**Why We Love Grandchildren**

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We intend to drive to a nearby kibbutz, me and my two grandkids, Donny, 8 and Laura, 11. To the pool, to the pool, to the pool, on a hot August day in Israel. What could be better?

“Gramma- I don’t wanna go!” screams Laura. “I’ll be late for my lesson in Rehovot that starts at 6. I’m not going!” I point out that it’s not even 4 and it only takes 15 minutes to get to the pool and another 20 min to get to Rehovot after we return home. We’ll have plenty of time. “Please find your sandals; do you want to stay in this hot, nothing-to-do-here-now-anyway house? We can have fun in the pool.” “I’m not going!”

O.K., is a mathematician coming along with us in the car? Donny loves numbers. So, if it’s almost 4 and we need to get to Laura’s lesson at 6, and it takes 20 min after we get home which takes 15 minutes, then when do we need to leave the pool? He thinks and then shrugs. Dunno.

Laura finds her sandals. I assume my professorial role and decide that we can just leave the pool at 5 so we’re home by 5:30 and we’ll have plenty of time. Laura is not convinced. “I have an idea,” I say. “We can set my phone to ring and remind us at the pool, so you don’t worry.” “No!” she screams.

I wonder what is going on in her little soul to be so upset by this innocuous suggestion. Maybe she’s been admonished ad nauseum to “Stop worrying, Laura!” and finds it humiliating that I used the words “don’t worry”? Dunno. I drop the phone idea. Anyway, there’s a big clock at the pool. Do they even know how to tell time on a clock face? Funny that I don’t know if they do. I don’t ask.

On the way in the car I teach them to be good drivers. “You’ll both be driving before you know it and need to know how to approach a roundabout safely. Who has the right-of-way in a roundabout?”, I ask them. What’s a “right-of-way”? I explain. Donny thinks this is the most interesting topic, ever, and says, “We have another 5 roundabouts before the pool, Gramma”. How does an 8-year-old even know this? Remarkable grandchildren, I have. I ask if I can enter the next roundabout safely and Donny monitors traffic, so I know I’m in good hands. Laura perks up but clearly driving safety is not a compelling topic.

We make the pool by 4:15 and all have a grand time in the deep section doing her gymnastics somersaults, swimming through Gramma’s legs without touching – 2 points!, racing to the pole while Donny’s goggles leak water so he can’t see and he screams that it’s not fair. Then Donny is by the side of the pool and we start to talk. And here’s how the conversation goes:

Gramma: So, how was camp today?

Donny: I don’t have camp anymore, Gramma! You don’t know?!!

G: So, what did you do before I came to pick you up at 3?

D: I got up at 9 or maybe it was 8?

G: And then what did you do?

D: I went peepee.

G: O.k., so that takes us up to 9:01. What did you do after that?

D: I had a drink of water.

G: Up to 9:02.

D. Then I made a poo.

G: 9:04

D. It took an hour, Gramma!

G: 10:02 Then what?

D: Then I watched t.v.

G. Do you have any witnesses? You need a good alibi since a dead body was found near your house and I might have to haul you off to jail if you have no witnesses. You’re a prime suspect.

D. No witnesses.

G: What program did you watch? I need some hard evidence here of your whereabouts this morning.

D. I don’t remember but it was half an hour.

G: Very suspicious. So, we’re up to 10:32. What did you do next?

D. More poo (hilarious laughing)

G: o.k. up to 11:32. Then what?

D. Lunch

G: But you didn’t have lunch until 2:30. Fish and rice. You have an empty 3 hours to explain.

D. Maybe it was more t.v.

G: No witnesses? I might need to make an arrest.

D: It was – a sports game, I think.

I play good cop and let him off the hook. Anyway, it’s almost 5 and we need to get going.

Who wants ice cream?!! I give them some money and they get the most expensive chocolate-dipped frozen cones. How do I know? Another mother they recognize walks by and casually mentions that she knows I’m the gramma since the quality of ice cream jumps up by 10 points if it’s a gramma, compared to plain popsicles bought by moms. Never mind. Laura cries that Donny gave her the smashed cone. I tell her to stick it to him and give him a crumpled brownie when she gets the chance. A satisfying payback to remember. Proud of myself to be able to guide the next generation.

We get into the car and make it home by 5:30. Perfect timing. Donny gets out and Laura tells her mom she’s too tired to go to her lesson. Her mom convinces her to go and we’re on the way to Rehovot.

I tell her some fascinating story about history, until I realize there’s no response. Fast asleep in the back seat. Will I get there, and she’ll refuse to exit the car in which case would I call my daughter-in-law to come get her or would I drive her back home, another 20 minutes, or should I turn back now to save half the journey? Oh, the dilemmas of grandparenting. I decide to go all the way. About a block before we arrive, I hear movement in the back. “Laura – we’re almost there” I gently say. “I know, Gramma.” She gets out and gives me a hug. A perfect day.