

Five Things you will Never See Engraved on a Mother's Tombstone

Contributed by Carly Sutherland
Tuesday, 09 February 2010

1. Her Drawers Were Always Organized

After my baby shower, I had what felt like hundreds of those little baby washcloths. I diligently washed them (in special hypoallergenic baby detergent, of course) and folded them in fourths, smoothing them over my swollen belly and placing them neatly in a drawer. Skip ahead to a month later, and within a 24-hour period, every single washcloth was covered in either poop, pee, spit-up, breast milk, or tears. I washed and dried them again, but this time, I threw them all in a pile on the change table where they would be destroyed again over the course of the following 24 hours. I've now gotten a bit better: I'll toss them in a shoebox if I'm on a bit of a clean spree. But let me tell you: those facecloths got folded and put away once in 18 months.

Oh, and the special detergent was quickly replaced by whatever was on sale that week.

2. She Never Asked for an Epidural

I wanted a natural childbirth. Oh, I wanted it so badly. I also told everyone that I wouldn't be getting an epidural (parenting mistake #1 of 56782 thus far) unless there was some kind of emergency. Well, after 24 hours of labour, the last 8 hours of which passed without dilating a single centimeter, I broke down. At the time I justified it by screaming to my husband, "THIS IS A %\$&*# EMERGENCY!"

And I will confess this much: there was a teeny tiny part of me that was thinking you can't get the epidural, because everyone will say, "I TOLD YOU SO."

Well, no one ever did. At least not out loud, or to my face.

3. She Never Served Kraft Dinner

The nutritional standards I hold for my child are generally higher than my own. He gets organic milk; I get the regular stuff. He gets free-range chicken; I get whatever is slapped with a "PRICED FOR QUICK SALE" sticker. My husband rolls his eyes. I insist that my years of critical development have come and gone, and it is too late for omega-3 fatty acids to do my brain any good, anyway.

Several months ago my husband was away for work, and I was home alone for a week, caring for our son and suffering from a nasty stomach flu. At one point I realized that the lentil soup and ethically farmed salmon were coming to an end, so I crawled into the kitchen and made a pot of KD. Aside from a startlingly orange diaper, he survived. Now, I'll even slip him some of my "PRICED FOR QUICK SALE" chicken (but only if cooked to 185 degrees) if I'm feeling reckless and wild.

4. She Was Always So Busy

I think that for my explanation here, I will turn to a lyrical except from the robbed-of-a-Grammy children's compilation "Philadelphia Chickens" by Sandra Boynton (it helps if you read it reallyreallyfast) to express what it is that I'm trying to say:

We're very very busy and we've got a lot to do

And we haven't got a minute to explain it all to you

For on Sunday Monday Tuesday there are people we must see

And on Wednesday Thursday Friday we're as busy as can be

With our most important meetings and our most important calls

And we have to do so many things and post them on the walls

Then we have to hurry to the south and then we hurry to the north

And we're talking every minute as we hurry back and forth

And we have to hurry to the east and then we hurry west

And we're talking every minute and we don't have time to rest

And we have to do it faster or it never will be done

And we have no time for listening or anything that's fun

Who was it that said everything you need to know, you can learn from a children's book?

5. Her Kid Was Potty Trained 6 Months Before Everyone Else's

Well, congratulations. You know, there will come a time when you don't want your child to reach every milestone before his peers. I taught junior high. Trust me on this one.

So there you have it.

Let it go, sister!

I can still make you a medal if you were really hoping for one, but it will have dried macaroni noodles glued around the edge.

Carly Sutherland writes about parenting and the people who just don't get it on her blog:
<http://topfiveparenting.wordpress.com>.