

“Enjoy Them!”

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by Mykal White

“When my daughter was small, of all the suggestions I’d received and discarded from other mom’s, the worst for me was being told “Enjoy her. It goes by fast.” From the time she was seven months old until about her fifth birthday, I cannot tell you how many times this sentiment was echoed from women I’d meet in waiting rooms, the supermarket and pharmacy. I never understood the purpose of telling a mother to enjoy her own child and part of me always cringed to hear it. It wasn’t because I felt they were implying that I was not enjoying my little girl...unmistakably, I was! But there was something about the look in the woman’s eyes as she spoke those words; like a thousand missed sunsets she could never reclaim. Subtle but undeniable, was a strange sense of loss.

Time after time I’d see that “look” again in the faces of the older moms who silently observed the interactions between mother and child. Or in the moments these strangers were compelled enough to approach and remind me (again!) of how quickly children tend to grow up. Then they’d walk away taking whatever unspoken thoughts were theirs to carry and reflect upon.

I was never bold enough to ask outright what it was that went through their minds when they told me to enjoy a child I was so obviously enjoying- but over time, a seed had surely been planted in my mind. I was determined never to fully understand whatever was behind “that look”.

It was not long before life stepped in and taught me the purpose of their words and the truth behind them. And time is what enlightened me to perfectly understand the significance of the look held in the eyes of all the mothers I’d seen... Because I too am now a Mother with grown kids.”

-Anonymous

There is a world’s difference between the perspective of the day to day life we share with our kids and that through the lenses of hindsight. There is also a lifetime's contrast between those of us with young children and the mothers whose children are well into their adulthoods. In the gap that stands between Them and Us is a particular insightful wisdom of lessons learned through the experiences they’ve survived. Lessons that must be earned before a deep appreciation for them can be found. It's been said that Experience is the toughest teacher because she gives the test first and the lesson afterward. That is the definition of *hindsight*.

As a Mother or Father with grown children, they realize that for every gain there is also an element of loss. Reflection shows them that even as we are witnessing the transformations of our children, watching them become just a little more independent - its hard to grasp the parts of them we are also saying goodbye to. Some of the magical elements about them that shine so brightly during the early years... With every milestone achieved, it also signifies a piece that is forever changed. A part of them we will not again see.

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These “veteran” parents understand that childhood flies by as quickly as it does for our kids. In so many ways, being a Parent is like having a job with a tremendous salary, but always finding yourself too busy with “work” to truly enjoy the money.

With every day, our children are mindful that there will be a vaguely precise moment when they will be grown up and independent of us. A time when they can decide for themselves what their rules will be and how their time will be spent. Certainly, they cannot yet wrap their heads around many of the realities and responsibilities of true adulthood. When they are young, it is impossible for them to appreciate that they are a child but ONCE and an adult forever and ever and ever.

Everything is done with an eye to something else. It can be easy to lose perspective. Parents whose children have already left the home know this maybe better than anyone. What these parents are trying to give us while our children are still small is the power of their own hindsight. As well intended as their efforts may be, it's difficult to fully absorb the levels of their understanding simply because our perspectives are so frustratingly polar.

What more can we do other than all that we're already doing? We try to find the balance between work and home, between personal pursuits and supporting our children on the roads to their own. We laugh with them and worry over them. We take as many pictures and videos of our kids as we possibly can because we clearly recognize how the moments continue to change even as they come.

Few triumphs can rival that of seeing our kids reach an autonomous adulthood. Yet even with the Parental victory of “a job well done”, there is also the vaguest feeling of *‘Is this it?’* There seems to be a component that we missed somehow. For the better part of twenty years everything we do is for our children. With the many trials that Parenthood offers-the official and final test for us is in our ability to Let Them Go and allow them to live their own life. To trust in what we have taught them and how effectively that impression has been left with our children.

Outside of the enormous sense of accomplishment we feel, what piece can we keep for ourselves?

Breadcrumbs® is what was missing all this time. Before this system, there was no way for a mother to offer anything other than another reminder of how quickly our children grow. As parents, how could we hold onto and keep safe the “things” between us and our kids that could simply never be captured through the lens of any camera? And before PaperBanking it was hard to appreciate just how many magical days become irretrievably lost with time.

Our experiences in Parenthood will eventually bring us all to a place where we understand that which we could not before. Fragments™ is an investment that marries the reality of Today with the power of a hindsight we haven't yet earned. We were told how much having a child would forever change our lives and a PaperBank™ is all the ways we will come to appreciate again everything our kids have added to our life.

Breadcrumbs® solves the mystery of *how* we enjoy the children we are already enjoying. Videos and photographs and journals, the artwork and baby teeth we save-suddenly have a greater value and added dimension when paired with the contents of your child's Paperbank®

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There are probably about one million things that stay on our mind and happen in our lives on any given day... But time really *is* flying. And in the midst of all the chaos, we must preserve what we can about our growing children- because they are surely changing between the break of every morning and the sleep that finds them each night. PaperBank™ and protect the highlights of their childhood against the weight and daily strain and distraction of “everything else”.

There are memories our children cause that are so delicate and powerful, but it's in the sense of security that we find in our daily routines with them that we forget to consider the need to keep these moments safe.

What are the things that we consider to be “bankable moments”? And when we recognize them, SAVE them. Shield them against the harsh elements of time and change.

If not now... When?? When could there *possibly* be a better time to capture the present than *in* the present?

So the next time we are told to “enjoy” our kids, we should exhale and understand that what they're really saying and subtly suggesting is:

“Are you PaperBanking™?”

And as we are reminded *again* of how amazingly fast it all goes by...we can sigh with relief knowing that even as our children are growing and evolving... through each Breadcrumb created, they will also in some ways, remain “untouched” by change. Touching, funny, and loving experiences are kept safe and are simply waiting for the world around us to cultivate new reasons to treasure those moments. In the meantime, they sit, encapsulated, accruing immeasurable value.

We can look forward to the delightful surprise of remembering the incredible things we won't believe we ever forgot. *And* we can smile back with reassurance because of the deep respect we have gained for the illusion of Time