

When You Do Everything Backwards

I was talking to my wife over the weekend about the stage in life we're in. We have four kids, ages 11 months to 13 years, and now, for the first time, we finally feel like this parenting thing is super fun and rewarding!

Not that we haven't loved it all the way, but it's been marked more by difficulty and chaos than calm delight. We got married very young. I was (almost) 20 and Heather was 22. Our first kid was a surprise just a year later. We moved several times, were always very tight financially, had the pain of a miscarriage then infertility for five long years, a crazy whirlwind adoption process followed by a surprise pregnancy nine months later (adoption is often a cure for infertility!), an escape from a city we hated living into a brand new place with no connections, quitting a great job to launch a company, tragic deaths in the family, an ill-fated trip abroad, yet another surprise pregnancy (we don't plan well), a move to a house we hated, then a move to a house we loved.

Now we're here. We've got a rhythm to this parenting and home/unschooling thing. We've got a rhythm to the growing company, kids activities, social life, etc. There's a peace and joy in place we've never really had, and never really realized we didn't have until we did.

It dawned on me that being settled in a great house in a great city with a great company and lots of knowledge on how we want to parent and a good financial situation and clear life and career goals is a state of being most people try to achieve first, before they have kids. We do everything backwards. We always end up jumping in with both feet, getting the worst of it, fighting for air, then realizing in retrospect that we had no idea what we were doing.

I'm not sure I'd advise our approach to anyone else. But I also don't think I'd do it differently. If we knew more, we might not have done any of the big crazy stuff that helped us grow.

Anyway, here's to the next leap and whatever it brings!