



Last week I spent two unexpected fun filled days with my 4 year old daughter when the playschool she attends had to shut down due to a flood from a heavy rainstorm. Because the flood happened while the kids were there (which they thought was so cool!), parents and other assorted caregivers had to scramble and re-arrange plans at midday to rescue their children.

While driving the 20 minutes to go pick her up, I was filled with thoughts of panic and worry over what the heck we were going to do with this spontaneous, unplanned time together. By the time I reached the school, it was already a scorching 32 degrees, so plans that required any kind of physical exertion on my part were out of the question! Finally, I just decided to give

ingenuity

it up and let the moments before us simply unfold. It's absolutely amazing to me how ingenuity, imagination, and creativity unfold when we let go of our desire of always having to know the outcome. Not only did the letting go of my need to "have a plan" put me in a relaxed and open space (to which my daughter immediately and positively responded), but it connected me to her at her level, which is 99.9% of the time at open, fun, wonder, magic, creative. discover - no such thing as time level.

Because it was so hot, we spent most of our time just hanging out on the front porch, which is wonderfully shaded until about 4pm. From this place on the porch I entered her world for two days, and the journey was magical. Not once did we get in the car to go "somewhere." All of life happened from that front porch and oh...the discoveries we made! Who could have imagined that our 4 month old kitty, Luna, could bring about more entertainment than a movie? We watched her jump sideways with her fur all puffed out, we laughed at her as she pounced on grasshoppers, or leapt

discover

in midair to try and catch a moth. We giggled when she tore around the grass in circles then flopped down panting like a dog. We ate ice cream for lunch, drew pictures with Vivaldi playing in the background, made a swimming pool from Sage's winter snow tube, which we filled up with the hose. This by the way, became an endless source of entertainment as it went from swimming pool to bug pond, complete with wooden bridge made from assorted sticks found laying about. At one point, it even became a bathtub for Luna (a very quick bath!) when Sage decided she wanted to

BE HERE NOW WITH YOUR KIDS

by Heather Fraser

see what would happen if she put kitty in there!

We ate cherries and tried to see who could spit the pits the furthest. We watched the clouds float by as they changed shapes. We stayed in our bathing suits all day. We made a bug can from an empty coffee container and by the end of the two days it was

creativity

filled with 5 shed cicada skins (a very cool discovery!). We had a real live cicada with a missing wing, an even cooler discovery. It was basically the highlight of our two days together as cicadas are very rare to see up close. They are usually high in the tops of trees buzzing in the heat. There were six tiny grasshoppers, which we caught, a cricket, a green inchworm, one dead moth, and one dead bumblebee. I watched in awe at how gentle and reverent Sage was when she handled these little creatures, even the dead ones. It was so natural to her. Even her voice and the look on her face changed to one of complete care and compassion. What an adventure! And all of it happened from sitting on the front porch without a single plan in sight.

I learned a valuable lesson from what at first appeared to be an inconvenience in "my" original plans. I learned to BE HERE NOW, and in doing so was privy

magical

to what my daughter is always doing, which is BEING HERE NOW. I also learned that nature can amuse, teach, and heal our children if we just take the time to let them be in it for a while. Let them explore, discover, touch and be free without interrupting them every five minutes to tell them to be careful, or not to climb on that log, or not to get dirty, or to hurry up. And nature doesn't have to equal the great northern adventure. We experienced a wilderness adventure together amongst the grass and trees and plants and sky in our own yard. If you don't have a backyard, parks are ideal!

Kids have an infinite capacity to take what is before them, without judgment, and fill it with their free flowing love, joy, and creativity. To them, when they feel safe, wanted and loved, every moment is an opportunity to discover. The role of parent, while at times can challenge us beyond belief, is surely a role to be accepted with honor, reverence, and the deepest of gratitude, for it is in this role, that we discover our own divinity...precisely what our children are teaching us each and every day. ■