where the Hell is all the Good Internet?

August 9, 2014

Ok I can admit this here, I'm an internet junkie, I need that fast speed shit like air, and it's not until you no longer have it that you really miss what you had, it's a blessing in one respect My Lord Dr King isn't experiencing this because nobody want to hear that many swears at one time, I mean how can you possibly run a global conglomerate on this internet shit?

I have to say that the cell phone situation has improved , on previous trips I've bought the prepaid phones and had to share digits win everyone and then with the prevalence of Facebook last time I decided that I'd prefer a hotspot and communicate via that on Skype and facebook rather than a $50 phone which I use not even half of

the credit and that's a waste, this time I have an Aussie iPhone, thanks to The Princess' inability to decide which country to reside in, and let me say it's a great plan with unlimited call and text and 500mb of data per day, that's a pretty good deal.



That's a lot of crap to keep one woman connected… And it's all for you guys! You're welcome.

Being away from home is always hard, and needing to find acceptable internet is a must, we really are spoiled in the USA and miss it when it's gone.

Train Tripping Across the Country

August 12, 2014

Saturday morning at 3:27 am the jetlag told me up and at em!… not because I was super messed up, I know I could have slept through until 9 but because I was anxious that I wouldn't wake up in time to get us to Central Station to catch our train south to the farm. We've had our fill of Sydney and it was time to get moving to the next adventure.

The kids had a really fun time with my school friends' children in Manly, skateboarding down death hill in the dark. Luckily I had no idea what was going on or I would have freaked. It was a one way street and they could see the cars coming. We had a really lovely time and the home cooked meal of roast lamb and potatoes, grilled chicken and salad topped of with sticky date pudding for dessert was a very welcome change from restaurant food.That's the trouble with the road, the lack of homemade food. It's wonderful to be able to reconnect with friends when we travel.



These chicks, friends for 35 year… what?!

The ferry ride back to the Harbour was very quiet, both children drooling on my shoulders. There were tears of exhaustion as we climbed into the cab back to the hotel from circular quay, Sydney we're elated you turned on your charm, a happy exhaustion. The train left on time and we have 8 hours to just relax and recuperate. The farm has no idea what's coming….



A foggy early morning… Sydney sending us on our way



A little country town train station



Towns along the way, they all look the same

The Outlaws Came to Town

August 17, 2014

Whenever we come home, we have to make the rounds to the family, we're spread all over and that makes for lots of internal travel for us which is expensive. So for the last few years My Lord Dr King's mum, sister and niece take a little vacay time and come east to visit us, we've done Sydney, we've done the Gold Coast beaches and we've done my home town and got the families together for the first time… It was overdue so it was great, this time I tried for the sun, surf and theme parks, with the kids older and braver I thought it would be more fun, but work got in the way and the outlaws are coming to town again, so we get to have our special brand of family get togethers, my mum, my mother and sister in law and My Lord Dr King's ex wife, the princess' mum… It's times like these that My Lord Dr King is glad for not making the trek. But that's how it goes sometimes when you live half way round the world, he tried but this time it didn't work.

So we didn't lose the airfare he's booked for early next year, and that my friends will be quite the homecoming!

We have been blessed by lovely weather and spent a great day in the park on the flying fox and awesome new playground equipment…followed by a cutthroat game of ten pin bowls and the quintessential pub lunch.



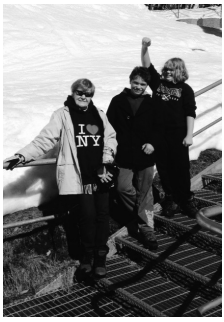






Over lunch the talk turned to going to the snow and the kids were excited to go, I excused myself, I do NOT need to drive up to the Australian snowfields thank you very much. The kids will had an awesome time. The experience was very different for them than the snow on the terrace and sledding in the park.









It's why we have Aunties, from the stories they told, it's hard to tell who was the biggest kid!

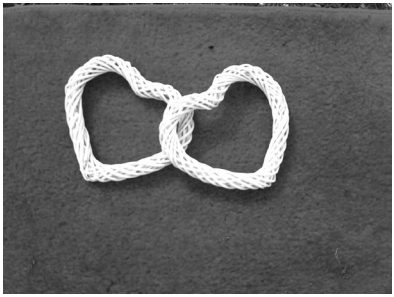
A Wedding is Not About the Date

August 19, 2014

Because I am who I am, about April of the year we go home I start making comments to My Lord Dr King, this year He made the announcement that he was coming too. After the initial shock wore off and the panic of how to keep him happy while getting to be absorbed in family, we set about booking and planning every intricate detail, we didn't fight once, I refused, I acquiesced to his every need and what he wanted, he doesn't like to stay at people's homes, he doesn't want to visit all the family, to him it's not fun, but after 10 years he decided that it was going to work, and it was a beautiful thing, the plan was a well rehearsed ballet and we were awesome. We would split up in part to do our things and we then meet again before he flew home a week before us to get business going while we finished off with more family.

But then My brother was getting married 3 weeks after we got back home and of course I wanted to be there but My Lord Dr King was not having it at all, the beginning of the school year, a week away where he's in charge of routine, another several thousands spent, nope can't do it. So sadly, I tried to find a way, and then I talked to my future sister inlaw and she said "When are you here? When will it work for you?" and with a wave of a hand and the flick of a wrist, it was moved. And I was attending …

Who does that? Someone who wants their husband's sister to be at her wedding because it will make him happy and someone who is easy going enough to accommodate someone else's needs, I'm amazed, shocked, thankful and so grateful that it has happened this way and I got to see my brother marry his soulmate, who is gonna rock as a sister in law I can tell. I am so very grateful, thankyou.



















Flying Kids

August 21, 2014

The kids have had a great time on the local flying fox. They've been there several times. Such a fun park

Stateside and in a State

September 2, 2014

So after 3 flights, several layovers and 21 hours in the air, we made it home in one piece (3 one pieces) on Saturday night at around 8:30, just in time to enjoy the holiday weekend. We were all totally shattered. That last train ride in from JFK airport was the worst, especially when the mostly express A train decided to run local in Brooklyn! (kill me now) So effectively it added another hour.



But that's the price you pay to have a fabulous vacation in a country on the other side of the planet. Australia is so far from everything. But it's good to be stateside again. It's a small price really. And honestly it's no worse than adjusting to daylight savings time… ok I lie, it's way worse but I' trying to be positive about it, ok!

We've unpacked and life is back to normal, the kids are getting ready for school on Thursday and I have to sift through all the pictures and reconstruct all we did so I can share it all with you.

There's so much to tell you!

But first… laundry. (hangs head, sulks)

Welcome to JFK, take a number please

September 4, 2014

Taking off from JFK on time is an amazing feat really considering the air traffic, it was announced that we had 10 planes in front of us but as we moved around the corner for our turn the line behind was incredible! There were at least a dozen in line behind us all shapes and sizes. Small commuter flyers sharing the wait with full size jumbos. So amazing that there aren't more incidents than there are.

No wonder air traffic controller is a stressful job. I couldn't imagine having to handle so many planes, for every one waiting to take off, a plane is landing in between. Just amazing. I would love to watch how it all happens but that would be a distraction and probably dangerous.





Travelling is always interesting.

We're Not Right

September 8, 2014

This morning, while I was quietly working in my spot, catching up on all the things I've neglected while travelling and getting the kids adjusted to school,

My Lord Dr King came downstairs, made his coffee and breakfast, cleaned up and then came over, kissed me on the head and said "I'm off to work, seeya."

Not one to be left out of the fun, I wished him a good day and told him I'd see him tonight…

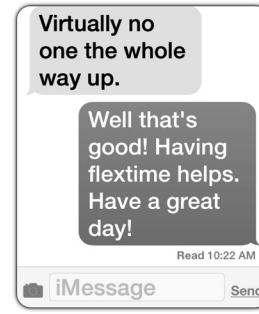
It's the little things that keep the spice in a marriage, right? Yes, it is I assure you.

Not 15 seconds later I received a txt…

We're not right, truly!







He works upstairs… in our apartment, in case you're confused…
There are no words.



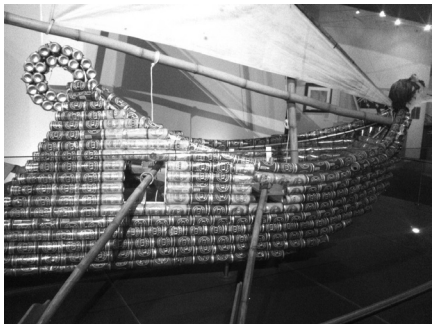
Sydney Is So Pretty this Time of Year

September 10, 2014

For the first 3 days in Australia we played tourist, Sydney turned on the charm and the weather as we checked out the sites the kids were interested in.We didn't venture too far but they had a great time. Planting ourselves in Darling Harbour was a great idea, close to countless restaurants and sites and the museums and Sydney Harbour was well worth it. We snagged an apartment, I didn't mean to when booking but it was great and with no one having to share a bed they were happy little campers. Jetlag kicked our ass a bit with the kids crashing the first day at 5pm and me being the big stay up girl until 6:30, day two woke us at 3 am but I managed an extra couple of hours snooze, Miss Gremlin was struggling by the time afternoon arrived but was a trooper, fueled with solo and vitamin waters. We traversed all manner of vessels along the wharf at the harbour where the maritime museum is housed, tall ships, scuttles and submarines, the latter both still in commission, they are run by volunteers and the passion that these older gentlemen have for sharing the stories is wonderful, old retired guys sharing their love of these vessels to the younger generation and overseas

visitors is wonderful to see, it made me nostalgic though, imagining my dad enjoying doing something like this had he gotten that chance.

The tall ship Endeavour, which James cook captained to new holland in 1770 claiming it for Britain was a highlight, I was on the same ship in 1990 when they were building it, of course it's a replica with the original being sunk off the coast on Plymouth UK in 1790 ish. The kids were fascinated by ship life and they learned the true meaning of the term 'letting the cat out of the bag'…all about the cat of nine tails whip. The museum itself was interesting but being as I'm not a mega museum fan we were happy to see the big things and scoot, actually feeling like we got our value on the boats anyway. And the beer can boat, seeing that restored my faith in Aussies!



Beer can boat



A boat in the museum



The Endeavour



rigging oon the endeavour



Looking up through the sky light



The captians quarters



A view inside the ship



Dinner on the ship



Ahoy me Hearties



Argh, cast off you mangey dogs!

After a quick room rest for Miss Gremlin's benefit we headed over in the harbour ferry to circular quay, sailing under the Harbour Bridge, which we didn't climb this time because Miss Gremlin was frightened and I didn't want to force her, we sailed past the opera house which we explored the next day before heading on the big ferry over to manly for some beach time and a BBQ with some old school buddies.



Lovely day for a sail on the Harbour



Going under the bridge



Luna Park at Milson's Point



The city at sunset



The Sydney Opera House from the front



The Sydney Opera House side on



I'm incognito woman!



Here I am, can you see me?



Mum told me to stretch my arms out… she's weird

Then we headed south in the train to family and the farm, where the kids got to make their "city" in the dirt pile which they had been busy drawing blueprints for, for weeks before we left.

Commuting Kids-Sometimes they have a Fail

September 15, 2014



When you put your kid on a train, all sorts of feelings happen. Fear, panic, paranoia… none of the good one's naturally.

Grand Master D has begun his 4 year high school commute, 2 trains and 40 minutes away from home. He starts at 8:20 so he must leave by 7:30 at the latest every morning.

Wednesday morning he discovered what happens when he's even just a minute or two late.

We live in a city with millions of people. Millions! And they all use public transport to get themselves to school and work. A minute or two can make the difference between a packed train and a train that you cannot possibly get into.

Luckily they come every 5-10 minutes but still when you're new to all this it can be scary. And so you make decisions that are not the best. He chose to walk across Manhattan… And that's a long ass way.

At least we don't live in Tokyo… could you imagine this? I'm pretty sure I'd have a panic attack.

He'll be ok, he'll work the system out…but one thing's for sure, he got his exercise today!

I hope they're a little lenient at school for a couple more weeks.

No vodka or Jell-O shots for me, is there fun without drinking?

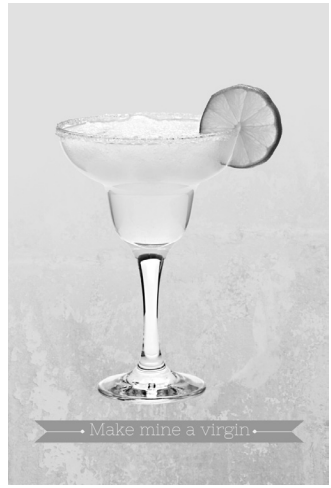
September 18, 2014

Back in July I attended my very first blogger conference, it's been something I've wanted to do for a couple of years now and to meet all the people who live only in your computer is a really awesome experience. But there was a feeling I had that I wouldn't be cool enough or I would have fun because I wouldn't be drinking with the drinkers and most of them were just that.

How do you fit in to the party when the partiers are leaving you behind?

Of course they're not and my fears were totally unfounded because these girls were perfect in every way, no explaining was required, no pressure at all, some asked why others said nothing after a drink was declined, understanding that there are plenty of people who don't drink because it just doesn't work for them .

I love that I could explain if I wanted to or not and no one ran from me because I wasn't doing Jell-O shots at midnight in the room, I had just as much fun and interaction with all those present and the level of alcohol in mine or their blood was totally irrelevant.



Does that mean we've become responsible grown ups? Maybe so…but I remember exactly what you did, can you? :P

I'm a Grumpy Cat Lady, Apparently

September 19, 2014

So there I was, just minding my own business, enjoying a quiet Friday when this happened…



Well that's pretty cool, I like Grumpy Cat, she's funny…
and then not 10 minutes later, this!



What do you think it means? Am I beginning to attract cats? Grumpy ones even, I'm a little worried. I didn't think I was the grumpy cat lady type.

But maybe I am, I am sarcastic, mean and grumpy …sometimes.

NOPE, don't care… let the Grumpy Cats come.

When POTUS Comes to Town

September 24, 2014

When POTUS comes to town everyone freaks out. It's UN week here in New York and if you live here all that means is there are troops at every subway to make you feel uneasy and half of the east side is road blocked. Getting around the city is a nightmare and the already snarled traffic becomes more like a fifth avenue parking lot. The most expensive lot in the city! But with POTUS' arrival also comes the glory… all the people gathering to catch a glimpse of good old 44. Yesterday afternoon as Marine One made its way to the north meadow of Central Park, the preferred landing site apparently, helicopters buzzed overhead here in Harlem like bees to a honey pot.

From our terrace we could see two, one hovering close to the landing site to secure the airspace I imagine, and the other one circling the nearby buildings looking for any kind of suspicious activity. You just never know who has sinister plans and how they might choose to execute them. Better safe than sorry, right?







New York is a crazy place, so often the epicenter of so much, you forget when you live here how exciting the place can be… I remember walking through Central Park years ago pushing Miss Gremlin in the stroller after a play date get together and saw George W. Bush land in the same space. It was a little freaky as I didn't know what was happening but the troops and police everywhere alerted me to something important. I discovered later what I'd walked through.

Tonight My Lord Dr King is going to a dinner with the Australian Prime Minister, who happens to be an old school friend of one of our team. It's such a small world but still exciting for a girl from the bush.

The Night my Husband and Boyfriend Came Face to Face

September 25, 2014

It's not every day your husband and your boyfriend meet and I don't advise it…

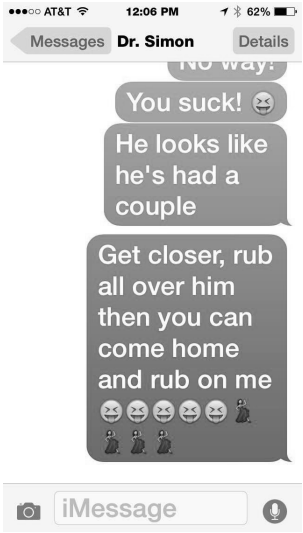
Ok not really, I'm very happily hitched to My Lord Dr King, besides who has time or the energy for a boyfriend, I mean really… more sex? That would take effort and energy of which I have very little. I know I'm in my sexual prime (apparently) meh if this is prime, I'm screwed!

But obviously you tell your husband when your boyfriend crush is Hugh Jackman because it's funny and keeps the spice going. I'm totally out if Scarlett Johansson turns up, I accept that, well maybe, he said we could all share. I guess we'll have to wait and see on that one.

So last night My Lord Dr King attended a function for the Australian Prime Minister. You know, it's UN week, everyone's in town. I often go to these events but for this one My Lord Dr King was someone else's +1 so I couldn't. No big deal. I don't need to meet Tony.

While I was home relaxing in front of tv, I sent him a txt to ask if he'd had a beer with Tony yet? You know he ALWAYS gets in with the peeps and so I just assumed. This how that went:





And so because if I'm gonna have Hugh then he can't leave Deborah Lee out!





They didn't end up coming but stranger things HAVE happened before so it's always on the cards. He did want to know how to watch the footy grand final tomorrow and My Lord Dr King told him I could hook him up…So I guess they'll come over and we'll all be together then! Pity he's going for the wrong team!

Grand Final party at my place apparently, starts at midnight!



Just the best of mates!



There's my boys!



Just an Aussie girl with her Aussie lamb- or she's about to shank My Lord Dr King

Rising from the Ashes

October 2, 2014

When I was a kid, around Miss Gremlin's age, our house burned down. To the ground, nothing left except the laundry drying on the hills hoist outside. As a kid it was a horrible time, we lost all our stuff. Sifting through the rubble is something I still can recall to this day, finding a treasure which didn't get completely burned was a thrilling and terrifying thing all at the same time. I remember my Dad finding his wedding ring and some live bullets among the ashes.

The night before we had all heard the sirens and he and a friend went to investigate. Not something they would normally do but it seemed to be over by our house so there was a possibility it was us. We lived in a small country town at the time and were at a friends home across town for mum and dad's weekly card night and get together. It's amazing the details I can actually remember, hanging out in the living room playing with the toys I brought while the adults played cards and drank beer. Its funny now as

an adult to think back to how it was then but in 1978, life was different. No baby sitter, you just went where your parents did and played until you fell asleep on the couch, being carried out the the car when it was time to leave.

I still remember dad describing it as they drove down the road and his feeling of seeing our home fully ablaze. He had to pull over the car so our friend could drive. I can't imagine what he must have thought. His family's hope and dreams going up in flames right before his eyes. I don't remember how long they were gone that night but I do remember the panicked feeling and the worry and then the realisation once Dad returned with the news, that we weren't going home that night or ever again. I was only a little kid. My brother even younger and the scope of what was actually happening was lost on us. I don't really remember but I guess we stayed at the friends home that night, and went to survey the damage the next day.

I do remember living in the caravan at their home for a few weeks while we got things together and then getting a larger caravan on the block of where the house once stood. We spend 3 months in that caravan, 18' long. It was an adventure for us kids, I remember the bunks and the funny shower and the washing machine outside under the annex. Life went on as normal, mum went back to work and we went back to school. We sifted through the remnents of our lives after school and wondered what happened to the guinea pigs we had as pets.

They escaped the fire and went a little wild, we would find them hiding in the long grass but they never were caught and caged again.

After a time my parents decided that living like that wasn't doing anyone any good. They had decided they would not rebuild there but sell the block and move on and we rented a small house in Albury and moved from the little country town to the larger centre. The real estate agent who rented us that place became a very close friend over the years. Funny how things work out.

We had nothing but the clothes on our backs, literally, the clothes line was full of the washing mum had done that day but other than that everything was gone. The town rallied together and donated items for us, and even though we were relative newcomers to that tight knit community, they all helped us out. I remember being allowed to pick my very own quilt from the linen store, which I still had up until very recently when it finally fell apart. I have kept a swatch of it in my treasure box. It's funny things that remain in your memory.

It wasn't long after that mum and dad found the property that would become the family home and farm we've all loved for 35 years, that rugged piece of land at the end of a fire track, way out of town. The road is sealed now and the neighbours are much closer. The lights of the town twinkle brighter and larger but it's still our piece of land at the end of the fire track.

So much has changed, many years have passed but I still remember that time like it was yesterday, when our house burned down and we got a colour tv and a modern stereo and the course of our lives changed forever.

It was actually the best thing that could have happened to our family but at the time it seemed like a tragedy.

Have you had an event that changed the course of your family for the better? Even though at the time it seemed like the end of the world?

Mexico On Foot-A Journey into the Unknown

October 9, 2014

We headed to Mexico on our so cal tour, all the business was done with and we were so close to the border it seemed like a good idea. Being so close to a foreign border is weird, I've never experienced it. All my travels internationally involve aircraft, except that one little jaunt into the frozen north, Canada, but that's another story. Mexico has a certain reputation, the poor sister to America and even close to the border it shows. We had told people we were going, knowledgable people and they gave us a heads up, Mexico for lunch is fine but be home before dark… Yikes!

What do they get up to over there? I was actually nervous! As we got closer and the signs started to appear my travel anxiety kicked in, are we doing the right thing? Maybe we shouldn't go, what if something happened? But the best advice we were given was to park and walk. Taking an American rental car into Mexico is a bad idea at best, even worse should something actually happen and so with the sign looming we veered in at the very last second, seeing the words 'last USA exit' sure can strike some fear in the timid traveller.



With the car safely stowed on U.S. soil and all our worldly belongings entrusted to the vehicle's storage, we head south to the border and the promise of an adventure-good or bad yet to be determined. As we walked up the ramp, taxis milled around. Waiting for that passenger from south of the border, we passed shoppers and school kids and Customs and border patrol agents walking back, who eyed us with a suspicion which comes from years in a hostile place, as we descended the stairs I pointed to one illegal who was being escorted back to Mexico, let's just say he wasn't happy.

This heightened my nerves, and with nerves comes pee, or maybe that was the 2 double espressos I'd had at breakfast, whatever the cause I needed to go, bad, and so against my better judgement I separated from My Lord Dr King and headed for the safety of Mcdonalds and their less than average but working facilities. I was thwarted though, pipped at the post by a measly quarter, you wanna pee here on the border you have to pay. I didn't have any change-it was eaten by the meters in Beverly Hills. So I talked myself out of peeing and went back to find My Lord Dr King who was fighting

with an atm for cash. Once we were reunited and cashed up for our adventure, hand in hand, we headed up the ramp to Mexico. I don't know what I was expecting, but it wasn't what we got. Mexico, it seems, has an open door policy, no one there checking papers, passport stamping or patting you down for illegal possessions. The only warning we got was back on the highway about a mile, with a big sign stating firearms are illegal in Mexico. Good to know! And so with some trepidation we walked through the big turnstile to Mexico, just like we were heading to a midtown subway.



The difference was immediate, where America's ramp was clean and neat and well kemp, Mexico's ramp was dirty and dilapidated and damaged, covered in graffiti and gum every where you stepped. As we continued down a ramp which took us through a building, there were armed guards and a couple of border customs personnel but they didn't want anything to do with us, and so after two more steps and a sign 'salida Tijuana centro' boom there we were smack bang in Mexico! The moment our feet left that concrete ramp it began, the haggle, the fight to legally steal all our money. Still needing a restroom we saw a sign and headed in that direction, only to be thwarted by a taxi driver who offered us a tour and safe passage to Revolucion st, where the action is, the safe action, apparently. He spoke English which was great because with our limited Spanish it would have be tough. I did however get to ask his name in Spanish, 'que esta nombre ?' Who said all that cleaning money didn't pay off? So armed with his name, Alejandro became our new best friend, he told us safe places, he told us what to do and what not to do, he showed us clean, safe dining and offered to meet us and take us back to the border when we were done. He left us on the corner with a promise to return at 3pm, we had 3 hours to wander and look at stuff, eat and return to America safely. As he drove away, we wondered if he'd be back.

Did we make it back? Or is this transmission coming from a mexicali jail cell?

Part two shortly… electricity is in short supply 😉

South of the Border-A shock to the Senses

October 13, 2014

After the border crossing, we began our journey down the street being approached by everyone! It was extremely overwhelming, every store was filled with tchotchkes, when Alejandro stopped at the first place, the eager owner opened the taxi door for us

and we had no choice but to go in and see her wares! She was an hilarious lady and spoke in the typical Mexican accent, slow and with major emphasis on 'e'. The battle began with My Lord Dr King and her regarding the price of a man bag, she wanted 90, he wasn't paying more than 20, she was right onto everything when I showed interest in her fake Michael Kors, she pounced and so my strategy after that was to look at everything and nothing in particular. After some hard haggling we left with the bag and a tshirt for 50 bucks, pretty good deal but we did pass on the free tequila, it's best to have your wits about you, in my opinion As we walked out the next store owner said "ok my turn!" And that phrase must have been uttered a dozen times as we wandered the street, you see we were the only real bait that day. The show shine guy tried his hardest to shine my boots but after the third no he finally got it. There was no getting way from the zonkey photo booth, resistance was futile, we had those Mexican blankets on our shoulders in a heartbeat and we were being pushed up the steps of the little wagon. It was fun though.



We wandered into one of the pharmacias, unashamedly advertising their antibiotics for sale, so naturally we asked for the vicodins because why not right? They told us. Don't sell controlled substances and so that ended that. Further down we got to another store with Cuban cigars and My Lord Dr King made a purchase sure to get one of us arrested at the border. I was lucky enough to carry that little gem in my purse. At that point we stumbled into a great little shop selling shoes, great casual shoes, it was at this point my bladder gave me a less than gentle reminder to attend to the ever pressing need and I politely asked to use his facility. He agreed but said he had to check first and then advised me that it was not functioning and I'd need to use the bucket to flush … It's been man years since this has been necessary for me but I'm no stranger to flushing with a bucket. With that need met I could focus better on the bargains and My Lord Dr King got some stunning shoes which have been commented on several times. We finally made it down to the end and crossed over,to head back to our designated 'safe' lunch spot, not without great tempting to dine elsewhere from the sprukers out front of their establishments but we listened to Alejandro and pressed on. About half way back down the long road that is revoluciyn st and man selling chains approached My Lord Dr King, insistently, we walked and refused his wares but he continued like a toddler Ina super alert candy aisle, he walked step to step, pushing

this Gordy gold chain with a diamonte marijuana leaf, so jot My Lord Dr King's style, his mistake was to take it and look at it, then giving it back saying not thank you. " you take. 10 dollar" "No thanks" "It good, it gold you take 8 dollar" "No I don't like the marijuana leaf" Whipping the leaf off in one swift move, "You take, 7 dollar," "No man"

He just wouldn't stop, we thought we'd lost him at the next block but there he was again…

This is where I thought it could turn ugly, I was prepared to run "4 dollar you have, 4 dollar," "Oh alright, you're a persistent guy and I appreciate that."

So for 4 dollars My Lord Dr King had a fancy gold chain, which by the next morning had begun to turn his skin green! That's fancy shit that Mexican street gold!

We arrived at our restaurant and were the only ones, here we got to try our Spanish, we did ok, we can order dos cervecas all damn day, that food was spectacular, best Mexican food ever!







As we walked out, there parked in the shade of the tree was Alejandro, waiting to take us to the border.

The border beckons… Oh that was interesting!

The Border Crossing

October 16, 2014

If you missed the first two parts of the Mexican story you can read them here and here. If you're with me up to this point, the story continues… As surprised as we were that Alejandro actually returned, I guess we shouldn't have been, we were a sure thing for him, and he was so nice and helpful to us. Our journey back to the border began smoothly but we told him we needed to get some cash to pay him as we'd been cleaned out by the sheisters on Revolucion st He must have forgotten because he headed straight for the border. His plan was to check the line first because if it's long then the quickest and best way back is on the bus, apparently they process the busses faster than all those on foot, as luck would have it, there was no line but in the process he went the wrong way and got half way up the entrance ramp to USA before exclaiming in perfect English "oh shit, wrong way" and proceeded to reverse back down the freeway ramp into oncoming traffic of course, because Mexico.



As this was happening an armed Mexican border patrol policeman appeared and started heading toward the car, oh boy here we go! As we continued to reverse he advanced threateningly. Hurry up Alejandro, he's coming, but we luckily got out and spun around back into traffic, amid a fluffy of abuse and car horns! With that he remembered we needed money and took us across town to Citibank pointing out statues along the way. I didn't know Montezuma was Mexican…

Thinking we could maybe get American dollars and not just pesos, we pulled up the the drive though ATM (a little taste of home), unfortunately we only got pesos but we worked with that and Alejandro received a nice tip for his trouble.



We did the circuit again and as we approached the bridge beside the border gates he pulled over to the side, where there's no stopping lane and said "You get out here, jump over that concrete barrier and walk down to the line."

ok then!

And so we did!

Along the walk, a simple concrete path with wire fencing, the Mexicans were trying to extract the last few US dollars from each pedestrian. As the turnstiles appeared so did the increased security. There were automatic kiosks but we couldn't make that work and had to speak to the CBP officer. Answering the standard questions about our return we handed him our green cards.



The long walk to USA, which sometimes can take hours



The last chance for a picture before armed guards make you feel nervous

At this point I began to worry about the cuban cigar I had haphazardly thrown into my purse. The questions continued with a mention of alcohol or cigarettes. My Lord Dr King answered to the negative on all accounts while I though, "Awesome, here comes my cavity search!"

After admittance came the standard x-ray belt, which you see in every airport checkpoint. With my heart in my throat I placed my purse on the belt along with the bags full of t-shirts for the kids. As it came out we grabbed our stuff without making eye contact and headed for the door. It was at this point My Lord Dr King announced

he wanted to use the bathroom. Fuck! I'm totally done now! So I told him I'll wait outside for home because I needed to not be within easy grasp of the CBP dudes.

And so I waited, and then I heard it, 'Ma'am", just ignore it , he's not talking to me, ooh look my phone is back on, facebook, what have I missed? "Ma'am!" Nope not me, he's not talking to me, I'll wait until his hand touches my shoulder, If I ignore it then I'm not caught… with my heart pounding out of my chest like a cartoon character, I just buried my face further into my phone. "MA'AM!" Oh fuck, I'm done, ok just look up and take my fate, I'll just admit I forgot or pretend I had no idea, I am after all an Aussie, so slowly and as nonchalantly as I can I look up with mild distain, you know, to throw them off the scent.

From the other side of the doorway, the CBP officer holding his machine gun waved me away from the door, "You can't stand there, move on"

PHEW! I moved, trying desperately to not show my crumbling knees.

And just like that, My Lord Dr King emerged and we left. Contraband safely smuggled across the border for a nice relaxing smoke on the balcony of our hotel. As we walked I recounted what happened and my complete fear of discovery, and as we ascended the ramp toward the car, I finally began to relax and joke about being his mule!

Next time he carries his own damn cuban cigars!

Obamacare, It's Only Good if You Can Actually Use It

October 20, 2014

The Affordable Health care Act (Obamacare) has been in for almost a year. Last year we signed up reluctantly but hopefully.



Stock photo/freedigitalphotos.net

Prior to this we had been self paying, we're self employed so there's no health insurance on our salary packages. We weren't going to but once we discovered that we would be fined 1% of our income it's seemed silly to have to pay the same amount and NOT receive coverage and so we jumped. I wrote about the process, and being an Aussie and new to all of it, I first had to learn all the terms. HMO, PPO, deductible, copay… It's a lot to take in. Then we waded through the system which was not ready to be rolled out and couldn't cope with the amount of people trying to access it.

We found something that seemed to work and went on with our lives… I got my toe fixed and I got some antibiotics for bronchitis. That's been the extent of my use. The kids and My Lord Dr King haven't been to a doctor since we bought our insurance. My Lord Dr King recently went to the dentist, seeing as it had been 10 years, since we left Australia, and figured it was time. The dentist was shocked at how great his teeth were considering the length of time since his last treatment. Of course My Lord Dr King credits all the red wine and acidic alcohol for this.

However it didn't go smoothly to begin with. While making that appointment, calling around local dentists, he couldn't find one who would take our insurance. He was actually told straight out by one place "Oh no we don't take Obamacare, that's poor people's insurance"

OK WTF? $1000 a month does not constitute poor people insurance in my book. (that's just for us, the kids have their own policy)

And anyway, whose business is it what policy we have?

And who says that to someone over the phone!?

That's the problem with this whole thing! Every place should take every insurance. Private practices shouldn't be allowed to opt out of taking it, that's how you begin to get an equal playing field in healthcare.

Anyway, I digress, he finally found a place where our costly insurance was accepted and made an appointment. On the day of the appointment, he turned up at the right time like a responsible patient and waited, and waited and waited… annnnnnnddddd waited! After asking several times 'when he would be seen', he was finally ushered into his consultation 2 hours later. They did a good job and he needed some other work done and made a follow up appointment. That appointment was last week. Knowing what happened last time he assumed he was in for a wait but surely not as long.

He was wrong. After 21/2 waiting in a packed reception area and having the receptionist treating him and other patients with total distain when asked why things were taking so long, he went to the counter. There was a woman there who was obviously in agony, crying and in need of the dentist. So My Lord Dr King said "2 1/2 hours is unacceptable, you're treating us very badly and this woman is in pain. You cancel my appointment and give it to her right now and then get all these people seen. You're disrespecting me and disrespecting everyone in this room, our time is valuable and this is unacceptable. And furthermore we all deserve to be treated better, without us as patients you wouldn't have a job." Or words that effect 😉 When he finished, the entire waiting room erupted into applause.

That evening we found a great online service, where we could search doctors who took our particular brand of insurance, booked in for the same procedure he didn't get done and we were happy to be done.

But the following morning the dentist called to cancel, telling us they don't take any Obamacare insurances anymore.

It's seems doctors are jumping ship everywhere and so what's happening is that the clinics which see medicare/medicaid patients are now picking up the overflow and so there is LOTS of waiting.

If this is what we get for $1000 a month we don't want it. We could save that $12,000 and self pay. We're not at the doctor every week. It's an incredible waste.

We cancelled… we'll pay the fine. (And before you all freak out, we do have back up for serious stuff in OZ, so we're not really uninsured)

It's great that the government is trying to fix the current system which is unfair and expensive, but this, isn't working. And we use insurance hardly at all! I can't imagine how people who have medical issues cope!

But hey once again I use my catch cry, I'm just an Aussie who's used to universal healthcare, I know nothing of this except my own experiences.

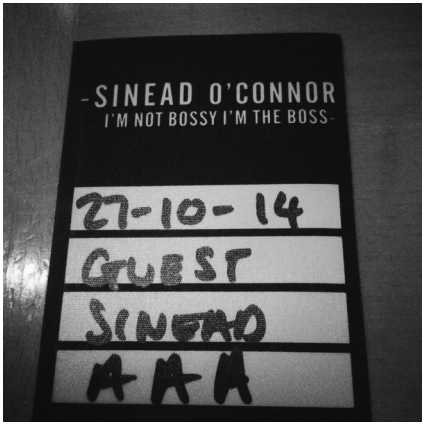
Have you had good or bad experiences?

Nothing Compares-Sinead O'Connor

October 29, 2014

On Monday evening we had the opportunity to see Sinead O'Connor live at City Winery. Our friend of many years, Brooke, is her guitarist and vocalist and has toured the world with her for the last 3 years. She came through New York last year around the same time but I was ill and unable to attend. This time I was not going to miss out.

Monday nights are not ideal for going out but when something like this comes along you just go. It helps when you're given an Access All Areas pass.



Look at that date around the right way… warms my heart 😉

It was a fantastic show and our seats had a great view. City Winery is a sit down venue and so we all had tables , makes for harder shows because there's no real room to get up and dance but you always have a seat so…

And trust me, going to concerts in your 40's, you want a seat, just sayin'. I have to say it was the most civilised concert ever, table service, sit down and done by 9:30! Nope I'm not old. Not at all 😊

Sinead rocked us solid for over an hour with her new material and some old favourites. Her vocal range is nothing short of brilliant and there's so much soul in her music.

Well worth it. If she comes to your town, go see her and say Hi to Brooke from me ☺



image courtesy of Paulo Coelho



image courtesy of Paulo Coelho



image courtesy of Paulo Coelho









photo credit *Paulo Coelho Music

Halloween, We're just in it for the Candy.

October 31, 2014



Halloween, All Hallow's Eve, a pagan ritual from way back in history, celebrated on the night before the Day of the dead to stop the evil spirits from inhabiting you, the extremely fearful and superstitious folks would dress in masks and animal skins so the evil spirits couldn't find them.

Seems legit…

Fast forward to present day, and Halloween is a 6 billion dollar industry in America alone. Kids and Adults alike dress in costumes and go out for candy, which we eat for the next 6 months. Can we say diabetes ?

I love costume parties, and fancy dress. As a kid growing up in Australia we didn't celebrate Halloween but we had some kickass costume parties…

Tonight we dress, the children are excited and My Lord Dr King and I have some little surprises up our sleeves. Miss Gremlin's costume involves handcuff… because of course!

Stay tuned for pictures. Stay safe, have fun and above all enjoy the sugar rush… tomorrow we diet ☺

OMG I think I've turned into a fully fledged American… yikes!

Happy Birthday, Grand Master D

November 4, 2014

My baby turns 14 today…
14!
How did that happen?



Heyyyy… I'm here!



2 years… off to do busy stuff!



Come this way little girl.



6 is super!



12 years, King of the Kids



14 years- yep He's cool

I'm loving this age and stage, it's challenging but also rewarding to watch your children become self made people and find their place in the world.

Happy Birthday Grand Master D

Thanksgiving Day…It's The New Black Friday

November 5, 2014

Halloween is over here in the US and other places that celebrate it. Thanksgiving is 3 weeks away, the time for families to get together under no particular religious persuasion to enjoy each other and give thanks for what they have. Black Friday is the Friday after Thanksgiving which traditionally marks the beginning the Crazy Christmas shopping season. Ok I get it, retailers are trying to get every cent they can in an ever squished economy.

For the last few years the beginning of black Friday has gone from opening at 6am to opening at 4am to opening at midnight and last year some greedy retailers including Macy's decided 6pm on Thanksgiving day was the time to open… ripping family members away from their day of thanksgiving, their family time, their special meal, to stand in a mall or big box store to grapple with the crazy stampeding shoppers.

This year, well this year some stores have sunk to a new low. Kmart, Kohls, and some others have decided to open at 6am on Thanksgiving morning.

Before the Macy's Thanksgiving day parade even begins. That's fucked up!

Is there nothing sacred anymore? Are we so greedy and in need of the almighty bargain that we make families miss a day together to serve us in our shopping spree?

Well personally, I'm disgusted. I hate black Friday anyway and I would never in a million years line up to rush a store for an item. It's supposed to be about family and togetherness. It's not about consumerism and it's certainly not about making people work when they should be home with their families.

I applaud stores like Costco, TJ Maxx and Marshalls and others deciding not to open at all on Thanksgiving day. They know how to honour what's important. They also know that doing so doesn't hurt their bottom line at all.



There's a movement to boycott the opening stores, please join it. Please let these retailers know that you stand for families and not greed. There's plenty of time between black Friday and Christmas to get what you want and maybe a bargain in the process.

Let's leave the third Thursday in November a time of thanksgiving for families to be together… however dysfunctional it happens to be.

That Time, For $12.50, Our Car was Towed

November 12, 2014

Some time ago, we decided to go for a Sunday drive. This was when we still had a car, making those decisions is less last minute and more let's get a zipcar now, but I digress.

We all piled into our V12 Mercedes and having no real direction we headed up the Palisades Parkway in New Jersey. Merrily driving along, us in the front and the 3 kids lined up in the back. We drove past a parked Palisades police vehicle and thought nothing of it, you know they do love to sit on the side of the road.

Next thing we knew My Lord Dr King said "That cop is following us and wants me to pull over." Now we're law abiding citizens, when the cops pull you over during a family Sunday drive, you don't worry. Maybe we were speeding, we all had our belts on so it wasn't that. The kids weren't in boosters but I doubt that was it , they were pretty big for their ages and the seatbelt fit them fine (oh don't go all spare about the age limit and blah blah they didn't have them. The End) We have different rules in Australia and no one told us the US laws until much later; anyway.

Mr Palisades Wannabe (because they're only glorified traffic cops) saunters up to the window and begins to speak with My Lord Dr King, but we wasn't nice from the get go, we'll never know why, maybe he had a fight with his wife, maybe something else but he was an asshole. Pure and simple.

Apparently, our vehicle was unregistered. Now long story short, we 'bought' it from a friend but had yet to change over all the insurance/registration and our friend would just give us the paperwork when it was due. I guess that bill slipped through.

No big deal. So it was out of registration, and for the princely sum of $12.50 we would have to pay to reregister it, we figured he'd advise us and send us on our way. Giving 48 hours to produce papers at the local precinct etc. and probably a fine.

Ah NO! Mr. Asshole decided that the BEST course of action on this busy Sunday on the Palisades Parkway for a family with children, 4,7 and 19 was to have our car towed.

My Lord Dr King got a little angry at this. And because the officer said we would have to be split up (we couldn't all fit in his squad car) My Lord Dr King got animated, really animated and started to stand up for our rights, saying you're not splitting my family up. This got Mr. Asshole very angry and fearful I guess, because he called for back up and no less that 3 cars arrived with 6 officers! WHAT THE FUCK?

They made us get out of our car and stand on the side of the road with the children… because that's safer than driving an unregistered car, while the tow truck loaded it onto the flatbed and took it away and 7 officers chatted on the side of the road, deciding what to do with us.

I was totally shocked! How is this the best solution? So after some more arguing we were separated, myself, Miss Gremlin, who was freaking out by this time, and Grand Master D in the asshole officer's car and My Lord Dr King and the Princess both in another vehicle.

They took us along the Palisades with lights flashing, again WTF? to the next town and dumped us, at a diner in the heart of Jersey!

We had no clue where we even were!

We eventually figured it out and caught a bus back to the city but here's the thing…

What was he thinking? Traumatizing small children and making them fear the police for something like this! Ok, our car was out or registration BUT it was roadworthy and we could have paid it online or over the phone then and there! Worst case My Lord Dr King could have had to make a trip to the police station to show the paper work on Monday. It certainly wasn't a tow away situation. Why would you unload a family and make them stand on the side of the freeway for almost an hour with two small children? How is that safe?

The next week, when My Lord D King had to go to the courthouse and stand before the judge and show the papers etc, he complained about our treatment, expressing that our children were very upset by this and that this had taught them NOT to feel safe around the police and how unnecessary it all was. The judge agreed and said Mr Asshole had done the wrong thing. The officer, present in the courtroom, was livid!

The moral?

Miss Gremlin (4 at the time) called him the no girlfriend, butt-hole policeman, and we totally agreed with her. Grand Master D was upset too. they still talk about this…

My Lord Dr King and the Princess naturally took photos from the back of their cop car, while I tried not to freak the fuck out with two little kids by myself in the back of the other.

Not long after that we heard that this is a common thing on the Palisades, asshole wannabe pretend cops do stuff like this all the time, trying to feel big!

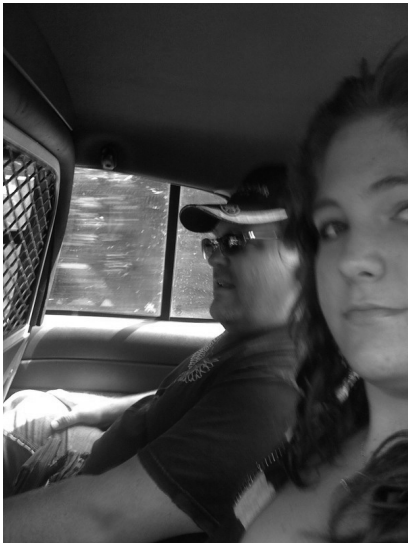
To this day, we avoid the Palisades Parkway, New Jersey whenever we can…



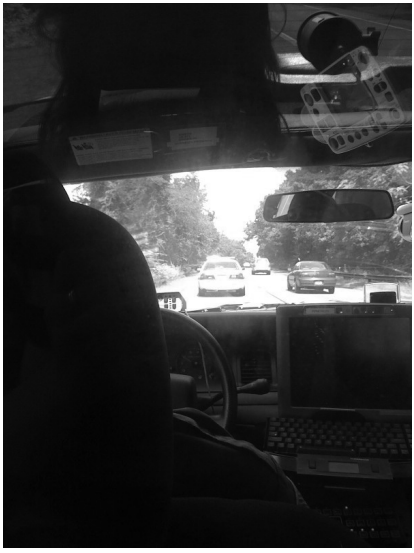
They're coming to take our car … haha



That's a lot of man power for one little family



Locked in the back



Riding down the road with lights flashing



Dumped in Jersey



How do we get home?

Have you had a ridiculous thing like this happen to you?

Fire Bugs… It's a family thing

November 17, 2014

Back in August when we were in Australia on the farm, I let the kids do what all farm kids get to do…

Play with Fire!

As a kid I did it and I want to let the kids experience as much of the life I had even though they're city kids. They love the farm and this trip was no exception.

When I was a kid, my dad always had a box or matches or a lighter in his pocket and all winter long he'd just light up logs that needed burning.There'd be as many as a dozen logs burning around the farm, sometimes for days! We'd make the rounds and tend them to keep the paddocks clean. During the summer months when it was too dangerous to light fires, we'd stack the rubbish deadwood and shrubs in piles all over the farm and when the cooler months came we'd light them up.

If there was one close to the house, we often spent a winter's evening around it toasting marshmallows and cooking sausages on the bbq plate directly over the fire.

I want these things for my children and so armed with a box of matches each and a pile close to the house I let them at it because I'm an excellent parent ☺

Yes I gave them the safety talk and I was close by…



This pile had been begging for fire for a while, and positioned just outside the house yard gate, was perfect for a winter evening by the fire.



A couple of well placed matches and boom! FIRE!



And now for the other fun part, dragging enough wood close to it to feed it through the evening. It's a great lesson in fire safety and so much fun to drag logs around a paddock and poke a fire.



Those coals are getting to a nice cooking heat… Where's the bbq plate?



Cleaning up the paddocks is a part of farm life. The cleaner the ground, the more grass can grow to feed the stock. And the less fuel lying around for summer fire risk.



A fun evening spent out under the stars toasting marshmallows and making memories. I think we have a couple of new fire bugs in the family.

Nothing better.

How to Teach Kids not to Half Ass Everything

November 24, 2014

We've headed into new territory with the kid raising thing. How do you teach work ethic and how do you teach them to complete a given task. We've been having trouble with Grand Master D for a long time. He doesn't finish anything, and I mean anything! But I'm lost at how to teach them how to do it rather than being on their case. I need to give their monkeys back. It's not my responsibility to remember to hang the towel back up, or to clean up the sink after you clean out the juicer but it's something I find myself doing all the time, calling him back. Reminding him to complete the task.

It got him in trouble at school. He just didn't finish stuff or follow up, no matter how much I punished or reminded or yelled. It was my frustration not his. So now I'm back to square 1, back to the training phase and yet I have no idea how to do it.

When they were little I dove into the parenting books, found solutions to the problems and tweaked behaviours along the way. But back then I had a different

circle of friends, I had friends with older children, friends who'd been through this phase. They were able to point me in the right direction.

Now I'm the one with the older children, I'm the one leading the way, sourcing the material to get the kids to do what's required. I second guess myself all the time. I don't really know how to get him to do what he needs to do. It's a difficult age because you need to give them room to grow, they're not babies but you still have to monitor how they're going without doing it for them.

Kids need to learn skills, they need to know how to survive and function as members of society and they don't learn that by us hovering over them and doing everything for them. The danger to just do it because it's easier or it gets done right is very tempting but that doesn't teach them how to get along without us and isn't that our job?



image courtesy of stock images

At this point of the journey, I believe parenting is teaching our children how not to need us. And if they don't need us then we've done it right because they can stand on their own and do it for themselves.

We've switched from raising children to guiding then to functional adulthood.

I'm still working on that part … but aren't we all?

The Social Decline of America, Are We Too Blind to See?

November 25, 2014

So Kim Kardashian's ass almost broke the internet last week. It was her plan. She did it with a photoshoot for a magazine.

Really?

Who cares?

We're losing our minds…

We live in a country where those photos are ok but photos of breastfeeding women are not.

We live in a world where vigilantes like George Zimmerman can shoot down unarmed teens and get away with it but a 90 year old man gets arrested for feeding the homeless.

We live in a country where it's getting increasingly more difficult to make choices regarding your own body and reproductive rights but more and more children are food insecure and horribly abused every day.

Where same sex couples are fighting for marriage equality while heterosexual couples are divorcing at a rate of 50%.

We live in a country where you can't give your child a chocolate egg (kinder surprise) because they may choke but you can walk around with a loaded gun. Where an average of 18 people a day are shot dead, 5 of them children.

Our food is full of chemicals.

Our water is full of chemicals.

The air is full of chemicals. Chemicals which are killing us but we can't afford to treat ourselves because of the broken healthcare system. Chemicals the rest of the world refuse to use.

Profit and greed rule this country.

It's more important for the richest family in America to have a great bottom line than give their workers a living wage. How can you work a full time job and still be so poor you need food stamps? How is this a good system.

Why are you so afraid of universal healthcare and gun control, immigration and free quality education and a living wage America?

And women's rights to chose. Why are we so concerned about the unborn but not about the born child who's parents can't afford to feed and house it, allowing it to live in squalor or fear of abuse. We're breeding hopelessness.Where are the protests for that?

After last nights decision regarding whether to indict Darren Wilson for shooting unarmed teen Michael Brown came down, as a foreigner, I feel lost. We chose to come here, the lucky country, to live the American dream but in the almost 10 years we've been here we have seen that dream slowly erode.

Make no mistake, America is in social decline.

Things that were fought in blood by those who came before, 50 years ago, the likes of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X must be turning in their graves. That a white policeman was in such fear for his life that he felt justified to kill an unarmed black youth in the street like a dog. This is 2014, why are we still doing this?

Good policemen go to work everyday not knowing if they'll come home, whether today is the day they are shot doing their job or they shoot someone under difficult circumstances.

Guns are not the answer, although this fight will continue while people believe the only way to protect themselves is to have more guns, the police have no choice but to suspect everyone of carrying and situations like Ferguson will just continue over and over as we're seeing nightly on the news.

Walking out of your home is a risk, sending your children to school or college, going shopping or to a movie or a public park all carry added risks because a right to carry a gun is more important than a right to feel safe. So much is going on daily that it boggles the mind.

We care more about a footballers' career than the fact he took part in a physical assault on a woman, or beat a child or raped a girl. We care more about money and fame than the health of the planet, or the wellbeing of children, the health of a population.

There's money is disease and war and fossil fuels, there's no money in peace and alternative energies and a healthy population.

I may be a foreigner but I live here, I see… My children see.

You can do better America, you must because the world is watching and they don't like what they see.

It's time to shift the focus, it's time to value peace and health and well being of the planet for all, regardless of race, sex or creed.

Hold your politicians accountable, care, make the effort, change the system… refuse to accept that this is the best America can be, demand better. It's worth it.

Your children's children are counting on you. So are mine.

Oh The Hoops You'll Jump Through~A Licensed Expat Story

December 3, 2014

This story first appeared on the expat blog Live Work Travel USA. It's a tale of woe and hoop jumping fun. You've really got to want to reside in a foreign country badly, considering the bullshit red tape it requires. Here's just one such story, from a list miles long, of stupid shit we've had to do to live here.

Fake it 'til you make it right?

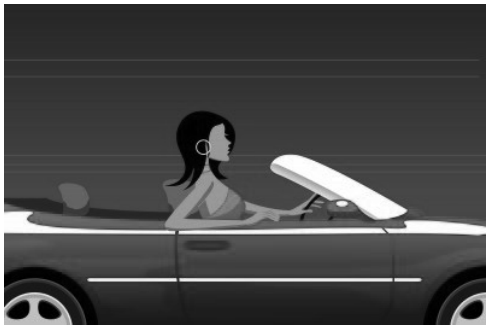


image by Digitalart

Arriving in the USA in 2005 made for interesting times. We were in the throws of starting a new business with partners who decided to rip us off, we've since fought a court battle and won, but that wasn't a very nice start. After the rocky start in Indianapolis we headed East to New York, where we had an apartment we purchased as an investment. It wasn't finished yet and we were having difficulty getting a mortgage. We were stuck in the new laws of the Patriots act of having to prove where every cent came from as well as being foreigners without credit scores. It was a tough time. Brought us to our knees in prayer for the first time.

During the process of getting credit and a mortgage, we needed to obtain drivers licenses. Not for the driving aspect but more for the identification box needed checking. You know America is ALL about checking the box. So while we were waiting to close on our Manhattan apartment we were holed up in a century old stone cottage by a lake in Connecticut. As luck would have it, that made things a little easier. We sought information on obtaining licenses and discovered that we would be required to take a written AND practical test, however we wouldn't be required to do any classes. The closest DMV to our little cottage had no openings for months and as we needed the licenses quickly, we found a larger center with earlier appointments, unfortunately

it was 100 miles away. And we discovered that we needed to have a Connecticut licensed car to test in. We had a vehicle but it was licensed in Indiana and that wasn't acceptable. So managing to borrow our new friends BMW, we packed the kids in and headed 100 miles down the highway to get licenses.

We both passed our written tests and The King passed his identity check, however I didn't. Somehow my documents weren't good enough so I couldn't go any further. With the King booking his practical test for the following week we headed off. We all piled in and headed back the following week for his test and for me to try again but still I didn't have what was acceptable. The woman at the counter told me straight out that a wedding certificate from church wasn't acceptable, but a baptism certificate was. Mortified I replied 'So you're telling me I can walk out of here, find the first church, get baptised, come back and you'll accept that but this is unacceptable?' She answered affirmatively to which I scoffed and said 'that's stupid.'

So we headed back home the 100 miles with the two little kids and only one license. Once home we contacted our friend from a church in the City the King had met years before and told him our plight. He said they didn't 'do' certificates but was happy for me to go ahead and 'make one'. And so that's what we did, in Microsoft word, we made a Baptism certificate, printed it out on fancy paper and I signed it.

The following day I drove the 100 miles myself, had my appointment, handed in all my paperwork including my acceptable fake certificate and did my driving test. I drove home as a licensed Connecticut driver and certified fake Baptism certificate maker.

How's that for a stupid system!

He's Really a Little Bit Country

December 8, 2014

To say our lives are unique and interesting is an understatement. Although we try to be semi normal the weird just slips out. Some things can't be contained.

There's been a running joke here with My Lord Dr King playfully announcing when he washes him nuts in an effort to illicit sex from me. I'm usually not amused but I acquiesce from time to time, you know the man has needs and you've got to admire his imaginative approach. Mostly we just laugh like 12 year olds and get the job done 😉

But the other night he upped the anti by doing this…



He posted it on facebook… as is his right, I mean I have a whole commentary of our lives going on here and on my facebook page , his friends were thrilled, pervs, so

not to be outdone I shared it on my page, knowing my followers love to laugh at his antics too.

Feeling clever, I didn't expect his brilliant comeback:



I think he has a future in country music… Don't you?

HA! I should be so lucky.

Middle School or Bust

December 9, 2014

We finally finished the middle school application process here that I have written about a bit over on my facebook page (I'm there a lot, it's the instant gratification thing ☺)

The applications were submitted earlier this week and although a sigh of relief is audible throughout the New York school district, the fun is only just beginning.

Sure the parental legwork is done, the school tours and open houses and information nights are done with but now we wait with bated breath for the arrival of 'invitation to test' letters from each of the individual schools we applied to which have a testing criteria. That usually happens at the end of January, followed by an interview process which can include portfolio work and teacher recommendations.



photo by freedigitalphotos.net

It's serious business this process. It all comes about for reasons of choice, specialised schools leaning toward STEMs or the ARTS … It's becoming more streamlined.

High school is no different. We went through that last year with Grand Master D.

All the information collected is then processed by the schools who decide if the student is a good match for their offered program and then the schools 'apply' for the child.

The DOE has the final say but tries to match each child with one of his or her top 3 choices. It's a nerve wracking time for families and a busy time for schools… We won't know the result until early May, yes MAY!

If you don't get what you'd hoped for when the letters finally come out you can enter the appeals process and reapply and get your results at the end of June. Many children don't get what they want, but that is mostly due to unrealistic expectations. The elementary schools, in my experience do a good job at advising parents and students which schools would most likely work for them.

There is plenty of information and although the process seems daunting, it's actually pretty good.

It's a far cry from the rest of the country and from how it was done when I went to school in Australia, going to the closest school to your home. But this is New York City, the place of unlimited opportunities, why shouldn't that trickle down to school?

I like the idea of choice. I like the idea of schools competing for their students, it keeps them sharp and they can't rest on their laurels.

But I also like that it's over for now.

And if Miss Gremlin gets her first choice, we'll magically skip the high school process and that would be grand indeed.

Life with a Special Needs Dog

December 11, 2014

You may remember back to the summer when we were in Australia, My Lord Dr king put in a doggie door for Sir Lickalot. It was time, I was his door bitch and I was getting rather annoyed with it.



He had me trained. Even when he didn't want to go out he would signal that he did and make me climb the stairs with him and wait while he went out onto the terrace and then open back for hime. Every time I came home the first thing was let the dog out. He was totally messing with me, My Lord Dr King likes to do projects when we're away so I put that on the list. And I thought I didn't have a 'honey do' list 😉

It's been a life saver. It took him a few days to figure it our properly and My Lord Dr King was very patient , bless him, and showed Sir Lickalot how to get through, refusing to open the door but showing him the dog door every time and he got it but the minute I got home, he was back to his old habit. I had a hard time not opening the door and catering to his needs because I'd been trained.

Really well.

I caved and started opening the door, to which My Lord Dr King got mad, so I had to stop. It took all my willpower. And I felt rejected and no longer needed. it was an emotional time.

But he was right. Sir Lickalot does know how to use it and when he really wants to go out, he does, and comes back in.

But lately, I find him standing at the door again. I ignore it but he just stands there, sometimes inside and sometimes out, just watching me, waiting for me to open the door for him.

It's like he's forgotten there's a door he can use any damn time he likes. His brain damage might be showing.

He sure remembers at 4 am, 5am and 6 am though … asshole!

Australia, We Will Not Be Terrorised

December 15, 2014

In case you have no idea the Sydney Hostage crisis is now in it's 14th hour. An apparent lone gunman has taken many hostages in a busy cafe in the CBD of Sydney demanding an ISIS flag and to speak with the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott.

I cannot imagine how the hostages must be feeling. This is very scary. Australia has not had a terrorist attack on home soil before.

However it seems that the authorities are handling it very well. 5 hostages have escaped and are giving information. It's really good to see the media being responsible in not showing the videos which have been released on youtube with the demands of this madman. In fact youtube has now taken them down.

I love that!

We cannot allow these crazies to terrorise citizens in any country. By not giving them airtime and social media reach we effectively kill their ability to reach the masses and their demands and calls to like minded brothers is thwarted.

This is how you handle a crisis.

As for the people who are jeering about our gun control laws… really? This is our first terror attack on home soil EVER, we have no massacres, no school shootings, no mall shootings, no mass shootings of any kind. So seriously, shut the fuck up.

Australia is a peaceful resilient country who doesn't subscribe to the same hype as the US, watching the news coverage is very interesting, calls for calm, calls for no retaliation or backlash to the wider muslim community is commendable.

Today I am even more proud to be an Australian.

Hoping for a peaceful end. The world is watching.

2015 — A Mother Life

When Everyone Works from Home

January 6, 2015

This week is the first work week for the year for us. We all had a break together. The kids went back to school yesterday after their Christmas vacation.

During the break, we all relaxed, hiked, day tripped, overnighted, stayed up late and slept late but Monday morning reality has hit hard. This morning Grand Master D was already suffering from the weight of the early mornings, Miss Gremlin has been moody and tired but she's almost 11 so she's got other reasons.

My Lord Dr King is full swing! 2015 has conquer me written all over it.

The conference calls are endless and the only way to escape them is to retreat into my own world with headphones on. I can handle the first hour but we are now entering hour 3 and it's all too much. Luckily I have 2 pairs of wireless bluetooth headphones which are in a constant state of charging.

I have to remember how to co-habit the work space again. When to time the coffee grinder just right so as to not disturb critical information transference on the call, how to carve out shower time and which doors to shut so I can dry my hair. It's a delicate balance. ☺ The struggle is real.



But I wouldn't wish it any other way. We are very lucky to be able to spend time together. Every day, ALL DAY.

When does his February trip to Australia start again?

Happy New Year Peeps.

It's gonna be HUGE! Or Something ☺

The Hike

January 12, 2015

We went hiking last week. We had a friend's car for the weekend and after some relaxation out East (The Hamptons), We decided to go hiking up the Palisades.We are

a family of hikers, we love to get out of the city and get our wilderness on... The Princess had just landed from Australia on Sunday early am. So Monday we swung by her place and picked her up, cruised up the Palisades, which is a risk in itself for us, to our favourite trail.

Things were going fine and we found our swings, which we often visit and then we decided to follow a new trail we hadn't gone on before. We had Sir Lickalot with us, and he was loving the freedom!





But then it turned nasty, as we walked along the river front we began to come across rocks, rocks that had fallen from the cliff face beside us. Rocks that were huge, more like boulders. S0 we began and Sir Lickalot soon discovered the going too tough. I coaxed him and he followed, he trusts me and I can usually get him to do anything. Remember of course that the poor boy is blind in one eye and has brain damage causing motor skill issues.

So here we were clambering over rocks with great difficulty. The dog falling into gaps between the rocks at every step and we could see it was going to be a big problem. We were too far to turn back and so we had no choice but to continue on. As we passed hikers coming the other way, they told us it wasn't far and we were nearly through it and this made us feel better but in truth they were full of shit because we continued on over 3 lots of these rocks and the dog was bleeding on all 4 legs, with scraped skin from falling down the rock holes and worn down nails and toes. Every step a possibility of a broken leg. At one point I thought he wasn't going to make it out, that we would be leaving poor Sir Lickalot down by the river to cross the rainbow bridge.



So we trudged and trudged and coaxed and carried the wounded warrior for miles, over rocks and finally back to flat ground. He was relieved to be able to walk for himself and it's amazing how animals will just keep going.

We found the trail back up to the top and slowly climbed about 1000 steps, stopping at each landing to rest. Total distance covered that day, 6 miles.

Click on Post to see the video

The next few days, we were all a bit sad and sorry for ourselves. Sir Lickalot hardly moved for days. A week later we found 3 ticks on him to add to his woes but that's a whole other story.

10 Reasons I'm Never Shaving Again

January 13, 2015

Admit it ladies, shaving is a bitch, right? I'm hairy, there I said it... Technical term 'hirsute' or hairsuit :P. I've been shaving since I was 12 years old. I didn't need to because I was blonde back then and it was really just light fuzz but high school and fitting in and all of that played a major roll in my wanting to shave.

My dad said 'Don't start, you'll end up with thick, black, bristly whiskers on your legs'... did I listen?

NOOOO.

He was right.



Serge Bertasius Photography

So fast forward 30+ years to being too lazy to shave every other day and my legs are the vision of a spiky cactus more often than they are smooth as a fresh shaven leg. So sexy!

Don't even get me started with my underarms. I can put up with hairy legs and not give a flying fuck.... but my arms must be clean shaven all the time cos sweat and pit stains and prickles and just ewww. But I have to do it EVERY day! I hate it. So recently I decided I was going to give waxing a go. I've dabbled in the past, having bikini waxes

done and half a leg once, the waxer had to stop half way through, I couldn't cope, cold sweats and almost passing out happened!

But I have a wax kit at home and naturally decided I could do this myself. OMG, that shit hurt, so bad that I couldn't finish the job. Have you ever tried to wax your own armpit? I caused bruising, you know the kind, it looked like a love bite, so ugly and painful. I had to wait a few days for the area to heal and then I did what any self respecting failed home waxer does, took myself off to a professional. Realising that it was going to kill pain wise, I mentally prepared myself. It was pretty intense but those professionals have a knack of making it less painful and the result was spectacular!

But the best part - It lasted 6 whole weeks! I'm converted! I'm never shaving every again.

So if you're still trying to wean yourself off shaving here are my top ten reasons to just give it up completely.

1. Waxing lasts up to 6 weeks and the hair grows back finer.
2. No more daily shaving, ever.
3. More time in the shower for other activities (yes even that)
4. You don't need to tidy up if you're ready for some sexy fun (see 3.)
5. Never having to buy razors again. They're expensive. My pharmacy has them alarmed, something about people stealing them. Who does that shit?
6. The more you wax, the less hair grows back- awesome!
7. Getting waxed usually morphs into a mani-pedi date...BONUS
8. You'll never get razor rash or cut yourself ever again
9. The whiskers in the shower/sink will never be yours and you can confidently bitch to your significant other about their untidy mess 😉
10. Eventually the hair follicles will just give up and you won't even have to wax anymore.

Take a leap of faith and just do it. You won't regret it... probably.

I Love it When Paleo Cooking is Easy

January 14, 2015

I haven't written about food for a while, but My Lord Doctor King is on a 'lifestyle change' (we don't say diet) and has already dropped 14 lbs so I am cooking better again and using the paleo technique. Trying to find things that everyone loves can be difficult because Miss Gremlin isn't a huge fan of vegies, she likes potatoes and sweet potatoes but not so many greens, although I'm working on her 😊

Yesterday, feeling lazy, I went to pinterest to find something I could do without needing to leave the house, you know, with the ingredients I had here. We all know how hard that is, but I found something and it looked yummy and easy! My two favourite things.

Baked sweet potato spinach quiche. Yes real men eat quiche because they know not to complain! I found the recipe from this fine blog and here's how mine turned out.

Firstly I lined the pyrex pie dish with thinly slices sweet potatoes and baked in oven for 15 mins on 400f.



line the pie dish



baked pie 'crust'

While that was happening I sauteed onions and garlic and spinach, to the recipe I added mushrooms and ham because, my God, are we ever gonna finish eating the Christmas ham?



Garlic, onions, mushrooms and ham



You could use spinach or kale

After they were nicely browned, I added the mix to the eggs and cheese and put it into the pie 'crust'.



Reducing the heat to 375, I baked it for 40 minutes until the top was golden brown.



yes I did move the spinach out of one section for my little girl ☺

Super easy, incredibly yummy and a clever idea for those not eating pie crust!

I served it with shoestring sweet potato (I had a little left over) and potato fries and steamed broccoli. They liked it!

Even Miss Gremlin.

A picture says 1000 words-Ummmm

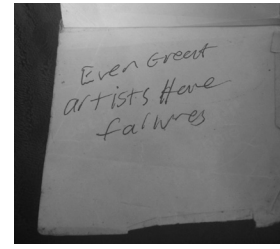
January 20, 2015

My Lord Dr King and I have been together for a long time, a very long time. We've been together longer than we've been apart and over the years we've had many things come and go through our lives. Back in the very early days when he used to come and visit me, if I wasn't home, he'd leave me little notes, just so I knew he'd been. Sometimes it was a love note, sometimes it was practical info and sometimes is was just buy more beer! Clearly I had let the supply dwindle. OOps.

But always was the same little man was drawn with the note. A kind of signature I suppose.







As young love is bound to do, I kept some of those notes and filed them away in a special place, as you do because mementos reminds us of a time long past. And it's fun to show the kids ☺ (queue Memories by Babs)

Life gets busy and in the blink of an eye 25 years flies by and you've completely forgotten about the notes on the kitchen counter reminding you to get more beer.

The other day, I received an email from My Lord Dr King, nothing unusual about that, we communicate electronically ALL THE TIME, but this one was different, it was blank except for an attachment. I opened it and this appeared



The little man! Like a long lost friend whizzing me back to another time and place and bringing a smile to my day. Cute but I didn't give it another thought after that.

A couple of days passed by and our daily crazy continued on.



Meetings, lunches, dinners, functions, meeting famous people, you know the norm (if you're new here, that shit happens quite a bit). We found ourselves in the company of Reverend Jesse Jackson and his son Jonathon, My Lord Dr King spent quite a long lunch with them and I attended the evening event as well.

This morning, after the children left and I gathered my strength at the bottom of my second macchiato, an email arrived in my inbox from My Lord Dr King.

Confused, as it was still before his usual wake up time, I opened the empty email. Another attachment.... hmmm

I damn near snorted my coffee all over the couch when I saw this!

I laughed out loud because I mean, what else is there to do when your husband sends you dick pictures from bed that he drew himself!

He received his just reward because I'm an awesome wife, I'll take that award now.....and he headed to the bath.

An hour later, yes he's a bather, I received this:



I'm hoping this is a short lived phase. It's cute and all but the return of the little man is getting a bit demanding!

Anyway, gotta go, the man wants eggs :P

How to Feel Rich for Very Little Expense- A Bidet, You Say?

January 22, 2015

For my birthday this year My Lord Dr King took me away to California for a week. He was to receive his Doctorate degree and so he whisked me away for a birthday/anniversary road trip. He's the best at combining things, except dinner parties, he's crap at that because we have very polarising friends. And a room full of our friends don't always get along. Don't ask... there's been many incidents best left undisclosed! Anyway he whisked me away and we stayed at the Beverly Wiltshire. I lived it up like Pretty Woman for days and it was divine. (I will write about it I promise) During that time I was reacquainted with the bidet. We had one in Australia before we left and while I hesitated in the beginning to use it, I fell in love with it over the 10 years we lived in that house. They have multiple uses I can assure you, besides the obvious.

Like a vomit receptacle when you're on the toilet with a stomach bug! We all know how bad that is when there's no bucket handy... Boom! bidet, lean over and blarrrgh.

Or if you've been in the garden and your flipflops are muddy or sandy... Hey it happens to to best of us in the tropics, dirty feet going to bed are the worst.



Too lazy for a bath or shower? No problem, stick your feet in the bidet and give them a swirl around and voila! And you don't even get the bathtub dirty!

Need something to entertain the toddler while you try for your weekly shower? Handy idea, fill the bidet with warm water and some bubbles and they can play while you get to wash and shave! Or they could even play boats! So much better than them playing in the toilet bowl right? Make sure you lay a towel down for easy clean up after.

So as you can see, they are fabulous things! Not to mention how soothing they are following birth. A nice warm salt splash for the tramatised hooha... you got it! Period time? Want to feel fresh? You got it! After sexy time clean up? The best! Especially if you're susceptible to infections.

The Europeans understand these badboys, I can't believe they haven't caught on here in the good Ol' USA!

Well the Beverly Wiltshire is a classy joint and so they understand. They have them in every room but not the regular type because I guess to retrofit 1000 rooms may be hard but they have these:

Handheld, Brilliant! I was immediately reunited with my love and announced to My Lord Dr King that we MUST have one, and seeing as how I didn't have an 'official' birthday present because, hello Beverly Wiltshire! I suggested that we could have this as our anniversary/birthday gift.

Like all suggestions I make, he took it onboard and amazoned that badboy and it was waiting for us upon our return. 2 day shipping yo!

The installation takes literally 5 minutes! (correct use of literally observed) Maybe even less and the feeling is oh so wonderful! To be shower fresh all the time is such a luxury but for very little expense, you should try it! I'm pretty sure you'll love it.

Now if only we could hook it up to the hot water instead of cold.

Brrrrrrrrrr



Blizzard 2015-Don't Lose your Mind

January 26, 2015



We have a blizzard about to hit the North East, a 250 mile front stretching from Pennsylvania to Maine. It's expected to dump upwards of 2 feet of snow, in some areas closer to 3. They're calling it a possible record storm. They're preparing for the worst.

But it's still just a snowstorm, we have them every winter. We know how to handle them even if the weathermen are frothing at the mouth, that's their job! They live for this shit!

But the people are in a frenzy, buying out supermarkets and hardware stores. Waiting in line for hours. Now I get that in the suburbs because you could very well be stranded in your home as roads will be cut off. You may even lose power but for the frenzy to exist in NYC makes me laugh.

We live in apartment buildings, the snow gets shovelled off the sidewalks, the ploughs work 24/7 and the supermarkets are usually only a block or two from your home. You can walk! NYC never loses power and the subway system underground continues to run. Why oh why are people stocking up and making a run on milk and bread like it's the end of the world?

It's crazy!

Anyway, so far, the snow has begun but the blizzard doesn't begin until tonight.

Our terrace looks like this.



Tomorrow may be a different story.

I'm excited!

If you're in an area where storms are dangerous and you may lose power, be sure to stock up on essentials and charge all devices. Stay warm and dry, be careful when shovelling snow. Make sure you clear your vents.

But if you live in NYC, calm down people, just watch the snow pile up and enjoy the muted noise for a change.

By Thursday it will be gross outside.

New York snow really is the grossest thing on the planet.

Exams, They Start Them Early in NYC

February 3, 2015



stockimages

This weekend Miss Gremlin attended the admissions tests for the schools she's applying for. The first one, which she really wants was a 3 hour exam which she sat for in Columbia University. She, along with 250 other children, took their test in an actual college lecture hall!

She loved it, she was super excited about the tables that lifted up from the side of the seat. Although she wasn't the first finished, she did finish her exam an hour early and felt pretty confident in how she went. We find out about that test on February 25. The wait will be tortuous!

The second test was only 1 1/2 hrs long. She said it was easy and was actually the first kid out. She sat that one with a hand full of her friends from her current school. I have no idea when we'll find out those results.

The official letters from the DOE with our placements don't come out until some time in May I believe, so we have to wait to see if we get what we want.

I know it seems like a crazy system and I guess it is, but it gives students and their parents options to follow career paths they may not necessarily get from a system where you go to your closest school. With any luck she'll get the school she really wants and won't have to go through the process again for 9th grade.

If she does, then next stop college!

It Gets Better- The Kids are Alright

February 9, 2015

So I've been missing, not like kidnapped, thrown in a van missing, but missing none the less. My Lord Dr King left for Australia last Monday afternoon and since then Grand Master D has continued to be sick and managed to spread his germs which knocked me out too. I have had zero energy and in fact have hardly left the house. Miss Gremlin has finally succumbed to the dreaded lurgy but I seem to be climbing out of the hole. I know, you'd think I could sit in a chair and tap on the computer but in all honesty all I wanted to do was veg out and sleep. The biggest thing was making sure the children had meals. But we got through. And only had take out every other meal... Yesterday Miss Gremlin folded all the laundry that was clean and then did 3 more loads of dirty that was waiting. She's 10! Bless her little heart.



The two of them, on Saturday, after going to see Selma, came home to raid the cupboards and go to the Princesses to look after her because she too was sick!

It warms my heart to know that I am actually teaching these kids empathy and consideration and the ability to see when people need help. AND that I'm not here as their slave. It takes a team to run a household and they live here too. That's a huge thing, to pitch in without being asked. Especially these days when we see stories of

teens getting into trouble and sueing their parents for college tuition and being all out brats, I'm very proud to say that whatever it is we're doing, it seems to be working....

The King Returns to the Homeland

February 10, 2015

Last August when we went to Australia for our bi annual trip, My Lord Dr King was supposed to come with us, however circumstances vetoed that trip and as we'd already purchased his ticket, he had to change it to another time.

Since moving here to New York in 2005, My Lord Dr King has only been back once, for 4 days, to sell our house in 2007. So a visit was long overdue. When your mother starts saying I could be dead before you come back to see me, you know you've gotta get your ass on the plane. And so he changed his ticket to February ....

As February loomed, it looked like he wasn't going to be able to go, those darn circumstances avoidance again... but honestly, it just needed to happen and so he went.



Clearly Purple shirt day

The epic tour of The Dr began ...and it's been really good. I, of course, have been stalking his every move and living vicariously through his posts and our chats. He's catching up with old friends and really enjoying his return, even though he's one to never go back, we once had to drive through 200 miles of unmade roads because of his 'never go back' theory but that's another story.

It really is like a Rock star tour, there are people all over the country reaching out to get some time with him, he's covering a lot of ground but it's great. It's nice to know so many people like you and care how you're doing.

So one week down, he's been to Sydney, Albury, Melbourne and the Gold Coast. He's caught up with family and friends and added a little business along the way. He has the visit to Perth for his mum and sister yet to do. It will probably be another 10 years before he feels the need to return so he's getting it all in.

I can't wait to hear all the stories. We're getting snippets, like him being propositioned too many times to count while out with musician friends and the ex in the hometown... I guess the women could smell fresh meat!

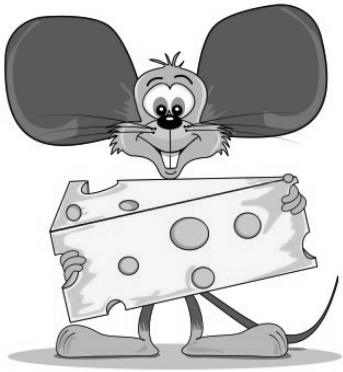
I laughed pretty hard at that!



NOT one of the propositioning females
He's at the beach now, so let's see how that goes!

The Cat's Away, So naturally the Mice Get The Plague

February 12, 2015



So My Lord Dr King left on his long overdue Aussie tour, which I'm super excited for him to do. It's almost as good as going myself except for the flight and the timtams...

Anyway, we're here soldiering on like good little troopers. Grand Master D has been sick but battling through, luckily he had a week off for regents testing which he wasn't required for. Gotta love the school system.

It's been snowing every other day in New York, Old Man Winter is really giving us the finger. I love the snow, I do. What I don't love is the inconsistency, one day is minus 54,000 degrees and the next day you need tshirts and sunscreen, and then back to minus 46,000 degrees, ok I might be exaggerating a little but you get what I mean, and so we're all sick, ALL OF US, even the Princess and she doesn't even live in this germ infested hovel, she has her own.

So on Saturday, the kids decided that it was entirely unacceptable that the Princess was sick and alone and had no food, and they came home from the movies to load up two grocery bags with supplies and headed on the train to their sisters house 40 blocks north.

They cooked and made lemon juice and honey's and generally kept her company for the whole afternoon. So sweet of them.

By Sunday I was at death's door, well I could see it from the terrace. Anyway I was

fairly sure I had asthmatic bronchitis too, which I actually had last May and was feeling the same symptoms, luckily I still had some special inhaler left and began using it and just to add some crunchy to my care, I continued on my lemon and honey and garlic and ginger thing and began swigging apple cider vinegar, just for good measure. Having consumed the amount of garlic I had, I knew there was no change of vampire attack. But the vinegar, lemon juices and vicks on my feet with socks actually worked because on Monday morning I woke up feeling 75% better. Congratulating myself on saving a trip to the doctor, I wandered down to rouse the kids out of their slumber. It was snowing again, no snow days are to be had in NYC... so they had school.

But my little Gremlin was taking her turn, the neck pain, the headache and temp, all telltale signs that her brother really is a sharer. So back to bed she went. A girl sick day we had while Grand Master D took himself off to school. I have to say she does bounce back fast because on Tuesday she was up, bright as a button ready for school. Grand Master D? Well that's a different story. I'm hoping they'll both exit the building for the rest of the week considering next week is winter break for a week.

Your Time Here is Done

February 16, 2015

As part of his tour, My Lord Dr King arrived on the Gold Coast, where we lived before we moved to New York, where all our friends were. Where we'd made our lives, married, had our babies, our house, our business. I go back all the time, take the kids by the house, remind them where they were born, show them where they're from. I think it's important for them to know. But My Lord Dr King isn't one for sentiment. Whenever I tell him we drove by the house or we walked by or whatever (because we do it every time ☺) He says why? Why bother?

But I always do it.

So I was talking to him this morning, he was staying just around the corner. I asked if he was going for a look and he said 'I suppose I could' and as we were chatting he was there. I told you it was literally around the corner ☺

He's been back there once, for 4 days to prepare it for sale, in 2007.

Now in all the times I've driven by, walked by etc, I've never gone to the front gate but My Lord Dr King did... and this is what was he saw.

Right at the front gate, next to the door bell:`



We moved away in 2005, we sold it in 2007...

It's still there!

How can you buy a house, make it your home, live there for almost a decade and have the previous owners names at the front door?

That's just weird.

Closure people, it's important.

Voicemail messages, boring is not better.

February 18, 2015

So My Lord Dr King has always had good voicemail messages. He is a jingle writer, musician and performer from way back. But recently he updated his phone and message and the result was , well.... boring.

So much so that people actually complained.

And so because he could, he did this.

Seriously.... you think your lives are weird. You have no idea ☺

Tell Me about Girl Scout Cookies...What Am I Missing?

February 23, 2015

I have been watching for weeks, you guys all talking about girl scout cookies, and selling them and eating them and which ones are your weakness. Apparently it's the season.



I've confessed all manner of things on here over the years I've been writing and now in our 10th year living in America, I think it's time to come clean:

I've never tasted girl scout cookies.

I KNOW, you're shocked.

And I'm sorry to upset you so.

Let's remedy this. I need to change this and I want to know the best ones. Describe them to me.

Come on ..... sell me ☺

It takes How Long to get Home?

February 25, 2015

We made it, we got through a month of My Lord Dr King being away in Australia.

We've had numerous snow storms, illnesses, a vacation week, and temperatures so cold that it's actually dangerous to be outside.

We minimally cooked and had take out, we slept in, we consumed lemon and honey, we played wii and board games. There was sledding and sleepovers and movies and school and the sickness circulated. We only left when we had to.

We watched as My Lord Dr King reconnected with the homeland and all the people who wanted to see him, business doors were opened and family bonds were strengthened. Not to mention the skin he left on Dead Man's Hill. ☺

The Homefront got a little messy but we enjoyed each other and now as we anticipate his re-entry, there's a little straightening up to do. ☺
. We've got time.



It's a long way, I don't envy the trip. He's flying from Perth to Sydney today so he doesn't have to over night and make the already long trip even longer. Starting from Perth is hard. It's the complete opposite side of the world. My Lord Dr King's mum once commented it was the furthest away he could go. Oops. I'm sure he didn't mean it ☺

We did it once, the red eye from Perth. The flight arrives in Sydney at 6 am and the longhaul to Los Angeles leaves at 10am. After 14 hours flying time you arrive in LA to clear custom with bags and recheck to fly another 5 hours to NYC.

It's a really long way. There are good trips and bad trips. Mostly you just do it. Sometimes you get an entire row, sometimes not. Sometimes you get diverted due to weather. Once we were wheels down to LA and then powered up and landed in Vegas, sitting on the tarmac from 3 hours unable to deplane. The delays make it worse. I hope the weather behaves.

But he's on his way, and we are ready. You can tell the kids are getting excited. I doubt he's brought them gifts or goodies because he only took a carry on bag. (who does that? for a month, to Australia)But they don't care, Dad will be home. Miss Gremlin was watching videos of him from his website and Grand Master D wants to go out board dogging with his Dad.

A month is a long time when your Dad is here all the time, these kids are lucky to have their dad around all the time. Working from home has its pitfalls but I couldn't imagine how different our lives would be if My Lord Dr King commuted. It's good to be around for your teens if you can do it. I'm glad he can.

We've been talking on facebook messenger and using facebook for most of the trip, no phone calls but a couple of video chats for the kids. The time different makes it harder.

He's been travelling and I've been here. A month is a long time for us to be apart, so I expect to be busy for a few days, you know how it goes.

He knows I waxed, it's cold..... ☺

Only 36 hours to go. There better be timtams ☺

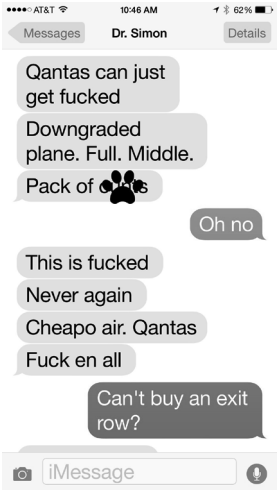
When You Know the Flight will Be Crap

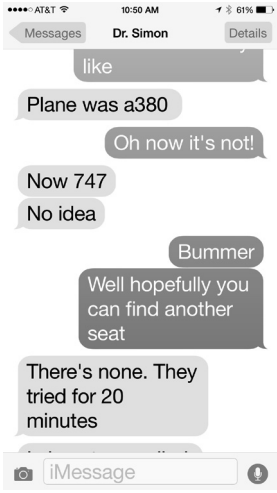
February 26, 2015

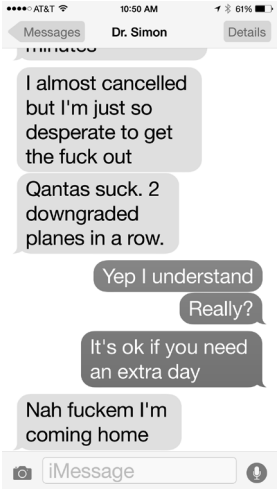
My Lord Dr King got to the airport yesterday morning and I guess due to bookings the plane was downgraded. Why send a half full plane when you can fill a smaller one, I get that, it's expensive and airlines are trying to make a profit.... But that doesn't help the flyer when you know it's gonna be a shit flight because you're in the middle, down the back.

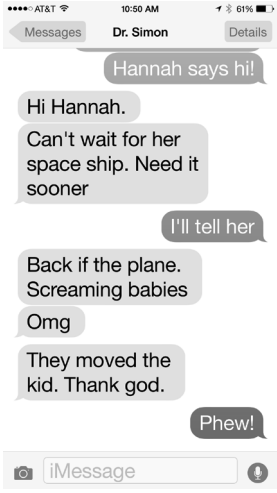
In the middle, down the back is code for "ALL THE SCREAMING KIDS"

This was our pre flight conversation:





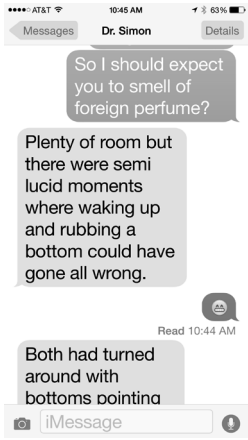


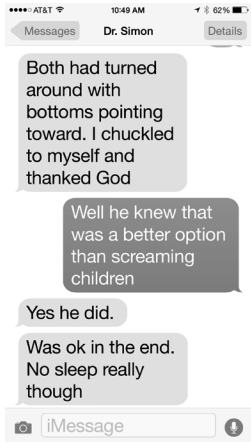


And so as we waited and watched the flight traverse the globe, we hoped he would be ok, down the back in the middle..It really isn't comfortable for that long.

This morning, after he landed safely I enquired about his flight expecting a tirade, I've done the shitty flights and they suck!







So the Lord shined on My Lord Dr King after all...
He seems happy to be home ☺

Let's face it, we knew this would happen

February 28, 2015

When My Lord Dr King went to visit the old place, we reminisced and were surprised to see the plaque we put there was still standing.



How do you leave a previous owners name on your front door for a decade!? People are weird.

So he walked all around the place, checking things out, like right into the backyard! I would never have enough guts to do that. Whenever I went there a scary man would come out and watch me... He was creepy.

However we think it has changed hands as we knew it was on the market and because it now looks nice and tidy. I've seen it with car wrecks everywhere and car parts on the grass tennis court we used to tend with loving care. Did I mention people are weird? Who does that?





This is one of the decks and the suspension bridge My Lord Dr King built when Grand Master D was about 2.





Our beautiful tennis court, which we line marked and used a cylinder mower on to get those funky patterns you see on the professional courts.





My Lord Dr King is standing on the spot where we buried one of our beautiful dogs.



Over the front wall you can see the Bali style hut we built beside the pool. Grand Master D used to swing from a rope 'ala Tarzan style' into the pool at age 3. ☺ . He also had a spiderman bouncy house up this end that he used to launch himself into the pool, deep end of course. It was also my solace on those super hot summer nights during pregnancy.



This is the purpose built recording studio which could be converted to a 4 br apartment.



And this ? Well it just had to come home where it belongs right?



Naturally ☺

This Free Range Parenting Thing

March 4, 2015

It made the news here a few weeks ago about a family whose children aged 10 and 6 were reported to police as being alone. Police came upon the children and questioned them as to why they were alone and drove them home to their parents. Their parents knew they were alone, they were at the playground, together but alone. CPS is now involved. The court has deemed them neglectful parents!

Well fed, well clothed, happy, healthy children with independence skills... nope they're neglected.

Just wow. We might be lost as a society.

These parents are self confessed 'free range'. They deliberately allowed their children out alone to foster independence, after teaching them how, something which is seriously lacking in many children and young adults today. There seem to be 2 camps, you're either in the camp of "Oh my god what were they thinking! The children were in grave danger" or the " Sounds like a great idea to let your children learn to be independent'. There's no guesses which camp I belong to.

I think that it goes a little over board when people freak out about unsupervised children. Eventually they'll be unsupervised adults. Don't we want them to have the skills to be trusted members of society? It's not a switch people, these skills must be learned.

We need to stop hovering and swooping in when something goes wrong every single time. Life is hard and not fair and full of things that go wrong but we must allow our children to learn how to cope and how to handle situations in life(guiding and helping when required) lest we breed a group of adults who can't do anything and the next generation dies out from lack of resoursefulness. I'm not even kidding. We're already breeding kids who can't do anything practical for themselves. Once we used to learn woodshop and metalcraft and sewing and cooking in high school, all qualities worthy of becoming an adult, we're loosing skills, practical skills, skill on how to survive.

Children helped their families on farms and in businesses. Image that, having to work after school at your parents store. The horror.

Current Education practices are changing all that, it's deemed more important to learn book smarts than to be able to do practical things. Which in turn breeds helpless

adults who need people to do everything for them. Don't even get me started on how that affects economies and industries and jobs...

At what point is it ok to intervene in another parents life anyway? Really, I'm asking. What right do we have in anyone else's business? Is it when we see their child walking alone in a neighbourhood park? Is it when they have a bruise? Is the child being beaten? Or is the child, a child with childhood bumps and scrapes? Because you know, children fall over, and off bikes and slides and over vacuum cleaners and dogs knock them down and they do dumb stuff. They fall off bunk beds and chairs and tables and as much as we try to keep them safe, shit happens. Does that mean we freak the fuck out when they get a scrape? Why is every emergency department visit clouded with questions, how did this happen? Did mommy do this to you? Are you sure you fell? I admit there is abuse in homes and that is unfortunate but for the most part, people love their children and want what's best for them, and what's best for them is teaching them to be self sufficient and productive and kind and self reliant and honourable and well mannered and thoughtful humans to function in society.

Why are we so concerned with everyone else's business enough to call the police or CPS, adding to parental stress. Isn't it enough that parents are so stressed and overworked and sleep deprived because as a parent you have to give your child everything all the time and you can never say no and you're expected to provide every entertaining whim that child wants until way beyond normal limits? When did this become reality?

It feels like you're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

There are better ways, sure you can be concerned, but who are we to assume our way is better? Just checking in might be enough. If the child is ok, accept that. Calling authorities is spiteful and selfish.

In all honesty, how many parents would pass a CPS check? Would you? Would I? Is having alcohol in your home unacceptable? What if you smoke?What if you haven't childproofed? Maybe you chose to house proof your child, teaching them not to touch certain things. Does that make you a bad parent? What if you've let them sip wine with dinner? Are you reportable? Have you ever smacked your child on the bottom as a discipline strategy? Is that child abuse?

Can we all say slippery slope?

Children are sueing parents for college payments now? Seriously? Grow up! The world doesn't owe you a job, an education, or anything. You need to learn to work hard, pay attention, learn skills and stop sitting on your ass and waiting for the world to bring everything to your feet.

Life is hard, children need to learn that the world isn't fair and people are mean and things go wrong and you can't always get what you want, but they also need to learn that being empathetic toward others and being kind and well mannered and thoughtful and considerate and helpful and responsible makes the world just bright enough for us all to get along.

It does take a village to raise children. A village where we're all working toward a common goal, even with different ideas of how to get there, growing the next generation to make the world a better place. Not a village where everyone is out for what they can get for themselves and we judge everyone and we hate and argue and are rude and thoughtless and spiteful and mean.

That's a shit village. And villages like that seldom prosper.

The Sun came out and we tried to fit all the Exercise in

March 9, 2015

The sun came out on the weekend and the temperature rose above freezing, just but we weren't gonna let that stop us. My Lord Dr King was away all February and we basically hibernated like bears. So it was time to dust off the skateboards and running shoes and get outside.

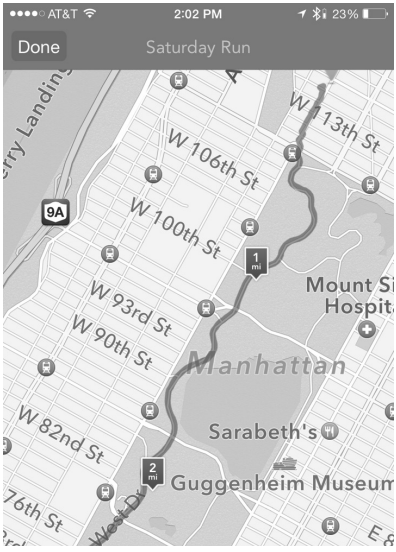
The kids love that Dad gets out with them on the skateboards, I'm not that adventurous but My Lord Dr King bought me some new kind of weird roller skates in the hope that I could go along. We have a current system, they take off on the boards and I track them on my phone and run to them. They skate, I run, and it works pretty well.

So Saturday, they took off on the boards, I walked the dog because he can't really come with us and then went out to find them. I ran for about 40 mins into Central Park with all the other runners and finally found them on the terrace near Bethesda fountain where there's a great area for boarding. They took the roller skates out too to try them out. When I got there they decided I needed to have a go. Being a roller skater from way back in my teens, I was happy to try. But my teens were a very long time ago and I haven't been on them since.

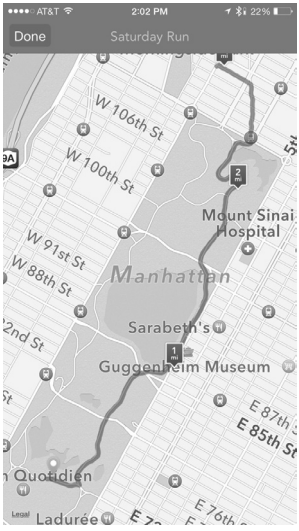
Here's how that went:

I'm not really sure if he wants me to be with them or he's trying to kill me and collect the insurance. I'm going with option one because we don't actually have option two ☺

Over all I ran 6 miles. That's basically couch to 6 miles in one day... Ouch.



The run down...



The run home...

Yesterday and today I'm walking like an old lady in need of a couple of hip replacement. Last night he loving said to me, "Well at least I know what you'll look like when you're an old lady".

NICE...

Enter Shirley Bassey

March 12, 2015

So you remember when Sid Fishious escaped? And how sad we were and how we missed him. Well I decided we really were a family who needs a permanent floating fish and bought a new one for My Lord Dr King for Christmas. We put him together but upon inflation we ran out of helium.... too much toking perhaps ☺

It's taken this long to get more. That stuff is expensive, and requires special shipping...but seeing as it's Miss Gremlin's birthday on Sunday and I suggested we fill her room in balloons while she sleeps as a birthday surprise upon waking, we had cause to get another tank. See how that works, justification, two birds, one stone and all that.

I traipsed around the city finally finding a tank in the East Village. But I got to see some pretty cool scenery.



Cute Old Building on E 8th st



The Freedom Tower

Once the kids got home we set about getting the fish done, unlike Sid, this one isn't a cute clown fish but a sulking looking bass (ill tempered one might say) .





With all things that live in this house he needed a name. Grand Master D came up with Shirley Bassey and then he was a she, just like the Lou Reed song.

Shirley seems happy, she doesn't move much and her personality is yet to be seen but I imagine that will come once we open the windows and let some air current in.



Welcome to our home Shirley, we've fixed the terrace door, so there is no escape.

When your kid turns Legs 11

March 15, 2015

Miss Gremlin is 11 on Sunday, the ides of March (Shakespeare apparently) and it doesn't feel like that long ago she was pigtails and curls. A squeaky baby from the start, she was always making some sort of noise. After Grand Master D, she was a totally different child. She's challenged me at every stage from birth through toddlerhood and now tween girl with a strong and at times, defiant spirit. This kid amazes me every single day. The things she knows, the things she wants to know. The figurate mountains she wants to conquer daily. This kid, the one who loves science and math and wants to work for NASA someday, (I hope there still is one) devours knowledge. She loves it. She's not ribbons and bow and dolls. You'll NEVER see her in pink or dresses.









She's happy and interesting to be around. She's funny and thoughtful and has a beautiful soul.

She's heading into the years where girls have a hard time, with the changes they face and body image and insecurity and bullying. I feel like she's preparing herself by doing what she likes and not trying to fit in to some kind of expected behaviour.... and I love that. If we get to skip the bitchy, catty, drama filled girl stuff, I'm cool with that.

She's just awesome, happy birthday Miss Gremlin.

P.S. She still loves breakfast ☺.

The Joke's on You.

March 17, 2015

Miss Gremlin and Grand Master D have taken to reading jokes to us at the dinner table and it's fun. We've always played some kind of rhyming or word association game but lately it's jokes. Some of the jokes are a little inappropriate but what a little

inappropriateness between family at dinner with teens. It leads to security and trust and open communication or something...

Let me share some of their favourites. I have no idea where they come from so I can't give credit but please know this shit made some of us pee our pants... (ok it was me, and I had an asthma attack too)

What's the difference between roast beef and pea soup?..... Anyone can roast beef. giggle, snort

How do you confuse a blonde? ..... Paint yourself green and throw forks at them. ok so I might be blonde but its funny...

What's green, fuzzy and if it falls out of a tree it will kill you?..... A pool table. This is just too much. queue the asthma

Apparently someone gets stabbed in London every 52 seconds..... Poor Bastard. oops a swear ☺

My wife accused me of being immature, I told her to get out of my fort. Well we live this everyday so, you know

How do you find Will Smith in the snow? .....You look for the fresh prints. *groan*

And lastly, the one which brings the house down:

A dad goes hunting and brings home a deer to feed the family. Feeling proud but playful he decides not to tell the children what kind of meat it is but gives them clues. "Kids what we're about to eat is something your mother calls me a lot", thinking that's an easy one he serves the food. Looking at the food then each other, one of the kids then yells "Don't eat it, it's an asshole!"

And that's why I love having dinner at the table with the kids, because we're silly and fun and communicating with our kids, albeit inappropriately. ☺

Beatles Book Giveaway

March 18, 2015



For several decades, Pat DiCesare was the legendary concert promoter in the Pittsburgh area. If you wanted to book a concert in the city of Steel, you had to go through Pat. The world saw amazing rock concerts come to life on the stage because of Pat's creative vision and driving success in the business. What the world didn't see was what went on behind the scenes. What the world didn't know was how much work went into each and every concert Pat promoted.

In his book, "Hard Days, Hard Nights" Pat tells us that story. Pat allows his readers a unique and candid glimpse behind the scenes of the concert business. The book unfolds in a way that the reader is sucked in and feels as if they are living the experiences with Pat.

I'm excited today to offer two of my readers the chance to win exciting prizes from Pat DiCesare. One lucky winner will receive an autographed copy of Pat's bestselling book, and a second winner will be the lucky recipient of a Beatles T-shirt from Pat's upcoming Relive the Beatles '64 Concert in September.

Rafflecopter giveaway Pat's Website details and social links.

Check them out!

http://www.concertpat.com/
https://www.facebook.com/PatDiCesareAuthor
https://twitter.com/Concertpat
http://www.amazon.com/Hard-Days-Nights-Legendary-Promoter/dp/1882658086

The Boom Crash Shake and the Media Storm that followed

March 23, 2015

A year on, we remember the victims of the East Harlem Gas Explosion which shattered a still late winter morning and for a moment put the fear of another terrorist attack in NYC. For a time I was the go to person for the media around the world! If only they knew 😉. Here's what happened for me on that day.

> ***When you work from home, you tend to be a bit slobbish, well we do. I'm certainly productive but who says you can't be productive in pj's? Not me!***
> ***Wednesday started like any other morning, hoisting the tween and teen out of bed almost too late because I couldn't get my own carcass moving. Then the endless bickering and all the crap that goes with mornings. You all know the drill so there's no need to explain.***
> ***They finally left and I sat down to get totally absorbed in facebook and twitter and waste hours of time write. I've been doing a piece on the healthcare deadline. We've finally succumbed, realising the fine will be quite substantial for us, so if we must pay money, we might as well get some coverage! We're geniuses like that...***
> ***In my 8th floor living room, on the couch in my pj's, third coffee going down, I heard a huge BOOM! In all honesty it sounded like the banging of metal, like a dropped dump truck tray or a skip bin crashing off the pulley or something of that nature right under my window! I felt the***

building shake at the same time.
We live in the 'hood, there's LOTS of construction, there's always something going on, some sort of weird loud noise happening. So I wasn't terribly concerned. But then my social media started...
"My building just shook, is this an earthquake?"
"Did you guys hear that noise?"
"Wow that was loud..".
Words to those effects started flooding my iphone screen and so I did what I do best to find out what the fuck happened! I did a discover hashtag on twitter. #explosioninharlem and a picture came up of smoke with someone saying that the 116 subway blew up! Well fuck, I live on 115 right near the subway, so I flew upstairs, outside onto the terrace (glad for the mild weather) and sure enough I saw this!



Now I have to say, I was mildly relieved to see it all the way over on the East side, not our 116 station. As you can see it was just beginning, so I posted this picture on twitter and then someone asked to use that picture, to which I responded sure please credit amotherlife.com cos I'm an unabashed media whore... and THEN shit got real. Remember I'm in my pj's!
Next NBC contacted to use the picture, then someone else and then a picture came out credited to me and it wasn't mine, then CBS tweeted for me to call them and then another, who I tried but couldn't get through so in a split second decision I tweeted my number to him!
Well that was the move! Next thing I know I'm being inundated with tweets and calls and emails and then I'm on hold waiting to go on with Chris Wragge and Sarah Siciliano on CBS morning. I was outside explaining what I was seeing, explaining how it started ALL ON NATIONAL TV!



Total craziness! The media had no idea what was happening and here they were connected to an Aussie girl in her pj's on a terrace, 5 avenue blocks west! It was pretty surreal. They didn't stop! Brazil called. Danish tv tweeted, Irish news tweeted, Huff Post UK....WTF?!
I did another live to air interview on Brazil TV and then CNN reached out. 'Are you the Molley Mills we've seen all over this morning?' UM yeah! 'Great what happened? Can we interview you?' OMG people, it was a spectacular fuck up!
But then their people on the ground started to get better info and the frenzy died down, at least for me, but seriously for 3 hours Wednesday morning, while dozens of people were injured and at least 7 lay buried under the rubble, I was the point person to the explosion in Harlem!
As details filtered through, they told us it was a gas explosion, there was no terror threat, 2 people were found quickly, critical and later died.
It became pretty apparent that this was a terrible tragedy as more and more people were unaccounted for. The stations ran it all day, twitter retweeted my original pic 100's of times and the one that wasn't even mine!
First responders worked into the night, trying to extinguish the fire and continue to search for the missing, hoping beyond reason they'd find someone alive.
Thursday morning brought worse news, the death toll had climbed to 7 and a total of 70 people reported to area hospitals with injuries.
At the writing of this article there are still two people unaccounted for. Hundreds of people will be spending their second night in temporary accommodations and those who've lost love ones will begin the grieving process.
Live every day to the fullest peeps because honestly, you just never know.

Is your AARP Card in the Mail? Are you ready?

March 25, 2015

This year I turn 47, I have a 25 yo step daughter, a 14 yo son and an 11 yo daughter. Life is marching on, 50 is waiting in the wings and I'm not happy about it.

Turning 50 is not something I'm ready for *at all*. Of course I'm happy that I get to do it because it means I'm still here to help my children reach their full potential and the alternative is way worse but age is actually starting to creep up.

When I was turning 30, I didn't want to, in fact I refused, turning 29A instead and that continued right through my 30s and when 40 came, My Lord Dr King actually put 29K on my cake. ☺. He knows...

Once I turned 40, I told the kids I was no longer 29K but 35e and so on.... these day I'm not even discussing it.

But 50

Fucking 50.

50 is ten years off ***60*** and 15 years off old age pension. 49 A doesn't even sound better.

It's a strange feeling because my Dad is gone now and my mum is one year off retirement. My uncles and aunts are all old! Old like my grandparents used to be, they've become the grandparents and we've become them, with children, some of whom are getting married and having children. Even my younger brothers kids are grown ups. There'll start to be more trips home for funerals than weddings. That time is coming.

It's nuts...

When my Lord Dr King was in Oz and caught up with a very special family he calls his own as much as his own, the youngest got out of bed at 4am to take him to the train station when he was leaving. This kid, who to us will always be a gawky 14 yo kid hanging around the piano shop and playing sax.... he's 35!



I guess what I'm getting at is the creep just happens, you live your lives and the years come and go, your parents get older and your children grow and when you look in the mirror, although you see signs of your mother and grandmother (have a look, it's fascinating) looking back at you, don't you wonder why you still feel like that 20 something?

A bit more wisdom, a lot more life experience, road weariness and a mellowness that allows you to accept what's next but still be the same person. Well that's how I feel. I wonder if turning 50 will make my inner person come of age too.

I don't know the original source of this... but it's super cute.

Who knows... I've got 3 years to wait.

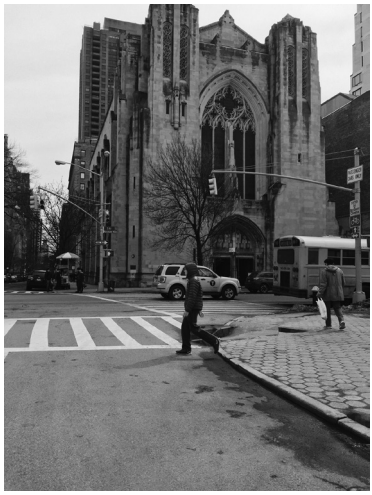
A Walk In Central Park

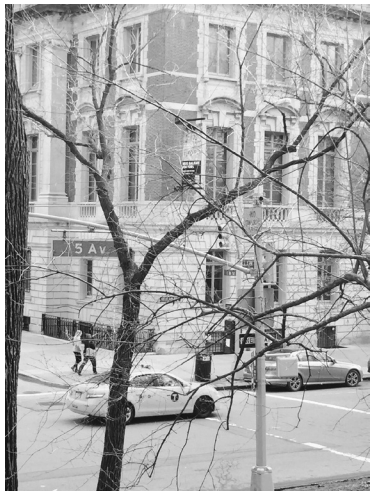
March 27, 2015

Last week when the sun came out and it was warmish, I took the opportunity to get outside with the dog. He's not had too much exercise with all this cold and we all needed to stretch and get some air in our lungs and sun on our faces. Northern Hemisphere winters suck. Yep they really do.



Walking along the roads in Central Park makes you feel invincible and a little rebellious....but don't do it between 8-10am and 4-6pm ☺ They'll mow your ass down in a New York minute.





The scenery is not bad either.



There's a few of these around the world, apparently the Egyptians like giving their big stone things away. This is Cleopatra's Needle in Central Park, we recently discovered there's also one in Boston.



How can you not love living in a city of 8 million people and yet feel like you're in the wilderness. It's kinda cool, with a side of delivery on every corner :P





our light poles are pretty cool too!

This looks abandoned now but let me assure you once the weather turns, you won't get a spot here. Tennis in Central park is really good fun.



Not a bad morning.....
Nap time!

I'm A Ninja.... Shhh it's a Secret

March 31, 2015

It's warmer now so I can wear t-shirts again...
Here's a gem My Lord Dr King got me for Christmas.
You had no idea, did you....



Go on, ask me!

You know you want to,
it's ok, I promise not to hurt you.....



BOOM!
drops mic

Girl Power AKA My Vacation...

April 10, 2015

I've spent this week gutting and reorganising the kitchen. We purchased a new oven because replacing the same part for the fourth time in the same oven is just stupid. It's had a good run, it's 10 years old and has worked hard. But it's time. Less bells and whistles and more commercial is what we went for. Better quality, we use it so why not get what works.

So preparing for this, I had to reorganise cupboards because being a more commercial model it didn't have a warmer drawer that everyone just uses as baking pan storage.... right? I mean who even uses the warming drawer? Anyway that began a snowball effect and I just kept going. 8 hours later, every cupboard had been reorganised and things were thrown away.

I had also wanted a water dispensing fridge, which we haven't had since moving to America and we missed it. However with nothing actually wrong with our current fridge and spending $1600 on a water dispenser seemed excessive, so we opted for a water dispensing bar fridge instead... way cheaper and extra fridge space... bonus.

So while the family had their road trip I gutted the fridge, finding things that had no business still being in a refrigerator. The shit we buy and never ever use again is amazing. So wasteful.

While cleaning out the fridge and rearranging all the selves I discovered features I had no idea even existed. Feels like a new fridge now for no cost but a little elbow grease. Perception is everything here.



40 lbs is hard to remove from a box on your own



And the dispenser and handle needs installation



Tada!



time to fill with goodies

Two full days down, bar fridge delivered and put together, Wednesday was delivery day of the oven. Part of my excuse for not going on the road trip. The other part of course was how much My Lord Dr King has been away in the last couple of months and the kids needed to hang with him and I needed to not. ☺ (hang with the kids that is)

Anyway, Wednesday morning came, I prepared for the delivery and figured I could unhook the old one at last and prepare for the new baby. As it turned out, the delivery guys were happy to disconnect and remove the old one for 20 bucks, I'm sure they recondition them and sell them but that's not my worry. I told them what was wrong. We would have just put it on the street anyway. If it gets repaired and a second life, so be it, recycling works.

I could have paid them to install the new one but they assured me I could do it, as I thought I could, they generously gave me the correct connection and some sealant.

Connecting gas isn't hard but you know it's gas and gas goes BOOM, not something I wanted to happen. So I connected it, slid the oven into place and leveled it all up. Girl power was running rampant in me and I felt pretty confident that I'd done it correctly. The proof was in ignition.

I turned it on, didn't smell gas.... so continued.

The scrambled eggs I tried were a total success.

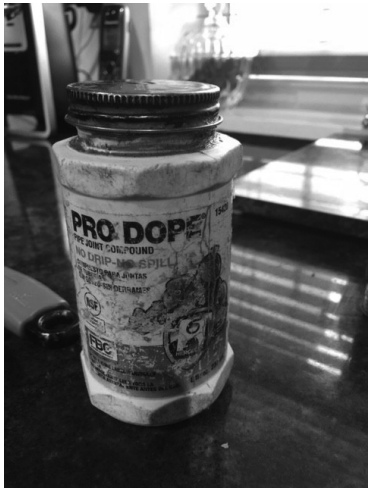
As the hour progressed I got braver, not smelling any escaping gas, I decided to give the oven a test drive. Sending an arrow prayer not to end up on the evening news in a gas building explosion, I made cookies....

As will all new appliances the first run has to burn off the chemical smell. I stood over it smelling for gas, then stepping back, then stepped back in again to smell. I was nervous but as the smell continued, I could tell that it was just the factory chemical and all was safe.

I had cookies within 20 minutes ☺



Disconnecting the old oven



The goop for the new pipe sealant



Tada!



Best scrambled eggs ever



And cookies....

New kitchen complete.

Spring cleaning is a hell of a thing, but now we have what feels like a new kitchen with just a few small additions. And I did it ALL.

Not content to finish there, with no one in the house I decided that spring cleaning all the rungs was the next order of business... Um wasn't I supposed to be having some time to myself? Oh well, only another hour to get the dog smell out of the rugs and all the windows open for an airing. I know, I have no idea what's wrong with me either but it's all done now.

Having a few hours left, I stocked the new drinks fridge with goodies for everyone and headed out for a massage.

Finally some me time.....and then...

Hi Honey we're home!

The Next Step on my Road to Freedom

April 22, 2015

Laundry has been part of my life since I was 14, before that my mum did it. But with growing up comes learning to look after yourself. She was right. Every child needs to learn to do it.



It's come to that time for Grand Master D. He wear clothes.... LOTS of clothes. He has twice the pile as any other family member. I've been complaining about it for a while.

A few weeks ago he took over the job. I bought him a hamper so he can take care of it himself. He's 14.

He's come unstuck once though ☺ I have reminded him to do his laundry a couple of times and he's like yep I got it but does nothing about it so last week he dug out a tshirt I hadn't seen in a long time. I commented on it and he said "Yeah I ran out of clothes" We laughed and he learned that waiting to do laundry for 2 1/2 weeks is too long. Sometimes you gotta learn by making the mistake yourself, no matter how many times mum reminds you.

Now Miss Gremlin wants to do her own too. She has always wanted to do what he does but earlier. I'm not gonna stop her. But I'm also not going to make her if she drops the ball. She's 11. There's time. She will learn to do it properly.

But it's awesome that they are happy to start learning how to look after themselves.

Proper meal cooking is next.

My island vacation is getting closer 😉

He's Getting The Band Back Together

April 29, 2015

Ok, he's not but.....



My Lord Dr King has been out a bit lately playing with a friend. He hasn't played much for a long time, but it's a life you miss.

A lifetime ago, we were on the road every weekend and more for years, so movies like Almost Famous, The Banger Sisters and Walk the Line always make us both nostalgic and horrified at the same time. It depends on our mood as to whether we watch them.

But playing a regular thing, close to home a couple of nights a week is totally fine right?

It remains to be seen and it's shaky....but it sure seems like My Lord Dr King needs to go out playing again. Are you ready NYC?

All the Best One's start at the Bitter End 😉

We found a village

May 4, 2015

Last week while we continued to wait to hear which school Miss Gremlin got into, she started to process what's happening, her life is about to change and she's beginning the grieving process of everything she's ever known to change completely. She's been going to that school since she was 2. She was there every day we dropped Grand Master D off and every day we picked him up. All weather, walking to and from the neighborhood school, because this is where we live. The school is 5 blocks from home and beside the park, as the kids have grown they have played in this park. So there's a boundary. Her circle is expanding, her life is changing, she's having new experiences and growing up.

Middle school, 11, bigger, more kids, further from home.

She's thinking about what's next, the excitement of change and growing up, she grew taller than me this week too, that's it now, I'm officially the shortest family member.

When you let go and look forward, it's sometimes easier to paint the past in a bad light so as to want to leave it. Grief is a funny thing, change can be hard and you do grieve for what you know.

But is that it?

She remembers more fun, more trips, more engaging things. She commented about this year's fundraising event. Instead of a community carnival there's a multicultural fair, she's like "what is that? We're graduating this year we want fun. I want a carnival, that sucks, and we haven't been on any trips this year and its nearly over."

So it's different this year.

The tests are done and there's two months left of school, two months, so now

what, they pretty much waste that time because it doesn't matter? The tests are done, that's all they have to do, teach the kids to pass the tests, for money, more passers more money, just get 'em tested.

But teachers want to teach, they want to inspire, they obviously love the way it feels to give other humans knowledge, but knowledge is experience, it's life, it's expression, its investigation, it's discussion, i*t's not fucking geometry,* what do you even need that for?

Except when you do, so learn it then, but for now, learn about life and how to successfully function in the world, we need people who can build communities, communities who look out for each other, who have local services that aid the local area, increasing the life quality and unity to live happily.

We need neighborhoods for our children to play in and know they are safe, where they go to the schools around them, where their friends are close by.

We may live in one of the biggest cities in the world but we are still managing to use the local services, the neighborhood businesses and as luck would have it some of the best schools in the city are close by. Although Miss Gremlin is moving on, she's not moving far and she will always be able to walk past on her way to her new school and perhaps the university beyond and see everything that is familiar and remember where she started.

It feels good to have a village.



The view of our 'village' from the 'backyard'

A Watch Made of Wood - JORD Watch

May 6, 2015

In the age of cell phones, the art of wearing a watch seems to be fading, but watches are worthy of our time (pun intended). Watches are a statement, as individual as the arm it rests on. I have several watches, probably like most of you and I change them out to suit the activity or outfit I'm wearing. Did you guys even know I do fashiony stuff?

I came across the JORD watch recently when the company reached out to me and I'm all for interesting and new and *ahem* free 😉. They sent me a watch of my choosing to tell you guys all about!



Sully series $139



Ely series $129



Dover series $295



Delmar series $149

These watches are made of wood, like from actual trees!

It's like a little piece of hippie heaven. Who even comes up with stuff like that? I can see it in the planning meeting now. "Let's make a watch out of wood!"

So they did, and the results are spectacular!



Lightweight and elegant by design, the JORD watch is a fashion statement you can be proud to wear. I really love interesting pieces that catch the eye. I don't do reviews all that often but this one, I was excited about.

There are many different designs to choose from, and from those designs a variety of wood combinations are used. All sizes and specs are available on their website.

I went with the Ely series, in cherry wood. I think it really compliments my skin tone and hair colour. I do love earthy tones. (Maybe I have a bit of hippie after all 😉)

I've had so many compliments while wearing this timepiece. People are really quite intrigued.



You know with Mother's Day coming, this could solve the ever present "What to get Mom" question! I know there's not much chance to get it in time but Father's Day is just around the corner too 😉

Can't you just see the old boy sitting back with his cigar in his fingers and a JORD watch on his wrist? Maybe that's just me, *note to self*, add one to My Lord Dr King's Christmas list. Look at me planning ahead.



I love this watch. I've worn it everyday since it arrived and that's saying a lot for me as I don't often wear watches these days. So far it's extremely durable and easy to wear and the compliments are easy to take as well.

With so many to choose from, I'm sure you'll find something to suit that special someone...and you never know, that special someone might even be you 😉

Unique Watch

*I was furnished with a watch to review but all opinions are my own because writing someone else's opinion would be stupid, right.

Chess Time, Next Stop Nashville

May 12, 2015

It's been a big couple of weeks for Miss Gremlin, she found out her new school, celebrated and now she's heading to Chess Nationals again. This year it's in Nashville Tennessee and once again I'm not going. I would love to see Nashville but Miss Gremlin wants to go with the group, without me. She's our independent one that's for sure. The culmination of an entire year worth of Saturdays playing chess around the city will be tested in the grand ballrooms of the convention centre where about 1000 kids will congregate to battle for the trophies and gain incredible life experiences.



Learning some tips in Washington Square park last summer.

She's excited, I'm excited, she's excited about the 3:45am pick up for the airport, I'm less excited about that part but they'll get there early and have plenty of time to settle in before the first game on Friday evening.

She didn't win any games last year, the experience was probably too overwhelming to be successful, but this year, she's older and more experienced and she's experienced Nationals before so she knows what to expect and she can bring her game.

But truthfully it doesn't matter if she loses every game, she's still a winner because she's experiencing an incredible thing for an 11 yo. And every opportunity to experience something new makes you a winner in my book.

She played her last all day tournament Saturday, on Thursday, they ride.....

The post When everything happens at Once

May 26, 2015

So the last 2 weeks have been a crazy whirlwind. Frantic would also describe it. Mother's Day and Chess nationals happened and then the inlaws arrived. Bearing all manner of goodies, we spent a great week doing City tourist stuff, walking the highline, home through Central park in the drizzling rain after dinner. I may have made My Lord Dr King buy me an umbrella :P.



Auntie in the 'hood



They were stalking us.... we were tracking them



Water fountain????

We restauranted in Williamsburg and in Harlem and just enjoyed the visit.

School is super crazy busy with end of year activities and end of elementary school activities, senior trips, graduations and new school orientation visits. It's always a busy time.

Then throw in the fun of an ER visit and some broken ribs! My Lord Dr King is fine, fun colours but well enough to go to LA to do his official duties as Dean of Technology, wait what? Oh don't ask.....and the Princess graduated.



Xray selfies



I can still do this



Tomorrow My Lord Dr King flies home to go to see Billy Joel. That's exciting, Madison Square Garden, record residency and the kids first actual concert. Tuesday he's going back to LA for business.

I feel exhausted just listing it. Actually writing about it all makes my brain hurt.

Life is busy.

Feeling A Little Blue, Hair?

May 27, 2015

Miss Gremlin is nothing if not individual. She's awesome and so much fun. Her humour is great, she has a dry wit that has been cultivated for a long time and she's wicked smart.

Middle school is coming and she's flexing her individuality even more. Not a girly girl, she wears loose fitting comfortable clothes which have not a bow or pink anywhere on them.

She rocks short hair because who has time to care for thick flowing locks... Not her.

Last night she asked if she could dye her hair blue. Now if she wants to start attending to appearance, who am I to say no. This is the kid that you have to chase into the shower with a big stick and THEN make her go back because she didn't wash... The struggle is real.

But last night, she wanted blue hair. And so I did what all adolescent parents do.... or not, I went and got some blue hair dye. And dyed her blue. Having dabbled in permanent colours for many years I felt pretty confident in my abilities. I can do it again to get a darker result but we wanted to just make sure she liked it. I used splat but didn't use the bleach part, just applied the colour straight to her blonde hair and only left it for 10 minutes.

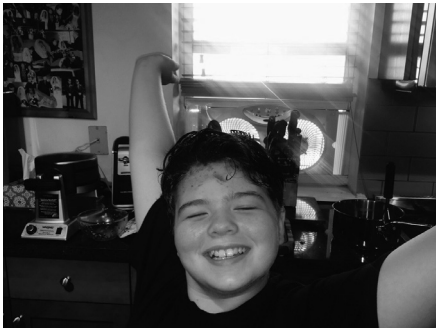
SHE LOVED IT.

And then she asked me how to style it and we got out the dryer and some sculpting paste.

This girl is ever full of surprises and I can't wait to hear what her friends and teachers think!

Just wait 'til she starts on the green and purple!

Peacock style ☺



Enjoying the process



Straight face



Fine, take the damn picture



All the blue



Does my brother's photobomb make my hair look blue?

We're So Cool, We Took The Kids to See Billy Joel

June 1, 2015

On Thursday evening we went to see Billy Joel at Madison Square Garden. We took the kids. This was their first ever concert experience, unless you count the Wiggles when they were 3... which for this exercise we shan't. They almost count, being The Cockroaches but that's a very long time ago.... ANYWAY!

For the last few weeks we've been playing Billy Joel music in the house and reminding them we're going etc and generally getting them excited for an experience they've never had and therefore probably have a difficult time even imagining.

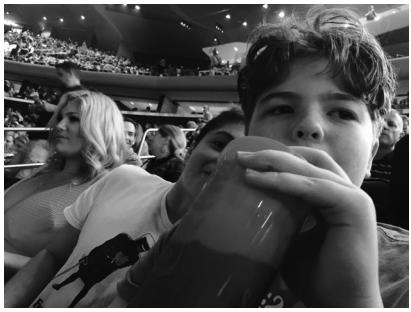
The day came and we went out to dinner early, like retirement home early... We literally had the early bird special at Shun Lee. No celebrity sightings this time. (No self respecting celeb would be eating dinner at 5:30, a late lunch, maybe).

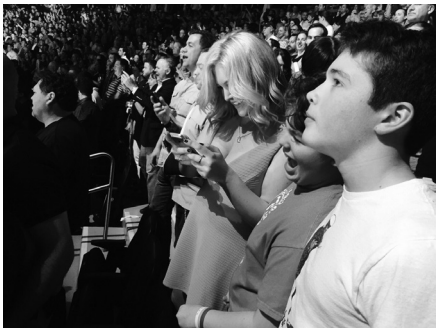
After dinner we strolled down to 34th St where Madison Square Garden takes up an entire city block, large semi trucks were parked out front and my old rock and roll heart skipped a beat. It's been a few years since I've attended any concerts but the feeling never leaves you.



We headed in and the kids were in awe! We had awesome seats behind the stage, yes, behind and honestly they were probably the best in the house. They weren't front row but you have to stand all the time in front row and then the mosh pit takes over. These seats were raised and we could see all the action and Billy's piano revolved so nothing was missed at all. Not to mention the screens were also used.



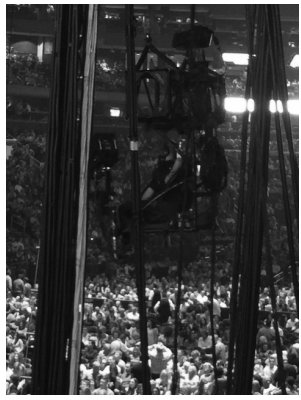




We watched as people filed in and right on 8 the lights dimmed and the support came on. Who should it be but Gavin DeGraw, one of our muso friends. We'd heard he was doing support but didn't actually consider that he would be doing this run.. (damn could've saved a 1000 bucks!) We settled in to watch and enjoyed the kid's reaction. Of course the support is never quite as loud as the main act but the music was thumping and Miss Gremlin was shocked that she could feel it in her chest... We laughed. Yeah baby, that's what it's ALL about.



While the road crew changed the stage we got to see the lighting guys go up in their rigs. The kids were fascinated by this. Miss Gremlin however decided this would not be a good job for her.... fear of heights and all that. But just watching was exciting enough.



Then at 9 o'clock, the lights went down and the main man himself came out.











Miami 2017

New York State Of Mind

He played for over 2 hours, and did a 4 song encore!

Such an excellent show, he was funny, thanked us all for coming out, telling us he had nothing new, just the same old shit ☺ Hilarious.

We loved every second of it.

Here's what he played: Miami 2017 My Life The Entertainer Summer Highland Falls For the Longest time An Innocent Man Big Man on Mulberry St Allentown New York State of Mind

Then he brought out a special guest, the piano player from the Young Rascals, Felix Cavaliere, if you watch this video you can see us in the crowd! You can see the Princess dancing in the coral dress and catch glimpses of the kids beside her. We are one row in front sitting to the left of her on the end of the row! I bounce the green balloon away at the end of the clip. FUNNY!

He continued on with:

Downeaster Alexa Sometimes a fantasy Moving Out Keeping the Faith She's Always a Woman Don't Ask Me Why Then his roadie, Chainsaw came out and did Highway to Hell ☺

We Didn't Start the Fire River of Dreams (that was the last tour we saw him, in Melbourne) Scenes from An Italian Restaurant Piano Man

Encore

Uptown Girl Still Rock and Roll to Me You May Be Right and finally

Only The Good Die Young...

Awesome show, worth every cent, best time ever!

When we left the kids were deaf, which we told them just meant they'd had fun...

We all deserve to be pampered.

June 9, 2015

My Lord Dr was taking me out the other week and the ritual of getting ready was required. You know the whole thing, we were going somewhere fancy. SO I had to do the hair and makeup thing. :roll:

I'm pretty lazy and don't wear make up much, somedays I'll put on some thing just to look not so tired but I rarely do full makeup. I don't think it's healthy for your skin to cover it in makeup anyway. It gives you pimples, and honestly at this age, I'd rather have no pimples and an unmade face than wear made up and have teenage skin in my late forties...

Anyway, usually I'm left alone to do this ritual, noone is interested in what happens in the make up department here. Except this time, Miss Gremlin decided she wanted to watch, she asked a lot of questions. Wondering why each step was required. As always I explained as I go. I have no problem explaining anything to the kids, never have, no matter what the subject. She was genuinely interested, of course I'm going to share girly things with her if she wants to know. We all know those moments are few and far between around here.



Next week she's getting a manicure for graduation. None of that icky colour stuff or anything but a pampering just the same. Clear polish is a start, and with the re-do of the blue hair on the weekend, it'll be so much fun!

Hidden Gems of New York City

June 15, 2015

On Saturday we went to Governor's Island. It sits right in the middle of New York Harbour, a short 10 minute ferry ride from South Ferry at the bottom of Manhattan. It's $2.00. Once you get over there, you step into the past. There are houses built in the last century, and cannons on top of the hill pointed out, waiting for the enemy to dare. It's been a long time since they've been used but it's all there.

They have a jazz reenactment going on as well. There are dozens of people dressed in their 1920's finery and dancing it up around the back of the island in a "Remember the 20's" jazz thing. There's pedal cars and bikes you can hire and bars and walking trails and a spectacular view of downtown Manhattan, Liberty and the Brooklyn Bridge.



The City through the old buildings



Brooklyn Bridge



The view back to Manhattan



Coming into Governor's Island



Maniac bike Boy



Mush Mush...



Can I drive now?



....but between you and me and the Staten Island Ferry





He can drive, I'll enjoy the ride **pedal kid, this joy ride won't pedal it's self**

Super fun day, super cheap, well except for the exorbitant pedal car rental...highly recommend as a daytrip. So much fun.



New Hork Harbour

Get Off My Lawn- When New Neighbours Move In Across the Hall...

June 17, 2015

So we have some new neighbours moving in. I just had to walk up the stairs with the dog, I mean I could have ridden the elevator with their boxes and bed frames but Sir Lickalot is not that great with the elevator empty so I wasn't even going to worry. We'll call it exercise.

Then Miss Gremlin walks in AKA detective girl and says"where's our Mirror?" So I stuck my head out and asked the removalist if they moved it.

That's when I met him, standing as tall as myself, our new neighbour. He warned me that we'd be hearing a lot from them, they have 3 active boys.... Hmm We'll see about that! One scary "what are you doing?" from My Lord Dr King should induce pant crapping fear in noisy children, just the way we like it.

I've yet to meet the rest of the family but as they've signed a 2 year lease I guess we'll meet soon enough. :/

See we're not great at neighbours, except our original ones, they were perfect! The last ones, who just moved, we hardly saw, My Lord Dr King never saw them. But these ones I fear, we'll be seeing a lot of.

So far we know this, they're jewish and keep the sabbath. That's a lot of stairs to walk with 3 little kids, but I imagine they thought of that when they rented on the 8th floor.

Also they're probably not gonna like our Friday night bacon parties....

There will be stories, I guarantee!

An Attitude That Must Change

June 24, 2015

The other night I posted something on facebook, a comment made by our current President in the wake of yet another mass shooting.

> ***....But let's be clear: at some point, we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries. It doesn't happen in other places with this kind of frequency. And it is in our power to do something about it. I say that recognizing the politics in this town foreclose a lot of those avenues right now. But it would be wrong for us not to acknowledge it. And at some point it's going to be important for the American people to come to grips with it, and for us to be able to shift how we think about the issue of gun violence collectively... -Barack Obama***

What he said was truth, a statement in fact. That we must at some point address the fact that there is a problem with guns in America and the rest of the advanced world doesn't have these issues. It's truth. There's no argument. They just don't. The statistics don't lie.

People went a little nutty, things got heated and the actual argument got hijacked. People are passionate about guns here, well some people... it's a nation divided.

But here's the thing. In Australia, UK, Italy, Spain, Germany, Finland, Sweden, France and countless other countries, children don't accidentally shoot their sibling with their parent's gun, toddlers don't accidentally shoot their mother in Walmart while shopping, teens don't shoot up schools and colleges and movie theatres and malls and churches. It doesn't happen. There are isolated incidents like the recent one in France and in Sydney, which were specific terror threats by foreign extremists but they are isolated and countable on one hand. Here in America, every. single. day there is a news story where someone was shot, often several people. Snipers target motorists on the freeways, police gun down 12 years olds, and shoot men in the back, lone gunmen kill dozens of innocent people going about their daily lives, yet the rhetoric is always if the victims had a gun it wouldn't have happened. The good guys, if armed would have saved us from the bad guys.

The arguments that we need to arm ourselves against the government is just crackpot. The argument about good guys carrying guns will save us from the criminals doesn't hold water, it just doesn't. When was the last report of a good guy actually saving people from a deranged shooter. Can you even give me a single example? And how do we ascertain who is a good guy? If you're strolling through target or grabbing a bite to eat in a mall food court and someone walks by with a gun slung over their shoulder, what do you think? Oh look at that good guy keeping us safe... or do we all call 911 and hide under the tables? There's no way to tell!

The argument about keeping yourself safe from intruders is also flawed. If you are a safe, responsible gun owner then your gun will be locked up or at least separated

from the ammunition, so unless you sleep with a loaded gun under your pillow, the chances of actually defending yourself in a home invasion are small unfortunately, no matter what you think. Your right to personal safety is there. You have the right to arm yourself. Noone is even discussing removing this part of the law and I imagine it makes people feel safer but in reality will it help you? Probably not.

Imagine if we could have actual conversations, without the gun slinging and right to bear arms rhetoric, real, honest discussions. There is a way forward, there is a way to have safe gun ownership and a reduction in the loss of innocent lives.

It can be done, America just has to want to. In the meantime, I guess we just duck and cover.

Changes Everywhere

July 2, 2015

Miss Gremlin graduated from elementary school on Tuesday. That's 5th grade for those not up with US schooling.

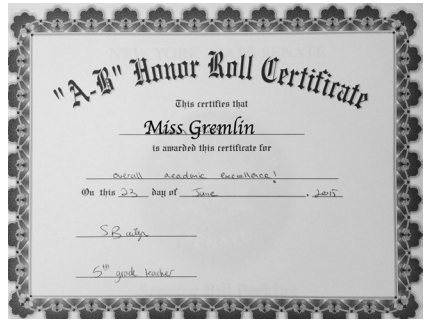
She's moving onto middle school, junior high, 6th grade through 8th grade. Actually she's going to a secondary school so she'll stay put until 12th grade but now you all know how it works over here.

Miss Gremlin dressed in her gladrags and rocked her dance presentation and got on the AB honour roll and a certificate from a local senator...

She's awesome and we're very proud.









Rocking Kindergarten



Yeah I got 5th grade done.

A Climbing Adventure-Teens Love This Stuff

July 6, 2015

Over the Fourth of July Weekend we got outta Dodge because a) the fireworks are crazy and b) we had a gig to attend.

So we made a trip of it. The gig was awesome. Nothing like a bit of christian rock to get you all pumped up! If you haven't heard of them you should check out the Planetshakers. An Australian Christian rock band touring the world.

Our friend of many years is music director of the band. He stays with us when ever he comes through town but we've never seen him play. So he invited us to Connecticut for Friday night's gig.

We had a spectacular time and it was fun to share it with the kids and actually see what our friend does.

Saturday we were looking for something to do. I had seen an amusement park near the water the night before and went looking for that on the google. But something else came up.Miss Gremlin is finally at an age where she can experience things and not have to be child size. I found a place called The Adventure Park and it looked like fun.



It totally was. Acres of obstacle courses through the trees with ziplines and repellers and climbing things. So much fun!

We did the tutorial and safety talk an then we were let loose. Miss Gremlin didn't want to do the kiddie ones, she wanted to go for the blue square (intermediate, kids above 9 to adult).



So we began, My Lord Dr King went first, and half way across he fell! Not wanting to frighten the children, I freaked out internally. I was already nervous but I really freaked watching him figure out how to get back up onto a cable bridge 20 feet off the ground. But he did it.

Miss Gremlin went next. I was so proud of this kid, who is afraid of heights and doesn't like rollercoasters. She was pumped and up for the climb!





She did so well until there was a glitch in the rope on the snowboard...

After that, understandably so, Miss Gremlin freaked out and had to repel out at the safety exit. She had pulled muscles in her shoulder and decided to get out. She's totally fine, a couple of days with the fun pain killers and rest and she'll be back to normal.

The boys carried on and loved it!

We will be back because it was fun and although Miss Gremlin was hurt, she will want to conquer her fears and go again.

Best of all we didn't die! It was excellent fun and thrilling and entirely terrifying but isn't that what adventuring is all about?

Every Year, There's a Little More Acceptance

July 8, 2015

Time goes so fast, every day is filled with tasks we do and we don't even think about. Life marches on, we move forward whether we think we can or not.

Today is 4 years since my dad died. FOUR YEARS. I can't even believe it's been so long. The kids are taller now than in the last photos with him, we're all a little older and the urge to call and tell Pa stuff is all but gone. But he's missed. I never get on skype anymore, ever, but once it was my morning routine, to see what he'd said overnight while I slept, to converse for the few hours that we were both awake. Time zones are weird like that.



Last visit with the kids August 2010

I don't even know how to feel. There's a heaviness but also an acceptance because that's what time does. They say it heals all wounds but what they mean is it puts distance between you and that event and the good experiences you've had since help to soothe the pain.

I don't tear up very much anymore, I don't get sad or cry without warning. I can look at the picture on the wall and I don't get a tightness in my chest. He's gone from our physical world and that's how it works but he's never gone from my heart and I find myself thinking of the things he'd enjoy about us now. How the kids have grown and how they are becoming adults and figuring out the world.



Pa and Miss Gremlin 2007



2007



Pa would think 'you blokes are alright'. And he'd be right.

I think he'd be proud.

*There's a building going up across the street. I'm sitting outside and a worker is using an angle grinder. The sound and the smell of grinding steel is on the wind. It's funny the things that trigger memories. It's like I'm 14 again and he's out in the shed building something.

Tomorrow will be better. Today I'm allowed to cry.



August 2010

I miss you Dad.
18 Aug 1938-8 July 2011

So This Happened....

July 14, 2015

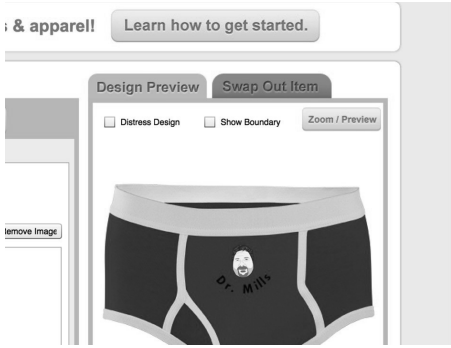
You know things can get quite interesting here. I mean it is us after all. My Lord Dr King likes to say that he does it to 'give me things to write about' but I believe I write because of the things he does.

Case in Point:

You wish you had my life.

Just look what I get to wash and fold now!





But not only that! I get to see him wear them.

Seriously? Dr Mills undies?

I cannot even keep a straight face....It's like his penis is smiling at me...

WITH THAT FACE!

He just asked me if I wanted him to design me some. I totally should right? What could possibly go wrong?

Dr, Better Check That Again

July 21, 2015

Remember back in May when My Lord Dr King did this? Skateboard crash in the park.



The hospital diagnosed a broken rib or two but the x-rays showed no breaks in his arm.

Awesome, let the healing begin.

Fast forward to a couple of weeks ago.

You know when you have a niggling pain, like a thorn in your side, or a piece of glass in your foot that has to work its way out?

Well My Lord Dr King's arm wasn't making the recovery it should. He's been working out trying to strengthen it back up but the pain was still quite strong.

The belligerence was getting stronger too. The annoyance factor was ramping up. Things are busy here, the kids are on vacation, the routine is all messed up. All the things to make any normal person feel crappy. Especially one who works from home.

Frankly the mood was just getting worse. NO matter what I did to try to appease it. (Yeah EVEN that!)

Eventually I did what all wives do when their super communicators aren't communicating.

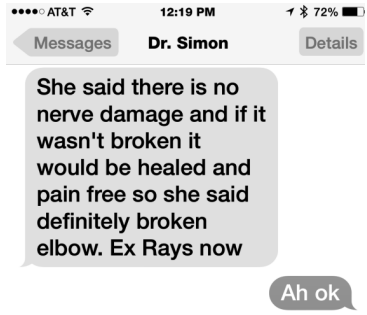
I asked. "What the fuck is wrong with you?"

"I just don't feel right." he answered

"No shit." came my sympathetic reply

I actually asked if he was sick of me! You know, years together can do that to a person.

So last Monday he said, "I think I need to go to the doctor because I just don't feel right."



And now, just for fun, we get to see an orthopedic surgeon.

Sneaky broken arm! No wonder he wasn't feeling well. Who has a broken arm for 6 weeks and tries to heal it by working out?

DOH!

If All Else Fails I Could Be A Groomer!

July 22, 2015

Sir Lickalot has had a few different haircuts,

He's had the trim...



and he's looked like a shorn sheep...



But the best one, is the Lion cut, although it was kind of embarrassing to walk him because of the attention :P





The problem is, since he has all of his issues, it would take hours! And he would be traumatised when I went to pick him up. One time I dropped him off, walked the two blocks home and got a phone call to come get him because they couldn't handle him.

Apparently he sits down because of the noise, so it takes two people. You know how he gets when the drill comes out.

And I got to thinking, not everyone is going to care for him like us, even though I explain he's brain damaged and blind in one eye. He always seemed very happy to get out of there and getting him IN the door is a mammoth task.

It's really hot here in NYC and he needs to be clipped because he has one of those double coats, he's old and I can really see the heat affecting him.

I made a decision to try and do it myself. So I went to the Amazon and found some good quality clippers and awaited their delivery. One day shipping of course!

Here's Mr Fluffy pants before...



I unpacked everything and just went for it. I got Grand Master D to help in case he freaked out.

Truth is, this dog trusts me and I can get him to do practically anything with enough patience but that wasn't required at all!

He just stood there.

It was super easy and fun. Just like shearing a sheep.

Grand Master D even had a go, however his handywork needs perfecting, see the large gouge? But hey, it's just hair and it'll grow back.



He's much happier and easier to wash. I think I'll keep him trimmed.

I consider it a success.

Total cost $50 for clippers and 45 minutes work.

Totally savings $100 grooming fee every time and 2-5 hours, depending on the groomer.



He seems relaxed enough with the outcome.

All I need is a supply of bandanas....

Go Set A Watchman- Review

July 27, 2015

Saturday I read an entire book in one sitting. I've never done that before but I wanted to read it. Grand Master D has to read it for school so I also wanted to get finished so he could have it.

I've been following the controversy of the release of Go Set A Watchman and the idea that perhaps Harper Lee was bullied, coerced or worse into it's publication. But I was also curious.

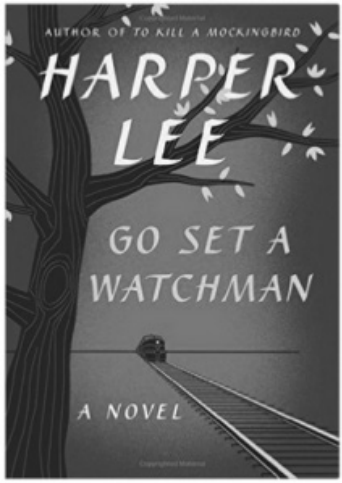
SPOILER ALERT

I read some articles about the content of the book and how Atticus was NOT the same man as depicted in Mockingbird and that he was racist and a bigot. These are interesting times we live in, with the resurgence of racial tensions, this book has a place in the discussion, just as Mockingbird did back in the 60's when the country was looking at how to shift the paradigm and bring equality to an entire race of people oppressed for generations.

The book switches between 26 yo Jean Louise who is visiting her family in Maycomb after being away in New York for years and discovering her attitudes have changed and her small town has a side she doesn't like, and memories of her childhood spent at the knee of Atticus learning the ways of the world from him and living wild and free in a small southern town.

Whether Harper wrote it as a prequel to Mockingbird, or a first draft and changed it into the book we've all come to see as a modern classic or not, it's a thought provoking read and one worthy of praise.

Whether it was her wish to publish it or not, the truth is, this book reflects very eloquently the troubles occurring in the south today. The true feelings of many and the struggle with what is right and how they feel.



While I felt some guilt after reading the articles and feeling that I was betraying Harper for buying and reading it, I've come to see, after reflecting on it, that this book, while not the same as Mockingbird, certainly gives the reader something to think about and captures human nature well.

It in no way diminishes my views on Mockingbird. It reads as a stand alone book and therefore offers a new generation a perspective of life and truth and human nature which spans generations and in no small part helps to explain why good people can still have bad thoughts .

I highly recommend the read and hope that Harper Lee benefits from her talent and amazing insight into life and small town southern prejudices.

A Series of Childhood Memories... Australian Farm Life

August 11, 2015

I've been thinking lately that trying to come up with things to write about on a regular basis can be hard. Especially when there's not that much to talk about with summer and being busy and not having time to write. I have lost inspiration

I thought I might write a series of stories, memories I guess about my life on the farm from the age of 7....

Things weren't what you call normal on our farm and I suppose it will give you a sense of who I am... or not ☺

Would you be up for that ?

Acreage, A Cast Iron Tub and A Horse Named Jim

August 13, 2015

When I was a kid, maybe 7 or 8, my parents moved us from a suburban home to a small acreage plot in a small country town about 50 km from the major centre. It was a financial decision on their part as much as it was lifestyle. They'd built a house on a block and found that maintaining the mortgage was too hard and so they opted for a more rural lifestyle.

The house they bought was an old one, built of weatherboard and fibro on 8 acres. Once a servants/farm hand's home, built on the lands of a once great property called Round Hill Station, it had the remnants of a fancy english garden and the grandeur was evident in the building.

By the time we bought it, it was old and a little run down but it afforded my parents to get out from under a mortgage they couldn't service and became a fixer upper...

There were many moments I remember about the place, the old chip heater in the bathroom over the bath which you lit to make instant hot water in the shower because the house wasn't plumbed with modern conveniences like that. It was the 70's, and shit like that still existed.

The house was riddled with white ants and a lawsuit ensued after purchase because both the seller and the agent had acted dishonourably. The place needed a lot of work. Over the years my parents renovated as money allowed.

Many, many childhood memories come from that place: climbing the almond tree and eating until our teeth hurt from cracking the outer shells getting our fill of mulberries before turning on each other in a playful food fight bragging to the nosy neighbours that we had a pool, only to see them stroll down the driveway with towels slung over their shoulders, finding us paddling in the old fashioned cast iron bathtub-our fancy pool trailing dad on our bikes while he cut the grass in haphazard tracks, until he got sick of us and finished the job.

However during the original purchase negotiations, there was an old horse living on the property. He was an ex pacer, not a trotter. He had learned to synchonise his legs to move in unison on each side. Not the natural gait of a horse but how they ran when harnessed to the sulky running around the track.

His name was Jim. He was about 14 hands high, a flea bitten grey and pretty much bombproof. Exactly the kind of horse you want to teach little kids how to ride.



Image courtesy of Vitolef at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

When the sellers ripped off the window coverings and air-conditioner, it was negotiated that he would sweeten the deal and be left for us.

We had arrived!

We lived on a farm and had a horse.

Now Old Jim was a cunning old thing. When we inherited him I suppose he was about 28 or 29. He'd seen a thing or two and was old enough to negotiate his own terms. They had left an old bridle and stock saddle for us to use.

The first trick was catching him from the paddock to ride. If he saw the bridle he'd just walk away but if you took a slice of bread he'd let you catch him. Sugar cubes were his weakness but too much sugar isn't good for horses and so mostly it was bread or a handful of chaff in a bucket. The bridle hidden inside of course.

Old Jim could tell if you were wearing appropriate footwear or not, and if you weren't he took great delight in lifting his hoof and placing it on your foot and leaning all his weight on you. A punch or three on the shoulder would shift him, but there was always that twinkle in his eye... crafty old shit. We learned not to wear thongs (flipflops) around him.

Naturally we joined the local pony club which met at the showgrounds on a sunday. The show grounds were about a mile away straight down the stock route which ran between our property and the local common: council land which was agisted or just used for stray stock. There was one main road to cross, the thoroughfare through the town, but with the town population totalling 1500, it wasn't a very busy road for the time.

Because we were young, my mum used to walk beside as we rode down to the showgrounds to show off our prowess of doing barrels and jumping the cavallettis which were the training ground for kids to learn how to show jump.

Inexperienced and small by comparision, Old Jim regularly took advantage of whomever was on his back. Mostly me, as I was the avid equestrian of the family.

He lead us on a merry dance on more than one occasion... I'll tell you about those next time...

California Road Trip

September 8, 2015

Having spent most of the summer just hanging out, we decided to take a 2 week trip to California, using a business engagement as the premise. This is often how our holidays happen. My Lord Dr King rarely takes vacations. it's the adult ADHD I suppose.

This time it was mostly vacation with a sprinkling of meetings...all wrapped up in a road trip because road trips are awesome!

We flew to Los Angeles and My Lord Dr King participated in a conferral of two well deserving individuals to receive honourary doctorates for the same University which he received his. He's the Dean of Technology there now... seriously don't even ask.



Like the Brady Bunch but not...



The Doctors....



All the cool

With a stop in the middle and a quick look around Hollywood boulevard, rodeo drive and an unsuccessful try at the Hollywood sign, the next day we headed south to La Jolla (San Diego) to meet with a couple of other business partners and mixed business and pleasure again. It's alway fun when you end your night drinking wine and smoking cigars on the hotel room deck while all the children play. Until some curmudgeony hotel guest comes up to complain he cant's sleep for the noise. Spoiled sport.



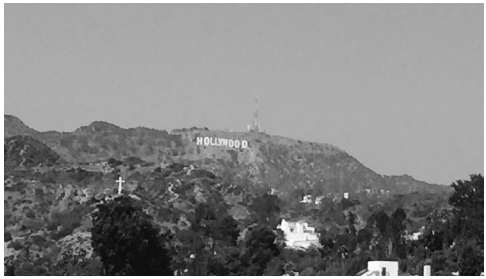
The family that tattoos together...



Rodeo Drive Baby...



Hollywood Stars



The Hollywood sign



Way in the distance....



Good Aussie Boy



He's part dog...



Seal Cove, La Jolla



Seal Beach, La Jolla



I see a pirate... Arghh

Anyway, the following morning we were sure to leave by noon and with one more stop along the way, we headed back north to LA and as close to San Francisco as we could get in one day. Naturally we managed to hit LA for peak hour traffic. Shit planning but the kids got to experience it I suppose. I could never live in LA with all that traffic.

Once we finally got on the open road and the familiar signs started to appear, like Ventura Highway and Santa Barbara etc we enjoyed car games and all the fun road trip things you do. The kids love road trips with Miss Gremlin leading the charge of eye-spy, the numberplate and the song game, ad nauseum for the rest of the car. The scenery along Highway 1 and 101 heading up the Pacific Coast was breathtaking! We will do it again.



Ventura Highway in the Sunshine....



Our new island getaway



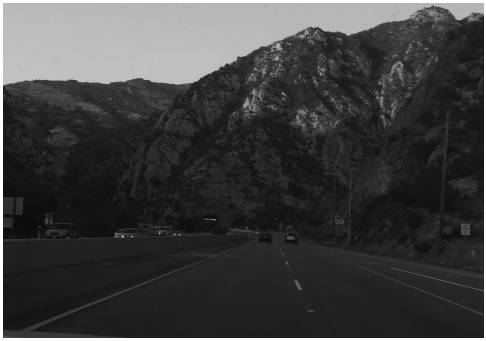
A Mountain Range...



The Other Central Park



The changing landscape



Climbing through the mountains



Sunset on Highway 1

We stopped for dinner in San Louis Obispo and fell in love with the quaint little town. Northern California was showing some appeal. After dinner we got back on the road to chew down as many miles as we could, so our drive into Napa the next day wasn't too long. We wound through some hills as we climbed higher and finding ourselves super low on fuel at midnight, we held our breath as we rolled into a sleepy hollow with a 24hr fuel pump. By then we were all done with driving and we drove another few miles and got the last two rooms in a hotel in Carmel. Carmel is the little place where Clint Eastwood was once Mayor.

Washing off the road and sleeping soundly, the morning found us closer to Monterey Bay than we expected and a quick breakfast on the pier and we were off again to San Francisco and Napa valley where we would stay for a few days.

Well Hello, Remember Me?!

October 1, 2015

Wow! Here we are in October! I haven't posted for a whole month. Crazy schedule with back to school, lots of short weeks due to the Jewish holidays and getting back into a routine after summer has left me exhausted and uninspired. (Ok summer didn't see me feverishly writing either)

It was a new experience with the kids attending different schools starting last year with Grand Master D heading to high school but this year with Miss Gremlin also going to a new school it has been a learning curve and stepping into the unfamiliar. So far she's loving it. We love the communication which this school has embraced wholeheartedly. Every kid has a google apps account and child and parent have their own dedicated school email address. Pretty cool but then what do you expect from a school which is annexed from a major university.

Last night was curriculum night, an opportunity for the teachers to let us know the expectations of the students, policies and general information to help us help our kids be successful.

I have always handled the school stuff, My Lord Dr King has been a seldom visitor to the halls of learning (even his own).... and only attends functions/performances and end of year activities, when he must.

He went through a baptism of fire last night as both schools scheduled their curriculum evenings on the same night at the same time. Now we all know I have super human skills, but being able to be up town on the west side and in midtown on the east side at the same time is beyond even my capabilities. And so with trepidation, because you know, people, My Lord Dr King went up to Miss Gremlin's school for the first time and attended his first ever curriculum evening. Did you hear the fanfare?

I had a running update, all the info was sent to me via text in real time, and I did the same to him. We were in sync! Working as a team for the betterment of our children's education. Who knew this could happen? Certainly not me....

Of course as no children were allowed to attend the events, due to numbers, no one knew who he was and he wasn't saying, oh there were some knowing looks from faculty, I mean let's face it, Miss Gremlin is her father's daughter.

He struck up a couple of conversations with other parents and was questioned whether he was Russell Crowe or another English actor whom he apparently resembles. It's not the first time he's be accused of looking like Russell Crowe ☺



What do you think ?

And it's also not beyond the realms of possibilities that Russell would attend an evening like that. He has kids and even actor's kids have to go to school and their famous parents have to rub shoulders with the riff raff and endure curriculum night. This is New York City after all.

It's a whole new world for us, with two kids out of elementary school and into specialised schools that cater to their interests, we've found ourselves both becoming far more involved. Of course, I can't see My Lord Dr King manning bake sale stalls but curriculum night is a good first step and who knows he might even have to do an occasional parent teacher conference, lets see how the schools schedule those...

Happy Autumn, happy getting into the swing of the new school year and if you're on the East Coast take care, Hurricane Joaquin is coming!

Doesn't Everyone chase their horse in a Ute? Stories from an Australian Country Childhood

October 15, 2015

Old Jim was quite a character. He was my first intro to horse ownership and a love of all things equestrian.

I learned how to jump on Jim, well if you call the local pony club's 18" cavalettis jumps. One day a particularly moody Jim decided that he'd had enough of this guff and was going home. As I've mentioned we lived about a mile up the stock route in a small country town from the show grounds. Mum would walk down beside me while I rode Jim and sometimes stay and other times go home and come back to pick me up or when I got older I rode home. This one day, she chose to stay and was in the midst of a lovely conversation with one of the other mothers, when out of the corner of her eye she saw Old Jim with me perched on his back heading out the gates towards to road and home beyond!

He was done, this silly game of following other horses around and jumping over these silly sticks with this skinny blonde kid on his back was not for him. I mean there's

only so much a cranky old retired pacer will put up with, besides it was feeding time and there was chaff to be had.

I had absolutely no control. Jim just put the bit between his teeth, threw his head and took us home at a fast walk, not one to over exert himself at the best of times...

So with that, mum had no choice but to jump up and chase her child up to road home...

That was him. Never more than a trot or pace actually. He never cantered, no matter how much you kicked him in the guts or used a gum tree switch on him. He was not interested one bit. The best you'd get was that he would change stride in midair... a leftover of his pacing days I guess. So I guess he was pretty safe to let the kids just go and learn how to ride.

One evening, I remember I was over playing at the neighbors house, Dad was sitting at the back table having his after work beers and decided that he was going to jump on Old Jim bareback and come over to the neighbours to pick me up.

It was all going well, the two of us trotting along bareback, when all of a sudden Jim changed stride and we slipped off. Now I'm not saying that Dad was drunk but I'm also not saying he wasn't a little pickled. We landed with a hard thump on the ground right at the front gate in the grass. Not as soft as one would hope if I remember rightly. I got the wind knocked out of me and had a little panic, I was only 7 or 8... and that was my first fall. But after we realised neither of us were hurt, we just walked down the driveway, leading Old Jim,who was most definitely chuckling himself on his brilliant maneuver... Old shit.

No matter what, he would not go faster than a trot, or a pace or whatever that crazy gait he had was called. Except for the time we had someone else's horse on the place for a few weeks. He had a friend and he loved it. This one day we decided we wanted to ride and he decided he wasn't into it. The bread didn't work, the sugar didn't work, he just stepped away and wouldn't be caught. Mum came out and she couldn't catch him then Dad came out...and that's when the fun began... That feisty old horse ran away! I mean tail up full pelt gallop across the paddock with his new friend. Now Dad, not one to be beaten, got in his ute (utility truck) and began chasing these horses around the 8 acre paddock, with us kids in the back of course. Hey it was the 70's and we were on a farm. It's what you did... around and around those horses ran, until they were white with foam and blowing hard. Old Jim at full gallop was a site to behold! We were shocked and amazed. We'd never seen it before and nery a single soul on his back, be it child or full grown man could ever get him above a trot again. But that day he proved he could still run, we had fun chasing him and made a memory doing it. I don't think we rode him once he was caught, I think it was more about who won in the end and he was too tired.

We must have had that old horse for about 3 years. By then he was really old, maybe 32 and arthritis had begun to cause him grief. He would get down on the ground and then not have the strength to get back up. He was the first horse that I even saw lay down flat on the ground to sleep. I had only ever seen them sleep standing up before Jim. At first we thought he was dead but when Dad got close he lifted his head as if to say "Yes?" And snore!? Oh My....

We had a vet come out and the prognosis was not great, he gave us some painkilling powder and we had to put it in some chaff or bread and give it to him to relieve his pain but the cunning old shit would take that piece of bread in his teeth and shake it until the powder fell off then eat it, and forget about the chaff... No tainted chaff for me thanks!

Eventually after a few months and several nights of pulling and encouragement to get him back on his feet, Dad decided that it was his time. We'd tried and tried for hours to get him up and we just couldn't. Still there the next morning we tried again but he'd been down all night and he was just too weak.

A call was made to the local council and a backhoe came out to our place, us kids were sent to the neighbours and Dad put Old Jim out of his misery. The backhoe put him in his final resting place and pushed the dirt over him.

He was buried on the farm he'd lived since his retirement, he'd spent the last years of his life teaching us kids the love of horses and the respect of large animals like that. He received the love of a young family. He gave us much enjoyment and I like to think we did the same for him.

It's Totally Ok to Squeeze Random Strangers, Right?

November 10, 2015

A strange thing happened to me yesterday.

Outside being walked by Sir Lickalot, yes he walks me. He's old, he deserves to walk where he wants. Anyway we walking back down the main street and two girls were out collecting for planned parenthood. They were standing in the basic formation about 20 mtrs apart. As we approached I could see a woman talking to them, as I go closer I could see it was hostile. Something in me snapped, I went up to the girl and said 'Tell me all about it!'

She did her thing and we parted ways. As I walked off the same woman was giving the second girl a roasting, telling her she should be doing that in Chelsea, not up here in Harlem. Let me assure you, girls need just as much help and education up here in Harlem don't you worry. Poor girl, I felt so sorry for her, she's just doing her job and supporting a place which helps women in poorer areas.

I couldn't help myself, as I got to the girl, I reached out and squeezed her arm in support and kept walking. That could be weird, actually I'm sure it is but I just felt like she needed to know she was doing a good thing.

Um ok it was weird, I'm getting to that age of doing those things ☺

This isn't Freedom

December 3, 2015

Here we are again, mopping up after a mass shooting. It's sickening, it's tragic, it's horrific and yet...

Nothing gets done. Not one single thing changes. All those people who go to work and school and never come home. What did they do to deserve this?

Tomorrow there is every chance we'll be mopping up again at a different scene. Nowhere is safe, every place in America has the opportunity to participate in one of these, get their 15 minutes of empathy and prayer in the 24 hr news cycle. The mall full of shoppers, the college campus full of our youth, an elementary school. We're

glued to the coverage, the stations make headers and graphics naming each tragedy and spout stats at us. More shootings than days of the year, has 2015 crossed over?

Is it one for the history books?

FUCK THAT SHIT.

I can't watch anymore. I can't!

I get too angry, infuriated by the politicians who are more concerned about upsetting their revenue flow than trying to save innocent humans. Too angered by the people who instantly go into attack mode about the government taking their guns. What they're actually saying is my gun is more important than your life.

The GOD DAMN Second Amendment. I'm over it.

The right to bear arms, America you don't deserve that right. You've proven time and time again that you're not responsible enough.

30,000+ people die of gun related deaths in America every single year. Toddlers accidentally shooting a parent, preschoolers shooting their friends, victims of domestic violence, road rage, school bullying, all manner of reasons people make decisions to use a firearm against another. Many of them legally obtained.

We pray and we mourn and we say now is not the time to talk about gun control. Here's a tip.... now is exactly the time to talk about gun control, before the next one. Before another family has to bury their loved one for no good reason.

The tired old rhetoric of criminals not obeying the rules blah blah blah, the criminals, the actual known criminals like bikers, gang members, felons, none of those people ever go into a public place and shoot the shit out of as many people as they can. That's not how it works. Those people, well they're 'lone wolves' and they're 'mentally ill' and they shouldn't have access.

NO SHIT but who's stopping them?

Not the Prolifers that's for sure. Sorry, that's another dig for another day.

It's basic, simple logic, if there are less guns in the community then there is less access and less chance of being hurt by a gun. Why is this not obvious? Good guys, 90% of the time don't do anything to stop a situation of a bad guy with a gun. And who determines who's good and bad anyway? Why are so many people afraid of regulation of a deadly weapon? We have regulations on many things. Things far less likely to kill you than an assault rifle.

Why aren't we protesting in the streets for this? Why are we allowing a Lobby group to dictate what's best for America? They don't even care! The NRA is squarely responsible for these daily senseless tragedies. 30,000 deaths a year.

30,000 deaths a year.

30,000

Deaths

A

Year

It makes me sick.

Where will it be tomorrow?

This isn't Freedom. This is terrorism.

2016 — A Mother Life

If We Make it Through Tomorrow....

January 22, 2016

It's almost February, so far this year we've had no real snow to speak off, which is good considering the battering we received over the last couple of years.

It's been lovely to enjoy some warmer weather but starting tonight, we're in for a snow storm, they're naming it Jonas. The weather people are hyping it up so much that it's just ridiculous. Ok D.C. and Virginia are going to be buried, but they've been buried before and the governing authorities know how to handle the snow.

Here in NYC the Mayor is saying stay inside, don't go out. It's all a little alarmist. In these days of 24 hour news and weather, all those channels need content to keep their channel going, so they just whip people up into a frenzy. Supermarkets are sold out of essentials but here in the city it's not a problem, we can all shuffle through the snow a block or two for milk and bread.

It's all such a joke.

But I'll prepare, because why not. I have a fridge full of food and a netflix list for of suggestions....

See you on the other side....



12 inches of snow does not an Armageddon make. :)

That Time a Megalomaniac Ran for President

February 10, 2016

You guys, I've been holding my tongue as much as I can. I've watched closely as this year's presidential election has taken shape. I've laughed with all of you who thought he wouldn't get far but when he lasted the first couple of months, I lamented, this can't be real. People can't honestly think he can run the country.

Then he became the front runner, even though every time he opens his mouth he's spouting hate speech against someone. Everything he says proves he cares little for the actual successful running of America and more about stroking his ego. Tell people what he thinks they want to hear. And by some accounts he's correct, unfortunately America has been in decline for some time and the hurt people are feeling is aimed at those in office, rightly or wrongly accused of not doing enough to help.

Last night, he won the New Hampshire Republican primary by a large margin. That means more republican voters chose to support a man who has bankrupted his companies several times just to get out of paying his debts, in doing so he's put people on the unemployment line.



The same man who has taken money and done developments in partnership with sheiks and other mega wealthy muslims but has turned on them all by saying ALL muslims must be temporarily banned from entering the US. He employs undocumented Mexican workers for his high rise projects and yet wants to build a wall to keep all the Mexican rapist and murderers out. The same man has directed his clothing manufacturing businesses off shore to Chinese sweat shops but believes China is our biggest threat.

This man, who stamps his name on everything he touches doesn't care about America, he doesn't care about the poor, the sick, the mentally ill.

This whole thing is a joke, an ego boost for himself. He's a bully and a danger to the international reputation and security of the United States of America. I can't vote as I'm a resident alien and not a citizen but I like to live here and I hope that the only thing this crazy, selfish, megalomaniac gets is his ass handed to him sometime between now and November....PLEASE

Because if this dick get control of this country, becomes the LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD, then we're all doomed and we should all make sure our passports are current because leaving is the only option.

Life Gets Messy

March 22, 2016



I went to court yesterday, I know, shocking... but it wasn't for me, I was a character witness for someone in family court being falsely accused in a messy family breakdown.

It was my first ever time in court, well ok I went because of a licensing fine on Sir Lickalot years ago but this was different. I was asked to give my account and truths about a friend whose life has been ripped out from underneath him. What a horrible place family court is. It's so sad and intimidating and feral and gross.

As it turned out I wasn't required to enter the courtroom and didn't have to speak but the judge was informed there were 6 people waiting the attest to the good character of this person. That seemed to be enough to swing the case his way in the best way possible.

The things that kept running through my mind for the 4 hours we sat in the lobby of the courts. How does it come to this? How do people who once loved each other enough to make a life together and produce children end up hating each other and making up lies just to score points? It makes me sad.

But it also makes me glad I have a secure, loving relationship. It makes me grateful for all that I have and all that we sacrifice to enjoy this life together.

I will never take it for granted.

What Are We Doing to These Kids?

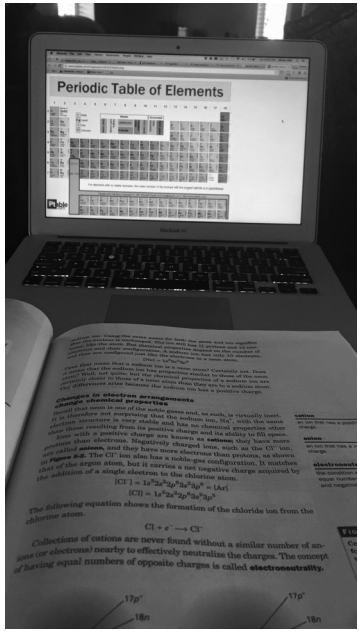
March 24, 2016

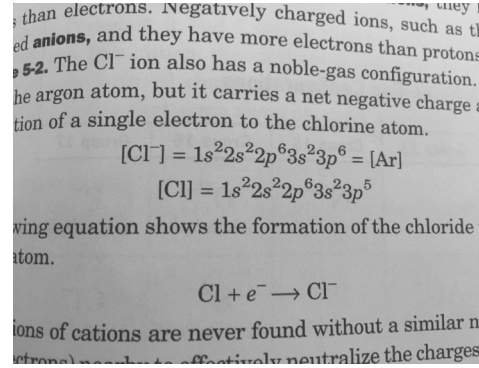
Wading through the American education system is becoming an ever increasing frustration. It seems that gone are the days of learning things that are practical and applicable to your life beyond school. No more are we teaching children life skills and vocational skills. We've reached a point where we're placing undue pressure on kids who just don't think that way and this makes them feel like failures. The dissection of subjects earlier in schooling, especially in the math/science fields is making many students second guess their abilities and we're stressing kids out unnecessarily.

Remember back when you did high school? I bet you didn't do algebra in 6th grade and I'm almost certain you didn't do chemistry and trigonometry until the last two years or wasn't that what just the brainac dungeons and dragons kids did?

I hear the argument all the time that we all need to have an understanding of these things but do we? I am learning chemistry for the very first time as a 48 yo simply so

I can help Grand Master D pass. To date in my life I have honestly never needed to know any chemical equations ever, not one single time. Don't even get me started on trigonometry, COS, TAN, SIN... dafuq?




than electrons. Negatively charged ions, such as the
ed **anions,** and they have more electrons than protons,
e **5-2.** The Cl^- ion also has a noble-gas configuration. It
he argon atom, but it carries a net negative charge ac
tion of a single electron to the chlorine atom.

$$[Cl^-] = 1s^2 2s^2 2p^6 3s^2 3p^6 = [Ar]$$
$$[Cl] = 1s^2 2s^2 2p^6 3s^2 3p^5$$

wing equation shows the formation of the chloride io
atom.

$$Cl + e^- \longrightarrow Cl^-$$

ions of cations are never found without a similar nu
etrons) nearby to effectively neutralize the charges.

I completely understand that these subjects are highly specialised and required for many fields of expertise and we need scientists and physics experts to continue inventing cool stuff but making every kid do them, younger and younger each year does nothing to actually teach them anything but to hate those subject if they don't have the aptitude. It doesn't mean you're not intelligent if you can't grasp the concepts of these subject, not everyone can paint or sing, dance or play an instrument either....

I also get the fact that we want a well rounded education for our children. Can we not just touch on each of the 4 math subject, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and calculus in a basic sense through the first years if only to light the spark in those kids who feel this is their jam and they go on to do the more difficult courses in 11 and 12? Why make the english and language lover struggle with something he's never going to use just to feel like a failure? And why make every kid do an entire year of it?

Same with the sciences, I get that earth science, life science and basic genetics are interesting topics but in depth chemistry and physics if you have no intention of becoming a pharmacist, doctor, scientist etc is borderline torture!

Whatever happened to Business Math? Math 1&2 or applied science for the math/science geeks is awesome for future STEM industries but for those kids who will never use it and struggle to even comprehend it, why not teach them finances and balancing cheque books and compound interest and how to fill out taxes and shit. Those children may excel in the language arts, or may be brilliant with their hands

instead. But how would we ever know anymore? Nobody takes wood work or metal shop or the culinary arts anymore. We're not all cut out for academia or dare I say it, college, and I really think it's unfair to force every kid into a cookie cutter education that they'll never use and can't succeed in.

When I look at the grades Grand Master D gets across his subjects, it's completely obvious where his strengths lie. He's getting honours in Film, Computer Tech and Art, high grades in english and global/social/geography and Spanish but he's really struggling with chemistry and geometry. He's a smart kid but his aptitude is shown to be more creative than analytical and it feels wrong to force extra pressure on him to just pass the tests and forget it anyway. Staying up until 2am to finish homework is so counterproductive that I can't even begin to explain. Teach him something more useful, a more general science and math course....something he will draw on throughout his life.

And on the flip side of that, what about the kid who's a whiz at math and loves all the sciences but can't write an english paper to save himself. Sure there are minimum standards but not everyone needs to be able to write a 100 page thesis on Shakespeare at 16.

We're setting kids up to fail, we're running out of skilled workers in the practical industries, builders, plumbers, electricians and the list goes on. Mike Rowe harps on this all the time. You really wanna make money? Learn how to be a plumber, a mechanic or a carpenter...

You wanna make America great again? Train the workers to rebuild the infrastructure, teach kids to weld and fix trains and cars and trucks and toilets and build houses and install solar and wind technology and cook our food. Then you can stop complaining that the illegal immigrants are taking all the jobs.

But for the love, stop making kids hate school because they are struggling to learn useless shit they'll never need.

End Rant of Frustrated Parent

Am I wrong? I'd love to hear what you think, especially if you have a child struggling with the impossible pressure placed on them at school.

And You thought your Husband was Weird

April 12, 2016

We all have quirks right? Some of us have stranger ones than others and we learn to navigate each others things when we live together for any length of time. It's part of the fabric of a relationship, agreed?

Well this story is just weird enough that you guys need to know, I'm living with a crazy person :P

First a little back story. I love to do laundry, it's a thing.

Moving on....

I use all the good products, no corner cutting in this house, tide and downy all the way. Well, some time ago My Lord Dr King mentioned to me that people were commenting on his clothing smell. I thought this was weird but whatever, people are

weird, it happened a few times and so we decided that the fabric softener was to blame and I eliminated it from my laundry routine. I'm nothing if not flexible with my obsessions.

Things went along normally, nobody really noticed the change although the weird smell comments stopped, or he stopped relaying them to me...

Sometime later and completely unrelated, My Lord Dr King was being annoyed by the pillows rubbing on the bedhead and making a squeaky sound and disturbing his sleep. This turned into a full blown thing that went on for months and eventually our bed was pulled apart and the sides and foot are now in the basement, just so the bed can be a few inches away from the bedhead. He built a contraption to keep it apart no matter the active movement in the bed. It's mildly annoying because now things can fall down and to retrieve them I end up doing all sorts of super human contortion moves.. Nevertheless the issue was fixed.

However, after some time the squeaking returned, and My Lord Dr King once again became obsessed with stopping this noise... Oh the joys of living with the sonically sensitive!

The bedding squeaks... No really, that was his discovery. Especially since he's spent quite a bit of time away from home and in hotels and friends spare rooms of late. "No one else's sheets and pillow squeak, what are you doing to make ours squeak like this?"

Of course at this point I think he's losing it because really? You can't sleep because the sheets squeak? Give me a break. Don't let anyone ever tell you people don't get weirder with age. So Sunday morning he proved to me that we had squeaky sheets and we had a discussion on the products used. Now remember, I gave up fabric softener some time ago because he said it smelled weird on his clothing...

I don't buy cheap sheets, they are all cotton and high thread count, thick and a little stiff but more crisp than anything, certainly not uncomfortable or scratchy. Crisp, clean, good quality linen like Grandma used to have. You know before you used them for 6 months and put your feet through the bottom of the sheet.

But my darling found them to be unacceptable because of the squeaking. Seriously? 1000 thread count not enough for you? I'm living with the Princess and the pea!

But as I mentioned, I am nothing if not flexible, it's a gift. And so as we lay in bed Sunday laughing at the ridiculousness of the situation, I promised to try to remedy it for his sonic sensibilities. *eyeroll*, I'm an excellent wife like that.

First thing Monday morning, I stripped the bed, ran out to the store, purchased the best quality fabric softener and went about washing 5 sets of sheets, putting on the extra rinse cycle and adding fabric softener to the mix. With every load that came out, I took it to him for a test to see if it still squeaked. I also brought other clothing for the test... And yes they squeaked when the top of his fingernail was dragged over the fabric. We laughed and laughed. Who even has this issue?

Monday IS washing day after all.

When everything was finally washed, fabric softened, rinsed and dried, I remade the bed and waited for the ultimate test.

Experiment outcome: Sheets do not squeak when fabric softener is applied.

Who knew fabric softener was so important?

And now my friends when you see My Lord Dr King, if he smells like fabric softener you'll just have to deal because squeaky sheets and loss of sleep is more important than how you smell...

Apparently.

Can you top this quirk? Come on share your partner's crazy... we're all in this together.

When Kids Get Jobs-Is After College Too Late?

May 11, 2016

Grand Master D just got a job. After school a couple of nights and one of the weekend days. And it's awesome. He did it himself. He's 15.

I think it's great because he's been looking for money more and more. He has had a babysitting gig for a while but now he wants something more. It's an important skill to learn for teens, they need to start getting out of home to do things for themselves before they're shunted off to college. (If they go at all). They need to learn how to be productive. We have this short amount of time while they're in high school to continue to influence them and teach them, all while pushing them out into the world on their own but still providing a safe place to land when they fail, and they will fail because thats how you grow and learn.

Not so long ago, certainly in my lifetime, once high school was done, kids got full time jobs. Not every kid went to college, especially in Australia. I know America is different in this regard but waiting until kids go to college to teach them about independence and going alone, I believe is too late.

I'm not the bank, when kids want money they need to earn it. So far we've provided all needs for our kids but when they start wanting entertainment money and larger purchases, it's good to show them that nothing is handed to you and to get what you want you need to work. An after school job is a great way to begin the transition of learning to live within your means, learning to budget and learning how long it takes to get what you want.

I know already that once Grand Master D finishes high school , he will want a gap year before he decides on a college education, actually we're insisting on it. The school he's at now is already talking about college to them, stressing the importance of this and that and how they must compete in this college driven world. But he has his whole life to decide what he want to do. One year will not affect the outcome of his entire life. Putting things into perspective is part of our job as parents.

The world is a big place and there are so many things to discover, travelling and working overseas is a great way for young people to figure out their life's path. Learning now as a teen how to be part of an adult workplace, to have the confidence in yourself to be able to do a task well and get paid for it sets you up to understand how life works.

We won't always be there to help. We certainly won't always be there to assist financially, nor is it our responsibility. Getting a job now will help him save for what

he wants to do after he finishes school.

I find it amazing that parents are still fully supporting their 25-26 year olds and older while they study, and these ADULTS have never had a job. How is this helpful to the child adult? How is the college grad whose been given everything along the way going to handle getting a job when the employer expects an adult?

We're already seeing colleges complaining about how their students aren't ready emotionally, how they can't cope with the rigors of college life. As parents we do a disservice to our kids by NOT teaching them how to get out and do it on their own.

It may be odd to you to think of your kid getting an after school job but I believe it's an important step along the way to adulthood and that's our job, nothing more nothing less, to raise successful adults.

I couldn't be more proud of this kid. I know he's gonna fall on his face, we all do, but he'll learn how to pick himself up and get going again and as a parent that's all you can ask.

Do your kids have after school jobs? Is this something you've even thought about or discussed with your children? I haven't heard any talk here among my friends about their kids. Tell me your thoughts, I'd love to know.

2018 — A Mother Life

Hello 2016, I mean 2018

February 28, 2018

After two entire years of writing nothing on my blog for fear of vilification during the controversial 2016 election year, I've come back to feel out if I had the heart to start again, and there it was, my very last draft post, waiting patiently to join the ranks of internet opinions, it feels like it could have been written last week:

Did I just fall into a time warp loop?

> ***Here it is, January 2016. Wasn't it just January 2015? Time is just going so fast.***
>
> ***Life is marching on, we're crazy busy and I've not been keeping up writing. There are several reasons really.***
>
> ***I have other distractions, I feel like I have nothing to say that won't get me in trouble. So much is going on in the US right now that it's all I can do to not turn into some ranting crazy, adding my opinion to the internet.***
>
> ***What's really sad is that, as a foreigner living in America, I can see what's happening with different eyes.***
>
> ***We've lived through gun control, the implementation of universal healthcare other things America is furiously arguing about...***

And so in 2018, we're still fighting about healthcare and gun control, 10's of thousands more have died as a result of not fixing either. I'm still not sure I want to delve back into the level I previously committed to, but maybe it's time to stand up for what's right and good.

Or maybe I'll steer clear of the real discussions, it's hard to tell at this point, being an immigrant and all, do my opinions even count?

Sir Lickalot's Journey

March 1, 2018

Our boy, the beautiful Leonberger known around here as Sir Lickalot went on his journey on Saturday, December 30, 2017.



The day we brought him home

It was coming. I had been telling the kids for a while that his time was running out, getting old and slow. No more daily walks, he didn't want to move around much and his appetite had diminished.

But that's how life goes, and if I'm being totally honest, the circle of life was the reason we got him in the first place.

It's not news I'm a farm girl, I've seen animals in all stages of life and death. I've seen my dad elbow deep in a ewe, trying to turn a lamb to help delivery. I've seen my mum try to sew a possum back together after it was in a felled tree and hit by a chainsaw, and I've buried many pets of all variety and size.

I wanted my children to have an animal in their lives so they could learn empathy, responsibility and ultimately, life and death.

That was the premise of getting a dog while living in a New York apartment, but in actuality, Sir Lickalot became much more than a means to a life lesson. He was a member of the family, he was unique in his ways and taught the children so many things about disabilities, happiness and positivity, just by living his life with us for almost 9 years.

He's still with us in spirit, he's made visitations to some of us, and is often in our daily thoughts and conversations. While rearranging the furniture recently, My Lord Dr King and I lamented on where he might have positioned himself for comfort and long day snoozes. We've moved things away from the dog door because we didn't want him to not be able to get in or out.



Adjustment to an absence in your life takes time. Grief is a fickle thing but the children have handled it well. As a first experience of losing a pet, it went as well as can be expected. I'm very proud of them.

During a get together the following evening for NYE, I announced to our gathering that our boy had gone on. So well loved there wasn't a dry eye at the table. Miss Gremlin had a first when she saw her father cry. If ever there's a right way to show your children that emotions are totally ok, crying for this dog goes a long way towards that. He was just that awesome.

So go on your journey old boy, and thanks for all the memories.

Sir Lickalot loved the snow, so it was fitting that he got one last walk in it.

His and Hers for Yours.

March 19, 2018

The fancy has arrived.

When the toilet seat breaks and a replacement is required, you just know if it's in this house, it won't be your average run of the mill white plastic dunny seat. Nope, not here.

After some years of using a handheld bidet, it was deemed time to try something new.

Have amazon, will order...

See what happens when My Lord Doctor King is left unsupervised!

Yes indeed, we are now the proud owners of a smart bidet! I'm not sure I can convey the changes...

Let's just say it's not every day you have to fight with your partner for bathroom time especially being a woman.





I don't know how long it will take to recoup the cost by not buying toilet paper but I'm in love with the feeling.

We're fancy asses now!

The End

So what became of Molley Mills
when the writing stopped 8 years ago?

Well, this:

Molley Marlena

www.MolleyMarlena.com

Boutique Couture for discerning empresarias
(yes, that's a word. It's my word),
empresarios (the male version), circus creatures, rock stars,
and people from various planets.

The children moved out, their bedroom became the Molley Marlena factory, and Dr. Mills still makes life an ever-evolving adventure. They have toured entire countries on a giant Harley-Davidson together and continue to mystify onlookers as to how such beings can be so different, and yet so compatible.

You can even track some of their adventures at
simonmills.com/media.

Stay tuned for more. Send Molley a message
from her website and keep in touch.

