

Another ends and so it begins...

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It's the end of another school year and that means my children (and probably yours) will repeat the same 4 phrases throughout the summer.

1. I'm bored.
2. Can we have a sleepover?
3. I didn't do it.
4. There's nothing to do around here!

And we parents will find ourselves also repeating the same chain of responses to our brood.

1. Clean your room or mow the lawn.
2. Someday when you get older and have children of your own, you'll realize sleepovers are stupid. This usually occurs to you when your oldest child is 9 or 10.
3. Give me your phone, iPod, DS etc. Maybe you'll think before you talk back next time.
4. I can't wait for school to start.

Of course by preparing myself for the summer with the kids I often forget to relish these days. Eventually school will start and they will grow another year and we'll be lost in the day to day of academia and fall sports. It won't be long before we'll all be thinking, 'I can't wait until fall break, Christmas break, spring break'.

Last week as I was going through mail and opened a birthday invitation from the child of a college friend. 'I'm turning 10! Please help me celebrate!' I couldn't believe it. Had it been 10 years? I always try to avoid using popular idioms but this deserved one, "you blink and the children are grown'. It got me all nostalgic. I thought about visiting my friend when her little guy was just a few days old. My oldest was just 3 years old. It seemed like yesterday. But my little family's life looks so different today than it did in 2002. In 10 years, we've moved twice, built a home, had another little boy, lost a mother, lost a father, survived a crappy economy with no visible scars, and so on. In short we've accomplished/survived a lot in a decade.

Wasn't it yesterday when we were trying to survive those first few weeks with a newborn and 4 year old without sleep? At the time it felt like those days would never end. It felt like he would never sleep for more than 15 minutes. Today he and his brother will sleep until noon if we let them. When it comes to fast paced parenthood, writer **Gretchen Rubin's** observation, 'The days are long but the years are shorter' particularly resonates with me. Contrary to the theme of many Hollywood films, we can't turn back time and re-live those flashes of history.

10 years from now, my oldest will be in the early stages of adulthood. Maybe out of college, getting that first 'big boy' job. He'll begin learning the importance of things like health insurance, 401k and turning the lights off when you leave a room. My youngest will be graduating from high school and getting ready for his first year of college where he will experience all the cool things his big brother told him about. And my husband and I will be 'empty nesters'. It will be here before we know it. And I'll be the one in the checkout line behind the young mom trying to sooth her baby saying, "Enjoy this, before you know it she'll be going off to college."

So this summer I am making the conscious effort to ENJOY. EVERY. MINUTE. Sure, I'll get upset about empty potato chip bags and candy wrappers strewn all over or the half full coke cans sitting around. But for once in my motherhood, I'll sit back and enjoy listening to all the commotion because before you know it, the house will be quiet for days on end. That's when the memories we made will keep us company in between visits from our boys.

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