

# I'm not sure, but I think it moved...

Yes, I've heard that reaction to sushi on occasion. I think it came from my children. For the most part when they were growing up, and for some even now, they never wanted to try new food. From the limited diet of their childhood (not that limited, I did experiment in the kitchen), I have a couple that will try new foods, and one that even enjoys some different tastes. As far as I know none of them are as varied in their food trying as their dad. (I've eaten bugs on purpose and some were tasty ....)

So anyway I took my eldest daughter and her husband out to dinner this evening. The reason is this was her first week back at work after some time off. I just thought it would help not to have to cook dinner for one evening. Yes, we did go to a Sushi Bar/Japanese Restaurant. We went to the [Koto Buki](#) restaurant in Toledo.

If you like sushi, you should go. If you don't, but you like some oriental foods, you should go. In addition to the sushi and sashimi, they have other oriental dishes. It is rather pricey when you start ordering a lot of Sushi. If you want less expensive, I guess you could order from the sides and appetizers. ☐

Anyway we all ended up eating all we wanted (and more) and had a good relaxing evening. As they say in the commercials, it was priceless.

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# And the rain comes down

As I sit here and type this blog, it seems that there is a bit of rain falling. I can hear it hit the windows, roof and echo on the metal chimney. To me, this is a comforting sound. As long as the wind isn't too strong, or the lightning too intense, I enjoy hearing it rain at night. I'm warm and dry in my house, and I know that we are receiving needed water.

It also brings back memories of walking in a warm summer rain with my wife. Not really worrying about getting wet or cold. Feeling relief from the summer's heat. And feeling the warmth of our relationship.

I also remember hurrying from building to building of our local zoo when the cold spring or fall rains hit during one of our many excursions. Maybe stopping for a warm drink at the cafe or spending extra time in the warm tropical exhibits. And finally getting back to the van and putting the heat on.

Or back at the zoo during the Christmas Lights exhibit during those bitter winter rains. We actually enjoyed those evenings more, since the crowds would be much thinner. We would be dressed and ready for the rain with waterproof or repellent outerwear and umbrellas. We would look at the lights and the raindrops falling would reflect a variety of color. Of course the evening would include hot chocolate, coffee or tea.

And of course there are always those first spring rains that bring the green back to the area after the long grey and white winters. Memories of fun, love, laughter and light remind me that even during the coldest times, the hope of spring and new life can be found in the same rains.....

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# A tale of two gatherings...

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... (Sorry Mr. Dickens)

But then again it was. This weekend families gathered to mark similar yet different events.

On Saturday, my nephew celebrated his birthday. He has reached his teen years, and is more interested in the presents, food and television than the actual gathering. I do believe he 'suffered' through the gathering just to make sure he got his presents. Nothing really wrong with that, I'm sure most young people of his age do exactly the same thing. The gatherings, unless totally oriented toward the youth, are for the adults. We ate, talked, laughed and remembered many of these events during the day. This is what, through the ages, kept families together. We share common bonds and we celebrate those bonds. Be they birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays, times with family and friends keep our bonds alive.

On Sunday, another gathering was held. This was a memorial of the birth and death day of my grandson. He received no physical presents, and he won't be living into his teen years to complain about the attention he is or isn't getting. This was a day to support those who will miss his presence in the world. It was a time for family and friends to gather and support one another. We ate, talked, laughed and remember many events, but we also shared a tear or two. Coming together in the hard times is another thing that keeps families together. Death, sickness and other troubles are also something we all share. Another common bond. Another way to show support and love.

While on the surface, I wish that all we ever had to do was share the happy occasions, I realize that it is the difficult situations that are the true measure of what we mean to each

other. These hard times can show the best humanity has to offer.

So this weekend was the best of times and the worst of times, with the best of times far outshining the worst. Those closest to the sadness may not feel this for quite some time, but in looking back they will eventually remember “The Best of Times.”

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## Saturday arrived

My youngest is settled in to her new apartment with her new roommates. I’m settled in to my new routine with the dog and chinchillas. Ok, not really settled in. We both are in our new places.

Her apartment is a nice place. I was thinking a bit small for 4, but it shouldn’t be too bad. I think the de finitely only want to have one person in the kitchen at a time. They do have two bathrooms, so that shouldn’t be too bad. They did have enough junk food to last for a while. I’m interested in hearing about how the four girls get along. I’m sure with her experience with all of her sister, my little girl should do just fine.

The college did have activities planned for this evening for all of the new residents. #1 it got the parents and other family members to leave and #2 it gave all the new students a chance to get to know each other.

I may blog more on my experiences living alone. It has been a few years since I spent more than a week or two on my own. That will be different.

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# Countdown to Saturday – Checklist

scissors – check  
scrubs – check  
Stethoscope – check  
coveralls – check  
boots – check  
white leather shoes – check  
hoof pick – check  
id – check  
thermometer – check

I have to be missing something don't I? If we get everything packed we should have everything. Just a few odds and ends. Food, other necessities. We should be ready to go early Saturday Morning. I'm sure there will be something missed, but it is only an hour drive. An hour in a different direction from any other family members, but still only an hour.

I still find it a little hard to believe that my youngest is old enough to be heading off to college. Then again, I didn't think my other daughters were old enough to get married. Sad thing that their mother was not alive to see any of this. A lot has happened in the last 5.666666 years. Yep, this Sunday is 5 and 2/3 years since that lovely lady left this earth. Graduations, marriages and happenings both happy and sad., life has been moving along.

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# Countdown to Saturday

My youngest is heading off to College this Saturday. This week we are getting things together to make sure she has everything she needs to start the new year.

My daughter needs some special equipment for her college career. The non-special equipment/clothing became special because my daughter is small. The small/petite scrubs have to be hemmed to fit. We went all over the place to find a coverall that even came close to fitting. Rubber boots, same thing. You may ask what she is going into with scrubs, coveralls and boots. Her chosen field is Vet-Tech. So with the current clothing and equipment it looks like she will spend a part of the semester in a barn or two. The hoof pick she needed kind of gave that away.

We are also picking up a few things so she can set up house keeping in her new apartment. It is a furnished apartment shared with 3 other young ladies. This is my first daughter to live on campus during college. I may go through some empty nest feelings later, but for now I am just excited for my daughter. More on all of this later in the week.

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## An Old Friend, A New Perspective...

A few weeks ago, we learned a friend from way back was going to be in the area on his way from Illinois to Florida with his family, so he came by and brought the fam. That in itself was very unusual – after 10 years of friendship and various business associations and partnerships, we had somehow never

gotten around to meeting his family in person.

But on this day earlier this summer, they all stopped in, and his wife and two kids (the oldest was off on some kind of school function) were really very nice, fun, and interesting people – we had a great day together. Their kids, although quite a bit older than my kids, were nonetheless kept entertained by my kids, especially their pet rats. Overall, it was a great visit with a nice family – we really should have gotten together sooner!

And I have some advice for our friend: appreciate what you have, buddy.

I don't know why he does some of the things he does, but he sometimes acts, um, I'll call it restless, and now that I know how awesome his wife and kids are, it's going to be that much more difficult for me if I continue to hear about any more dumb choices on his part. He seems to be going through some sort of mid-life crisis, so I can only hope that he finds what it is he's looking for without hurting those wonderful people who love him!

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## What next?

This may be a difficult post to read. It was certainly hard to write.

No happy or witty sayings in this post. This is a story of life, death, mourning and maybe life again.

At the beginning of this year many wonderful things were in the making. My 3rd daughter had her wedding scheduled for June. My fourth daughter was to graduate High School. Those

two events happened as planned.

Also occurring early in the year, my two oldest daughters told me they were expecting new arrivals. The oldest was due in September, my second daughter due in November. Expanding of family going full force this year. I was really looking forward to visiting my new grandchildren.

The first bad news came when my 2nd daughter had a miscarriage. I was unable to fly down to Florida and be with her. I am very glad she has a wonderful network of support with her. At that time, I had a countdown to the impending birth on my blog. I quietly removed that and all other mention of that news from my blog. This was news I didn't feel like sharing with the rest of the world. Stick with the good news. Too much bad news news in the world.

Last Thursday brought news that my oldest daughter lost her baby too. Much farther along, she had only a month before the due date. I quietly removed the countdown that that impending birth, and wrote a quick cryptic post. The mind was not working well enough to post anything else. I could write about the cause, but I will let [this site](#) handle that. I just needed to get these words out.

I spent the past few days with my oldest, at the hospital and her house. There were many tears flowing. Hugs given and received. While the words were not initially spoken, we were worried about my oldest daughter's life too. She had a serious medical condition that could have take her as well. In this we were fortunate. Physically she is recovering well. The emotional and spiritual recovery will take more time for all of us.

I did say something about life again didn't I. There is a little bright spot in all of this. I've written a few posts about my daughter's friends. These are people I consider to be my friends also. Our ages and backgrounds vary widely, but



they are true friends. People who will be there for my daughter and son-in-law. My children came home to a clean house, because someone thought this would be a good thing to do. They didn't ask, they acted. The bedroom for the newborn was in the final stages of finishing, but the door was off the hinges. It was put back in place and closed. Friends and family will supply food, companionship, or solitude when needed or wanted. Can we ever ask for more?

Through all of this, I've had many old wounds opened again. I keep wondering if each new death will bring back the memories of others. Faces I've not seen in years, faces I never saw, came into my thoughts and dreams. The past and future molds into one. The laugh of a child not heard may be one of the saddest moments in life.

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## Things change

Well moving days are coming up. Yes, I did say moving days. There will be at least two of them.

The first will be next week at work. We are moving to a new building, and we are scheduled to move as soon as it passes inspection. That should occur this week. A little farther to drive, but it should be a nicer work environment. We will see how that goes. Good news, no students in the halls. Bad news, the way the cubicles are set up, my back will face the entrance. I never did like having my back to the door.

Then at the end of the month, my youngest heads off to college. That may take a trip or two depending on how much she needs to move into her college room. When I went to school, I was able to fit everything I needed into the back of a Chevy Chevette, I have a truck now, and I still wonder how many

trips I will need to take.

At this point in time, I guess I should be feeling a bit of the 'empty nest' syndrome. I'm not sure I will in the same way other parents do. The whole point in my parenting was to get my children ready for the world. It is time for this one to spread her wings and see how she flies. A bit of anxiety, sure, but I'm ready to let her try more on her own.

There is another part of the empty nest that I really never expected when I first thought of this some 10 years ago when the first daughter spread her wings. I have the nest to myself. The question I really need to ask is "How will I spread my wings?" For more than a quarter of a century (over 1/2 my life) I've been a parent. For most of that time I've been a husband and then a widower. Before that I was in my childhood. What am I going to do with the time I will have for myself? What will I be when I grow up? □

Life is all about the change...

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## Up on the roof

I spent some time at my eldest's house on the 3rd of July. With my two youngest daughters, and the youngest son-in-law we (and a few others) climbed on the roof to get a better view of Maumee's Fireworks. It was a wonderful location. A bit far to get the full effect of the detonations, but close enough to have a full view of the fireworks. It was a good evening.

It started out with food, drink, conversation, music and friends. I met a few more of my daughter's friends, and sometimes I wonder and then I wonder some more. A very diverse group met for the evening.

Our early evening fireworks started off with a few brats burning on the grill. Yes, in the things going on during the party the grill was left unattended for a bit too long. There was still plenty to go around, so all was good.

At the end of the evening, when the group started to break up, I bade my own farewells to get some rest for what was going to be a busy 4th. More on that later...