

Enjoy going slow

by Lisa McKimm



School Holidays. They're over now, but were they a pleasure or an expensive endurance test for you? You may have had a bit of both?

Whilst there is a lot of advertising always about what to do with the kids in the holidays, it is also important to remember that holidays are about 'down time'. Time to lay back and take your eye off the clock.

It took me quite a while to figure this lesson out when my kids were small. I wanted to take them to the holiday children's theatre production; get to story reading marathons at the library; magic shows at the local shopping mall and goodness knows what else. I had this jam packed itinerary because I didn't want them to Get Bored!

By the time that our fourth child entered the world - I was beginning to realise the error of my ways. Down time did not have to be boring. And in fact I think that some of my kids most enduring memories of holiday times are of the simple things. Mates that came to play - where the same game could last all day; be put on hold whilst they had a sleepover; and then picked up and carried on the next day.

It didn't make any difference if it was playing in a hut down the back of the block that we lived on or creating another day in the ongoing saga of Barbie and her social life. I often used to laugh at this last one. I wondered if we'd set some odd gender roles up somehow.

There was an Action Man in the toybox who had to double as Ken when the Barbie game was being played. They would hook him on to the top of Barbie's house where he was apparently supposed to be painting the roof. They would completely ignore him for hour after hour, and then would occasionally say 'Better move Ken along to paint the next bit'. He was more of a hired hand for the odd jobs than a life partner.

This might worry me more if I thought that it vaguely reflected our own home life - but anyone who has seen my husband's DIY will know better. The only time that Ken was allowed off the roof was to be Barbie's driver if her Pink Sports Car was having an outing. Poor Ken.

The great thing about those games though was that while the kids let their imagination fill their time - they were developing their personalities and personal interaction skills - and I was relaxing! Ah, the heaven of it all.

My kids are grown now, and I as I busy myself increasingly in my work with families, I miss those holidays for 'chilling-out' time. Make the most of them while you can!

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