

Toddler Talk

WHEW! I didn't mean to take a weeklong blog hiatus, but due to the kids being on spring break, that's what happened! We were SO busy, I haven't really been in front of my computer... I hope this isn't what summer break is going to be like! It was fun and all, but SO busy! During the week, we did have LOTS of fun, and we got to spend lots of family time together, which gave me time to put together the following translation list of Toddler Talk. Our youngest (until July, anyway!) is currently at one of the cutest ages there is: 17 months. She walks around (finally!) babbling about all kinds of stuff, and she answers almost every question with a definitive "no". Sometimes she means it, sometimes she doesn't. Here is a guide to help you communicate better with Disney or any 17 month old:

oove = move, you're in MY way!

down = means up or down, just depends on where she is at the moment.

yum-yum-yum-yum = can sound like mom, mom, mom, mom – is usually used very loudly to "ask" for a food she wants.

no = self-explanatory. At this age, it's used constantly.

DOP = STOP. Because she has 2 older sisters, this was one of her first words.

oovie = movie. Usually used to request a dvd in the car.

mama = actually means Grandma. She calls Mommy "Mom".

gink = drink. I'm thirsty!

baa = bottle. I know, she should not be using these anymore... But it's so hard to take them away when she loves them so much!

cookie? = give me a cookie or I will cry.

candy = see above. She learned this word around the Easter holiday.

cake you = thank you. She says this almost every time you give her something – it's SO cute! I hope it doesn't lead to her being spoiled...

ack = snack

ankey = blankie

mere = come here. She uses this to call the dogs, or she holds out her arms and says it when she wants to be picked up. A favorite sentence is "Mom mere."

She says lots of things, and her vocabulary grows every day! These are just some of the cutest things right now... I love this age; the calm before the storm of the terrible two's!

The sweet life...

It's maple syrup time in our area. While we don't have the size and number of stands (sugar shacks) as Vermont, we have a few. Our local groups (family run businesses) have an annual pancake and sausage breakfast (with real maple syrup, of course). Today was that day.

My family (daughters, grandparents, son-in-law, boyfriend, other friends) all went today. We road the wagon out to the sugar camp and watched them boil down the sap. We road a horse drawn wagon. We ate syrup, pancakes, and sausage.

You should be told that my daughters are all older. The

youngest is 16 and the oldest 26. We've been doing this almost every year for about 9 years. This day just keeps getting bigger and bigger. My wife and I started going when we wanted something close, easy and different for the girls to do. I now have enough knowledge of the maple sap gathering and boiling that I could make syrup if I had the trees and inclination. I haven't learned anything new for the past few years, but I will go again next year, and the year after that and so on. It is a wonderful day for family and now friends. Of course the syrup, candy, pancakes and sausage aren't bad either.

So maple syrup producers, I will see you next year when the sap runs.

Whoopee for Whoopi

It is so funny how a simple fun evening with a group of friends can inspire thoughts to re-emerge in your head. I have gotten almost totally out of touch with *Star Trek*. Tonight, I was reminded that Academy Award winning actress Whoopi Goldberg was indeed a member of the cast of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* beginning in the series' second season. Although she did not receive a screen credit, she also appeared in the movies [Generations](#), [First Contact](#), and [Nemesis](#). Whoopi played the enigmatic hostess of the Enterprise's lounge Ten Forward. Perhaps more than any other person to have a role on the phenomenon, her history goes back to the original series.

In 1967 following the premiere season of *Star Trek*, Nichelle Nichols opted not to return to the show. Her character of communications officer Lt. Uhura was not being developed to its full potential. Upon learning of her departure, Dr. Martin

Luther King Jr. approached Nichelle and told her that she must not leave the show. The role of Uhura was not only one of the rare good female characters on television but also one of the first important roles for a woman of color. During the show's three year run, Nichelle had the distinction of sharing the first interracial kiss on television. This was shared with William Shatner in the episode "Plato's Stepchildren."

Twenty years later, Whoopi approached Trek creator Gene Roddenberry about being on the new television series. She cited the incident between Ms. Nichols and Dr. King as the inspiration behind her fascination with the franchise.

The character of Guinan has always been clouded in mystery. Like any good bartender, she is a good listener. She is extremely long-lived and very little is known about her alien race, the El Aurian. However, Guinan does share some history with Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) that has never been fully explained. Not even during the two-part episode in which members of the Enterprise crew travel back in time to the 19th century where they meet Mark Twain.



Days of wine and roses...

I feel like reminiscing about the past. I'm in my 49th year and will hit the big 50 next year. If I live to 100, I guess I will officially be middle age. So now is a good time to reflect on the past.

In April of 1983 I met my future bride. We didn't know it then, but we figured it out soon enough. After a whirlwind romance, we were married the following January. Together

through the years we raised 4 daughters, had fun and most of all stayed very much in love. As I said earlier, she died in 2003, but I don't want to dwell on that. I want to remember the good times.

From the very first New Years Eve together, we shared a bottle of wine on every special occasion. Our first date, I bought her some sweet-heart roses. On days of nothing special, and for a surprise, I would get her one or more of these roses. Those are my days of wine and roses. Days that were special and days that were not. Good days, bad days, and even indifferent days. These days made my life worth living. These days gave me the strength to continue even after the very worst days. These days made me the man I am today, and the one I will be tomorrow. These days continue, they are my life.

During these days our family was most important. Other things, material things, took a back seat to all things family. But we had good times together. Our favorite thing to do was go to zoos. We planned whole vacations revolving around zoo visits. We would pack lunch and make day trips to many of the zoos in our area. These things made our life and our family.

When movies made their way to Video tape and then DVD's our family enjoyed watching and collecting various movies. This made for many wonderful days together.

Can life be any better than the good times we have with family and friends? I hope to continue my days of wine and roses at a later time.

I'm going green

Ok, I think I should stop reading the news... I found [this](#) on people doing extreme recycling.

I'm all for getting by with less and taking my bottles and cans to the recycling center. I've seen how big Mt. Trashmore is getting just down the road from where I live. But taking old food out of dumpsters?!! Man, you have to draw the line somewhere don't you? This just hit me wrong. I know people throw out a bunch of stuff that is still good, but once it is in the dumpster, ya just got to leave it there. Don't you?

Maybe not... Hmm... There is a small gathering of friends this weekend. Maybe I can check the trash behind the local markets and restaurants to see what is available... Anybody else want to go extremely green?

CHEAP (yet ingenious) RATINGS PLOY

SPOILERS AHEAD:

IF YOU HAVE NOT SEEN THE 3-27 EPISODE OF ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A 5TH GRADER (AND CARE TO) SKIP THIS POST)

Last thursday night on the coming attraction for tonight's "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader", it was announced that someone gets to the million dollar question and answers it. I was totally flabbergasted that they would actually announce that someone would finally win the top prize more than a year after the show first aired. Then I remembered watching "Live

with Regis and Kelly” (or was it Kathie Lee at the time... who cares). On one particular morning, Regis announced that on that very night someone would win a million on “Who Wants to be a Millionaire.” At the time, it seemed exciting and of course I watched. I even remember the question (Which president made an appearance on the television series “Laugh In?”). Over the past few years, it seems like a cheap way to increase ratings.

It seemed like deja-vu while watching 5th Grader until the contestant who graduated from UCLA and has an MBA from USC got to the second question:

“What is the subject of the following sentence? Sierra baked a cake for Olivia.” He even got the three choices:

A: pronoun; B: proper noun; C: common noun

Unfortunately, this smart (?) guy thought the subject of the sentence was “cake” so he chose answer C. Sorry to say, the fifth grade student who could have saved him also chose the wrong answer. So the bright guy who knew he would be the first million dollar winner on the show flunked out on the second question and went home with nothing.

AH, but wait... since the man was sooooo sure that he would not only get to the top question but answer it correctly, Jeff showed the question and it was answered correctly.

I guess the advertisement did not say that the million dollars was actually won only that the question was asked and answered. CHEAP RATINGS PLOY. If it were five days from now, some would have shouted “**APRIL FOOLS!!!**”

Whoa!!! I use this stuff!

While scanning the news sites today I found [this](#).

I've taken that stuff through the years. The heaviest usage was during my most depressing time of life!! The allergy season of 2004 was extremely bad for me. I took *Singular* for the entire Spring thru Fall (Last Frost to First Frost). I'm very glad (my girls are probably glad too) that I never had that side affect. Suicidal is something I've never been. Hell, I've been so depressed I couldn't find my own socks in the morning, and they were right in the sock drawer where they've always been. I've put things in 'safe places' never to find them again. I went through at least 1 year on pure instinct. I'm surprised the people I met then still talk to me... Then again, the depression medication I was on had the same warning about suicide. Scary to take a med to help depression, that could cause thoughts of suicide.

Guess I have to talk with my Dr. before the allergy season starts up again...

1 a lonely number?

I am a widower. My wife died, from cancer, a little over four years ago. Since that time I've been 1 where I used to be part of 2. Yes, I still have my daughters in my life. 2 of the 4 are still living at home (well at least part of the time – teenager and young adult). For the most part, I really can't say I'm lonely. I do like to spend some of my time alone.

My hobbies tend to be solitary in nature. I am in a local theater group, and that is the one hobby I really can't do on

my own. All the rest, you guessed it, can be done alone. Even blogging is a solitary activity.

Tonight I feel very much alone. My daughters are off to various locations, the dog is fed and relaxing behind the couch. I'm here typing thoughts popping up in my head. Not where I thought I'd be 5 years ago.

We've all been told to make a 5 year plan. I've never done that. My lovely wife did. Back in the spring of 2003, she started saving money for our 25th anniversary. When she died, I found an envelope with money in it. Not a lot, but by Jan 2009, it could have made a bit of an impact on our anniversary plans. I didn't even know it existed. There was just an envelope marked 25th. We just missed our 20th anniversary. 21 days shy.

Most of that money is gone now. Most, but not all. I held some back. \$25 dollars to be exact. One dollar for each of the years we would have had. That envelope was in a box on my dresser. I hadn't opened it until today. I knew I had money left over, but I didn't know how much. Odd that there would be exactly \$25 dollars in and envelope marked 25th. I'm going to start putting money back in that envelope. I'm not sure how much I can save by January, but I'll save something. I need to celebrate that special day in January. I've spent that day alone since 2004, in 2009 I plan to do something a bit different. Maybe I'll figure it out by then...

Well, this has been a somber post, maybe lighter the next time... Maybe not. Just missing S.

Another Office Party

This evening, I watched the final three episodes of the premiere season of *The Clinic* (ooopsssss.... [The Office](#)). I am now absolutely hooked and need to seek out the second and third seasons before April 10 (although I am sure that I will not be able to watch them all.. unless I have an Office party :0). The first segment found Jim jokingly forming an "Alliance" with Dwight in order to investigate the downsizing rumor surrounding the Scranton, PA branch of Dunder-Mifflin. Dwight ends up being taped inside a shipping box to spy on other employees. Hilarious!!!!

The second episode found Michael and the staff taking on the warehouse workers in a "friendly?" game of basketball. Each side places a small bet on the outcome. Michael chooses the players that he thinks will defeat the other team in typical stereotypical fashion and hilarity ensues.

In the final episode of season one, an attractive new saleswoman (Amy Adams) enters the office to sell purses. Michael, Dwight (something strange about that one), and Jim each try to win her affections. Pam's fiance Roy (David Denman) also makes it known that he finds the new arrival very fetching.

After the final segment, I found myself wanting more. I was hoping to hear that Pam finally dumped her jerk of a fiance (after a three year engagement) and moved on to Jim. Of course, just watching the first season it seemed like a forgone conclusion. Who would be the victim(s) of downsizing? A few of these questions were answered by those who know, but I do want to catch up eventually.

I just cannot believe that I have not discovered this hilarious comedy full of great characters, a fantastic ensemble, and brilliant creative staff before now. I also like

the references to other series some of which are not part of NBC's lineup of shows (*Survivor* to name one).

Please forgive my allusion to *The Clinic* at the beginning of the post. A wonderful one-act play which I was part of in January 2007).

Stars out at night

Well, I got a small telescope for my birthday in February. I was able to take it out for a short time soon after that, but the weather was too cold to stay out long. The other night, I was able to take it out for a longer period. It wasn't too bad for the size and design, maybe someday I'll write a review for it.

What was really nice about that night was being able to share this night with one of my daughters. Normally I spend my nights alone with the stars, but it was nice to have a little company. It was still a bit chilly, so the night was shorter than it could have been. She's taking an astronomy course and was doing a 'lab' assignment. It felt good to help her out.

This got me thinking of her growing up. Back when she was in grade school, I gave a talk to her class about telescopes and astronomy. I brought in my telescope, and a few items of astronomical interest. Later that school year, we had a 'star party' for kids at the school. I'm not sure if it sparked any future interest in that class, but it was made my evening. Their questions were intelligent, and they seemed to enjoy themselves.

I was quite a bit younger when I saw my first telescope. I was about 5 or 6, when my dad brought home a small scope. I

don't know what we looked at, but I was hooked on astronomy from that very day. Funny how I still remember that day. What in your life changed your outlook on life?