

I had it pretty easy growing up; not so for Kevin

The post below was originally written over a week ago, 9/27/10, as I waited while Kevin (my son, not the pilot) was undergoing a fairly-painful procedure to try and figure out the source of his kidney-related abdominal pains. I didn't publish it then, because... well, just because. But it's now a week and a half later, he's been through yet another really painful procedure, and we're still looking for answers. I think we're getting closer, and we continue to be assured there's nothing life-threatening going on. At least not physically life-threatening. But there's definitely a force that's trying to suck life away, and my job, as a father & husband, is to do what I can to reverse that, and somehow offer hope over the long run when what everyone wants is a sudden quick fix. You can see my own desire for that "quick fix" in the final sentence. --Mike--

9/27/10- My high school years were littered with some of the usual teenage angst; the all-consuming girlfriend stuff, trying to motivate myself for classes I didn't care about (Spanish and Algebra II come to mind but don't let my kids know that), college plans (pretty simple there; Harvard on the Hill/Canada JC fit into the budget, UC would have to wait) but never much trouble with finances because I always wanted to work as much as possible and pay my own way.

But where I was really fortunate was with my health. It was something I just didn't give much thought to. When I had Osgood Schlatters "disease" for a year, I learned to live with pretty nasty pain, which has probably served me well over the years. When I broke my arm the "wrong" way when I was 17 (in a bike race, of course), it healed up nicely. My allergies to anything with pollen were pretty severe, but nothing could be done about it, so you just lived with it.

In short there was nothing about my teenage years that gave me any concerns about the future and whether I'd ever be "normal." Quite the opposite in fact as I found comfort in not being normal, and my bike racing was about as counter-cultural as a sport could get back then.

All of which makes me wonder whether I'm exactly the right parent for Kevin, with his epilepsy issues and now this ongoing as-yet-not-figured-out kidney thing, or maybe the opposite. Aside from my cool-weather breathing issues, what do I know about (involuntary) physical suffering?

I've always assumed that everything has a definable beginning, middle & end. I've always been able to make plans and rationalize accordingly. But is that due to a state of mind or, if you will, biological destiny? Is that a luxury I get to enjoy but not Kevin?

Being a parent is a more-interesting and self-reflective process than I would have thought. And it's making me think that there are things you may have missed as a kid that will reach you as a parent. Things that will make you a more complete person, hopefully for the benefit of your kid. Right now, waiting outside the room where Kevin is getting yet another somewhat-invasive test, I'm trying to figure out how best to help him through this process. It's not easy. At least not beyond the obvious, praying for a Doctor's tenacity and wisdom to figure this kidney thing out.

It's now 32 minutes that he's been behind that big heavy door. I'm hoping it's one of the best-spent 32 minutes of his life. --Mike--