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## My Boys

Visiting my grown children and seeing the lives that they have created, is one of the most beautiful moments for me as a parent. Meeting the people that they call their friends, staying in their homes, watching the activities they enjoy, sharing a meal at the table or visiting restaurants they often eat at is incredibly special.

I have three sons that are grown men. I was young when I had my children. It makes me shudder when I see our grandchildren being the same age that I was when I already had a family. Yikes!!

Our lives were not easy. There wasn't a lot of money when the boys were growing up so there were tough decisions, some unwise decisions. There were times when I didn't have my priorities right. But despite all that, my children are remarkable.



One son lives nearby so we get to see each other often. I watch him with his children, how he guides them, how he worries about them. Watching him show up and be the person his children need. Watching him with his friends and how strong those bonds are. I enjoy listening to him talk about hiking in the mountains.

Finally with travel opening up this fall, I was able to see my other two sons.

It had been a year since I last saw the son in Winnipeg. His own son graduated from high school in June. (Unfortunately, due to COVID we were unable to attend). He is a family historian. He writes an annual review of the year that people far and wide look forward to reading. He is deeply connected to his family. He and cousins meet weekly to share time. He has a career that he enjoys. We laughed, went for walks, played badminton, cooked, visited, and listened to great music.



It had been two years since I saw the one in Toronto – thanks COVID. Visits are usually planned around one of his cycle cross races. It's a crazy sport - check it out. He arranged for us to stay at cabin near Algonquin Park so that we could hike. What should have a relatively easy hike was challenging due to the rainfall. It is the conversations over homemade dinner, the hikes, and the shared activities that bring the most joy.

Spending time with each of them is special. The pandemic has changed everyone to some degree and they are no different. I was excited to be with them and to listen to their stories.

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They have each crafted a world filled with family and good friends. They live simple lives. They have careers that make them happy. They have found a balance between work and their personal lives. That is something that I could have learned earlier.

My sons are humble. They are conversationalists and historians. Each of them appreciates the magic of sharing a meal around the table.

When I think about the boys when they were young, I am often reminded of times when we were outside. We lived out in the country where there was a side road not far from the house. During the summer, the road was sand, with tall trees on either side, but in the winter the snow blew in metres high. It was impossible by car in the winter. This one winter they made a quinzhee from one of the large snow drifts. It created a warm cavern large enough for all of us. There was even a hole in the roof so that we could have a wiener roast.

On another occasion, the boys and I went camping about 1.5 hours from home for a week. The boys were about 3, 4 & 6. When I think of it now, I guess no one told us we couldn't, so we did. We packed the van with an abundance of groceries, camping supplies, the tent, and sleeping bags, and bikes, and off we went. We hiked up to the ink pots which was quite a feat given the age of the boys. For a glorious week, we hiked, hung out at the beach, explored the local towns, made evening campfires, and shared stories. The simple times, of roasted marshmallows, watching squirrels, and finding interesting bugs. They were curious, just like they should be.