

Creating Beautiful Family Memories

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A couple of weeks ago, I was looking through some boxes of photos that I hadn't touched since our move to Georgia three years ago. It was just before Father's Day and I wanted to include a few memorable pictures in the card I was sending to my dad. Memories flooded back over me as I look at the snapshots of my life--going camping as a family, visits from my grandparents who lived on the other side of the country, Monday morning pancakes made by my dad on his day off because he was a minister, my dad's patience as I learned to drive a stick shift in the parking lot of our school next door, celebrating Christmas and my parent's 60th wedding anniversary in Puerto Rico with my family giving my children a chance to get to know their grandparents as young adults and so much more.

One memory that came back to me was an early morning train ride when I was only four years old.

It sticks out in my mind because it was special -- the trip was just me and my dad and the purpose was not to get to a destination. I asked my dad to refresh my memory of this event. My grandparents had come by train to visit Oregon where we lived and somehow, there were two unused portions of the tickets. My parents had decided that my dad would use his day off to take me on an adventure. I remember getting up early and leaving the house while it was still dark out. We drove to the train station and boarded. Having breakfast in the dining car with the linen tablecloths, we watched the landscape flow by.

I don't remember much else about the day. My dad says that we went to a nearby city, got off the train and walked around visiting a book store and then headed back home on the train. I am sure that the reason that this memory has stayed with me is because of the gift of time and presence that my father gave to me that day. It reinforced the belief that I am loved and worthy.

Strong families are built on a foundation of love, and love, as we know, doesn't simply happen. Love takes work - especially when the details of the day-to-day grind seem to crowd out everything else and leave us short on time and sapped of energy. "Making memories" is one way to create a lasting sense of common identity and shared family heritage among the members of our households. What kind of memories are you creating in your family?