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Grandfather Chronicles

“Why Do You Keep Asking Me That”

By Donato (Danny) Pietrodangelo



Stunning. They were drawn thousands of years ago when we wore pelts and lived in caves. Three scenes - primitive but powerful - scrawled in fading red and yellow ochre on the smooth rock wall. The first depicts two cave children facing an enormous, vicious cave bear. In the next, one of the children is charging the bear, outstretched arms, trying to knock him over. The third has the other child casually walking past and around the monster.

Below the drawings is an inscription in an ancient language, only recently translated by archaeologists. It's a warning. "Beware, all parents who follow: if a cave boy wants to get past something, he tries to knock it down. But, if a cave girl wants to get by, she'll simply walk around.

"This is not a reason to put cave boy babies in baskets and launch them downstream - tempting as it might be."

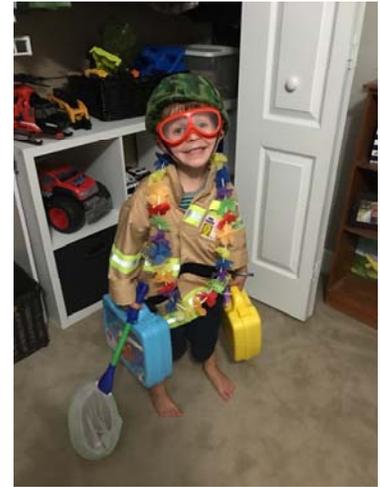
Now, let's be honest here, this is a primal thing and has nothing to do with gender assignment; let's just call it *Non-atypical Gender Behavioral Predispositions*.

Just ask a parent this: If a parent were to tell you incidents perpetrated against them by a child, let's say - taking off all its clothes, then jumping in the big fountain at a plant nursery; wiggling out of the stroller, next to a momentarily distracted adult, reaching up and pulling the the store's fire alarm; deciding the bathroom display at Home Depot had a perfectly good toilet; what's your guess on the kid's gender?

They just just seem to perceive and react to things differently, boys and girls. Now I'm not saying girls are angels dripping in sugar and spice. When one of my grand girls gets into it with her brother, she becomes a cage-fighter. But once they become bipeds, boys seem to develop a certain level of crude, physicality; the knock-it-down versus walk-around thing.

And, they're a take home test for your *Traumatic Incident Response* certification. Take, for instance, the "Why do you keep asking me that?" incident.

I hear a blood-curdling scream, "Dannnyyyy." I run, expecting to see something like a water moccasin, hanging by its fangs from my wife's calf. Instead, I see my grandson's back and her horrified expression. I rush around, hoping there's no blood. Thankfully there isn't - blood that is.



Rather, he is covered in black. Hands, feet, arms, legs. We're talking black, blacker than a blacktop. Oddly, Impenetrable black, the liquid equivalent of standing in the closet of a dark house, "I can't see my hands" black.

"What happened B? What is that?" He looks down at his hands and simply says, "I spilled something." Hesitantly, I walk up the stairs, go into my office, look around, then yell downstairs to my wife, "Don't come up here." No need to traumatize both of us.

The area around my desk has multiple tarpit-like black puddles. The same color liquid is slowly dripping off my desk into the open side of my computer. All the guts, like everything else, is as black as our black lab - named Jet. The nearby wall looks like a blood splattered crime scene in CSI Miami.

And then I see it. The tipped over cup and the equally tipped over empty bottle of black printer ink. The stuff is as permanent as death. (Hmm, so is this really my fault?)

Back downstairs, "Call your son." (Always *your* son when it's something bad.)
"No, you call him." Me on the phone, "Get over here to see what your son did."

“What? Why are you mad at me?” he asks. “I’m not mad at you, I’m mad at your mother, who wouldn’t call to tell you.”

“Tell me what?”

“Tell you to get over here.” It was one of those “who’s on first” type of conversations.

Waiting, I go over to the grand boy and ask, “Do you realize what you did?” He looks up at me baffled, with his bright, six-year-old hazel eyes and says, “Why does everybody keep asking, me that?”

Kind of like, “Duh, I’m a little boy, you know.”

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