

## **Stories of our Lives**

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I remember once at bedtime when our children were little wiggle worms, eager and cuddly, I was reading them a Polish story about an enchanted book. Our daughter Christi was in rapt attention, biting her fingernails at the part where the daughter is afraid her mother and father will be sad because she is away from them and can't get home. She tries to see the last page to see how things turn out before we get to it.

There was a time during Christi's teen-age years when Claudia and I felt very separated from her. Too much sneaking out of the house at night and being unwilling to turn loose of a fixer-upper boyfriend who was a very bad influence on her, were giving her mother and me heartache and heartburn! There were times we were biting our fingernails and wanting to look ahead to the end of the story to see how things were going to turn out!

I've often joked that teenagers should be cryogenically frozen until they are adults. But this of course defeats the learning curve. Experimentation is a creative process. The new theory on teen-age years is that during this period when the brain neurons are not fully myelinated (coated with protein like the insulation around an electric wire) they are hard-wired to be impulsive and take chances that post 25 year-old brains wouldn't take. The theory is that this is the age group that through the willingness to challenge the old and experiment with the new, is culture's way of improving itself.

Well, quite a few pages have turned in the story of our lives since then. Claudia and I have two grandchildren now. Christi is 30 years old. Her neurons are fully myelinated and she's doing beautifully. We are now learning what kind of parents we were by seeing what kind of parent she is. It includes a good bit of the old and lessons she learned through the painful experimentation.

One evening in May of this year I received an unexpected remembrance that left my heart warm. It was from my one-time wayward daughter, several chapters into the book of her life with her daughter.

Dad,

I was out on the back porch with Lizzy, listening to the thunder and watching the wind blow through the trees. I had Lizzy close her eyes and be still and listen. I realized I was doing something you used to try to do with me. I shared this with her and she just looked at me. She said she was scared to close her eyes because of the thunder. I was trying not to show my disappointment but realized she may be too young for this. I love sitting on our porch just remembering and being still while watching nature. It is such a nice change of pace from my hectic schedule. Its funny how I remember wanting to be so active as a child and not understanding why you wanted to be still at times. It all makes sense now and I laugh as I find myself doing things you tried to do with me. Heehee.

I don't know the end of the story yet, but I'm grateful for what's happening now and I relish the fact that the stories of our lives are lived first before we know how to understand them later.