

Please accept this “never seen by anyone” unedited chapter as my special gift to the Healthy, Wealthy n Wise members. Written and given from my heart.



Girls Just Want To Have Fun

I'm sure Cindy Lauper never imagined her 80's number one hit song being featured in a book for grandparents. Ha! Cindy, everyone ages. You either get old or the alternative. More plainly stated ... you're either getting older or you're dead. And, let's face it ... unless you're Shirley McLean you're not coming back! How about we just make the most of it and have fun this time around.

There are endless ways of having fun. Building indoor tents, games, adventure excursions and just being silly. It's not just girls that want to have fun - believe me - boys too. Having raised two daughters I know about playing with Barbie's, dress up and make believe. With my grandson Dylan playing boy activities was a completely new experience. Army men, bad guys and Pokemon® card games were as foreign to as running a marathon.

When your grandchild is young the games are easy. For three and four year olds Strawberry Shortcake Stick On Game®, large sized puzzles and ABC games which are light and fun. Operation®, Candyland® and Tip cups® still offer a lot of fun and entertain the five to seven year olds. But, man-oh-man, what a jump you'll experience when your grandchildren turn eight. Then you enter the world of competitive card games where you'll be challenged to pronounce the names of the players. Learning Pokemon® names Xatu, Magmar, Squirtle and Cyndaquil was only half the challenge. The rules! Good grief they're complicated! Seriously, much of the time, I'd put up a good argument for a killer move and didn't have a clue what I was talking about. Challengingly, Dylan would have me read the game card and seriously I still didn't get it. Sometime he was sweet enough to agree to make my move a new rule. He's such a good kid.

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Life has different phases and, for some of us, maturing comes with physical challenges. Your shoulder may hurt or your knee could be stiff or your lower back is not as flexible anymore. Learning to play their board games is a perfect activity for those days when you’re not feeling so peppy.

The role reversal of grandma’s sitting with her grandson playing bad guys and grandpa’s wearing a pink feather boa painting his finger nails for a tea party creates an enduring pleasure for you and your grandchildren. I can only imagine that as our grandchildren quickly pass through their terrible two’s into their troublesome teens the memories of early childhood play days with us will be part of the picture that helps them realign back to the human race knowing the importance of being loved and family.

One afternoon Dylan and I went to Soup Plantation® for an early dinner. He was eating his usual chicken noodle soup, Jell-O and a slice of pizza while I enjoyed a volcano size plate of salad. I’ve never been able to go through their buffet line and come out with a reasonable amount of salad on my plate. It always ends up piled too high and looking like it could feed two people.

At age seven Dylan brings along his constantly packed toy bag for back seat entertainment whenever he goes in the car. I don’t have a DVD player in my car and honestly I’m against them unless going on a long trip. It becomes an electronic babysitter and it’s been my experience that the conversations I’ve had in the car with Dylan have been the most revealing and helped me understand him on a deeper level. Don’t get me wrong, kid movies have their benefits and bring hours of enjoyment but they’ve also become the legally approved Valium drip for kids. The time and place for them is best when selected wisely.

Finishing my mound of salad and having some time to fill while Dylan ate his fifth or so serving of Jell-O I pulled up his toy bag and checked out the contents. He had 100 plus little green plastic army figures; “bad guy”

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transforming characters (Batman, super hero types), little bouncy balls, dice and a few part pieces of God knows what. I began pulling out a few of the green Army guys and looking them over. I began placing them in formation about the table. Little by little, I saw the beginning of a battle scene. I went back to the “all you can eat” food bar and selected soup and ice cream bowls and utensils. We had army guys positioned on top of ice cream cones, napkin holders, big soup bowl and small desert bowls, shredded carrots became beachfront sand, broccoli stacked on top of each other bushes and with a toothpick holding them together they became trees. We had such a fun, colorful display that crowds formed around our table. Sounds really silly, doesn’t it? And, so what! You’re a grandparent. You’re allowed to be outrageous and totally silly one more time in your life and have it be OK. My motto: “be silly before it’s called senile!”

Another fun food escape trip is McDonald’s ®. It provides more than a meal. Thank goodness they’ve created some healthy choices. Children love the food and now with their great selection of salads - we can eat there too. When Dylan was a toddler taking him to McDonald’s® for a plain hamburger and French fries always provided 30-minutes of solo active playtime in the fully contained playground. I would sit and watch with the joyful realization his nap time would be guaranteed. His naps were necessary for me. My work as a consultant required me to have a couple of uninterrupted hours either talking on the telephone or researching on the web. Take your grandchildren to McDonald’s ® it’s great fun, affordably feeds both of you in an environment they love, wears them out, and gives you the a couple of hours to work or even give yourself a much needed nap as well.

On the day’s when you’re feeling more energetic building indoor tents as forts, swimming, going to the beach and many other types of fun activities to build a memorable relationship with grandkids. On my web site www.grandparentsrock.com you’ll find pictures, with free downloadable instructions, for some spectacular tents Dylan and I created. I hope you’ll go there and be inspired.

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In the chapter, easier said than done, long-distance loving is discussed and how scheduling excursions and trips away for both of you is one of many ways to bridge the distance gap. In this chapter the stories of creating fun continue for the times Dylan comes to visit me on my turf.

Dylan’s learned to accept my enthusiastic “get in the car I’m taking you somewhere” instructions. Occasionally he gives me the where are we going questions but I tell him I’m creating a memory moment and to trust me. If he whines or asks again I simply say, “It’s an adventure”. That’s the final word. This summer day we drove for 70 minutes to a Marriott Hotel where a couple thousand people sat waiting in a grand ballroom.

Because I am blessed with many spiritually centered friends my awareness of holy people, whose entire purpose in life is to serve humanity and God, is wide-ranging. Mata Amritanandamayi, known to hundreds of thousands of people as Amma, is a petite, 50-year old woman who is revered as a guru in her home country of India. Thousands devotees follow her spiritual teachings and participate in her massive charities. During one summer visit I learned this exceptional woman, Amma, was stopping in LA on a 10-city tour, to give southern Californians hugs. Yes, hugs. Not the “hi, how are you” or the baby-burp type of pat on the back but a mystical, flower-scented, extraordinary

hug and a loving whisper spoken in Sanskrit in your ear that people wait for hours and hours to receive.

Seeing so many people and the ceremonial presence of a holy person Dylan asked the who, what, why child like, curious questions as you’d imagine. I explained to him Amma was born in a poor family in southern India, she is said to have left school in the fourth grade when her family forced her to become a house slave.

As a teenager, she began experiencing spiritual visions and expressing her love for humanity through hugs. Eventually, she attracted a following.

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I told him that it's been reported that she has given millions hugs in the past 30 years. Dylan's mother, after the many required university years of studying is a licensed Mid-wife and her long-term boyfriend is an ER doctor. When I told him Amma has also founded an 800-bed hospital in India, a medical college, schools, orphanages and women's shelters, and helped build thousands of low-income homes he knew, beyond a shadow of doubt this was a respectable person. He waited several hours with for his hug without complaining. On our quiet return ride back home he peacefully said, “Thank you Grammy”.

This brings me to the last section of creating fun ... car rides. First a few safety precautions. You'll need to purchase a car seat for your car if you see your grandchildren frequently. I discovered owning one much more convenient and easier than constantly transferring the car seat from my daughters to mine. Car seats go along with other numerous items you'll be buying. It's our responsibility to understand car safety laws and set ground rules. Read your car manual too.

With air bags there are issues regarding the age and weight a child is safe in the front seat. Remember what it was like before mandatory seat belt laws?

Long gone are the days when we grow up enjoying big cars rolling down congestion free highways, gleefully sliding across the front seat as Dad sung wide on a turn. Now we strapped in ready for any front, side or back run in equipped with Gameboy®, snacks and we're only going to the store.

Two old fashioned activities make my car rides with Dylan fun. Talking and singing song together from cd or to the radio. The two stations I discovered we both enjoyed were Radio Disney found on am and an Oldies station like FM K-Earth 101. It's music found on these stations that are fun to sing along to. Some of today's music has harsh and vulgar lyrics and pounds so hard it jolts the solorplexes. I don't want to sing to myself, much less along with my grandson, songs containing messages of slapping, knife stabbing or words like bitch. Don't get me wrong. There is no doubt in my mind today's

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musicians are talented. My experience tells me to know which ones to endorse and how to moderate.

I even like Prince. I’d play his CD in the car and sing along. I knew when and where he’d sing a vulgar word and I’d turn it down or go to the next song when children are with me in the car. I also like the Beach Boys, Beatles, Turtles, The Supremes to name a few that I never have to worry about the words or subliminal messages of hate and violence.

I prefer singing songs while in my car. It’s my private studio, Carnage Hall and the Greek theatre on wheels. While at a stop light I’m the person in the car next to you singing with all the windows up. All you see is my head bobbin’ and lips moving. You look over and can’t help but stare. Then you wonder, what song is she singing?

I especially like to sing on long drives. Once the cell phone service isn’t worth beans and I listened to enough of Mark Victor Hansen and Robert G. Allen tapes I slide on the Rolling Stones, Van Morrison, Gary Morris or Amy Grant and entertaining myself for hours. When Dylan and I driving alone together he listens to me sing and I hear him ever so faintly singing along too. We have our favorites.

Cross town car rides also give me another opportunity besides singing. It’s conversations with Dylan that have a special place in my heart. He’s not a big talker. Being an only child he’s learned to entertain himself and I suppose you can only carry conversations with yourself so long. I’ve discovered the best method for talking to more reserved children is to tell them a story about you first. Something you saw or learned since you were last together. After my story I’d ask Dylan what he thought about my story. Beginning my open ended question with what, how, where and never why keeps the conversation moving. The “why” allows the answer “because” or “I don’t know”. Then you have to talk and explain. I want to learn what Dylan thinks. During our drives is when he’d often shares his feelings with me; many times to the surprise of

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his Mother. The safe and loving environment he senses is what I’ve created.
Let it be chapter is full of ways for creating a trustful space of closeness.



Grandparent Guidelines

- **Be silly before it's called senile**
- **Outrageous memories you create are the best**
- **Ask open-ended questions**
- **Never play DVD's in your car unless going on a driving trip over four hours**
- **Expand both yours and your grandchildren's cultural awareness**
- **Meet interesting people**

For more information about Pat Burns

And Grandparents Rock!

Go to:

www.grandparentsrock.com

