



### Living in the Sub-points

Last weekend I sat at the dining room table with my dad looking at old photographs.

We spend 4-6 weekends with them every Fall. Yes, we live in the same town. We also live in a town with a beloved college football team where people will pay big money for homes to rent. Enough money to get us cleaning and organizing and moving our entire family out of our house for 3 days.

So, that is why we moved in with my parents for those weekends. All six of us. It's all for the money. Oh, and the quality time with family...

My parents live in the same house that I grew up in. My husband and I sleep in the same bed that I have had since 6th grade, and I can assure you, it should not have two adult people in it, especially one who sleeps like a starfish.

But my parents are more than happy to have us around, and the boys love the extra attention (and junk food) that my mom happily provides because despite what I say, she is going to do it anyway, and I'm not going to argue with her.

As I was looking through the hundreds of photo albums my mom has taken great care to create, I came across one that I hadn't seen. It had pictures of my brother, sister, and me in our 1980s glory, most of the photos I have absolutely no memory of them being taken. My mullet and I look like we're having fun though. Tucked in the back page was a few small black and white photos, that fell out.

One was a picture of my dad around the age of seven with his dog Pete in a boat. Although my dad has been through hell this past year, when he looked at this picture he was transported to that very place. He knew exactly where it was taken and for a moment, I witnessed him mentally transport himself to a young boy, just like that.

My grandfather was a successful lawyer who practiced law even into his 90's but that isn't what my dad thinks about when he reflects on his childhood. He thinks about a boat, a dog, and an afternoon floating around Silver Lake with his Dad.

For so long, I defined my success by my title, or what I was going to "be" when I grew up. I wanted so badly to be an actress. I love acting, yes, but what I discovered is that I loved the idea of fame more. Because in my mind, this would mean I was successful. Luckily I figured out early on how wrong I was.

My job is in publicity; my role is daughter, sister, friend, aunt, wife, and mother. But those are just Roman numerals on my outline. What is filling the sub-points, and even the subsidiary ideas under the sub-points are what make me interesting. Yes, I'm a daughter, but do you know the story about how my dad and I took dance lessons so we would get our father/daughter to dance right at my wedding, and we still tripped over our feet? Or how do my mom and I get coffee together and sit in the car and talk about nothing? Or how about how they both know that I still sleep with a pillow that was given to me by my grandmother when I was a baby?

I'm a wife, yes, but what about the time when Don and I cried on the kitchen floor with our first newborn son because we were exhausted and had no idea what we were doing?

Or the first time we lost one or sometimes two of our children in a corn maze.

Or when Don attached a wagon to our dog and the dog chased a squirrel while two of our sons went along for the ride and all of us were screaming.

Or the time when Finegan was two and fell asleep face first in a plate full of rice and beans at La Esperanza. Even the owner remembers that. It's the subtext of my life that measures success. And none of those instances would be considered good parenting, or even mediocre parenting for that matter.

On Sunday, we went to church with my parents and the sermon was about our legacy. What are people going to remember about us when we are gone? Maybe someone will define me as a publicist, actress, or writer, but what I hope more than anything is that it is more than that. I hope my boys, family, and friends get that look when they think of me. The look that my dad had when he saw the picture of himself on a boat with his dog.

I want to be a funny memory or a story, that lives deep within the hearts of the people I love the most.

For the people who I have loved who are gone now, I don't care about what they did for a living, I don't even remember. What I remember is how they made me feel when I was with them, and the blast we had making the most of our sub-points.