

Instead of teaching moment, sit back and watch moment

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Fun is where you find it.

My wife, Debra, and oldest daughter, Adaline, went to Omaha for a pageant a few weeks ago, leaving me in charge of Olivia and Elijah.

Elijah and I ventured off to take some bags of leaves down to the dump and come straight home.

Remember, fun is where you find it.

Upon arriving at the yard waste dump next to the ball fields here in Grant, I saw a large pile of refuse, pumpkins, leaves, brush, etc. My son saw a game.

He wanted to help me dump the bags of leaves and after doing so the first time, the leaves

stayed in a relatively uniform pile. I went back to the truck for another bag, my son stopped and stared at the pile.

Taking a good five to six good steps backward, he lined up the pile of leaves with his hand and took off running at a frantic pace. He kicked the pile of leaves and they scattered everywhere. This turned into a game. He would grab a bag of leaves, dump them out, pile them up and crash through them.

Once the bags were empty I felt he was ready to head home. Seeing things in a different way than most kids my son wanted to go to the 'new playground over there.'

"What new playground?" I asked.

He pointed to what I thought was a seemingly ordinary field.

"That big playground over there, can we go?" he asked, taking off at a run toward the area.

Off in the distance there was a large pile of gravel. To me it was a large pile of gravel, to him it was a playground.

He climbed to the top of the gravel mound and begged me to chase him. We went up and down the gravel mound at least 30 times. Elijah would jump from one small hill on the pile to another, pretending to be the Hulk, or a king on an adventure.

After nearly an hour having an adventure on the gravel pile, we went home. The following weekend, the first thing he said Saturday morning was, 'Can we go back to the playground and play on the mountain?'

We attended an auction at the fairgrounds and he immediately took off for the mound of gravel by the ball diamonds. It was there he found a golf ball in the dirt.

Well over an hour was spent throwing the ball and running bases around each and every ball field.

I was worn out, hands on my knees, tired. He was ready for a new game, a new adventure.

Parenting is filled with 'teachable moments.' These moments give us as parents the opportunity to give our children a life lesson.

I learned a lesson on this day by my son: fun is where you find it.

If I proposed to some people, 'We are going to hang out at an auction today' or 'We will spend the afternoon at the yard waste site,' they would likely roll their eyes at me.

Kids, however, find these moments of 'boredom' and turn them into games, adventures and memories for parents. Showing ingenuity in that situation gave me a life lesson in seeing things in a different angle.

How kids figure things out and express themselves has been awe-inspiring to me as a parent.

When my daughters make up games to keep themselves occupied or draw pictures and make up stories to go with them, that is really what being a kid is all about for me as a parent.

My oldest has authored several books and has a ton of story ideas floating around and, as an objective writer, some of the ideas are really intricate and well thought out for a nine-year-old.

Letting their imagination go where it wants to keeps me going and urges me on to continue to encourage this in my kids.

Yes, now and again, I have my hands on my knees, out of gas, but seeing how their minds process things is truly what makes being a parent special.