

Someone suggested this to me after seeing a facebook post of mine. I said that a Downeast vacation I took my kids on had the effect I wanted for my kids. We hiked, saw a different part of the state, went to beaches, played games, unplugged and enjoyed family time. We got sun, saw Canada, Acadia and lots of fun things in between. They were refreshed and it helped us transition from remote learning to summer fun. (And they never went into a store!)

But for me...it caused some melancholy. Coming back, I still had to wrap-up some end of school year details. Receiving on my doorstep the last pieces of my kindergartener's class work and her cubby picture had me bawling. As did thanking her teacher who will not have another one of my children in her classroom. I think I would have been sentimental had she been in class but not as much ...I know I would not have been as sad if it was 1st grade year. I think she will be the one faced with the most academic delay due to remote learning. They are social learners and help each other plus she likes to please teacher but not always me. I know she will be fine in the long run. Seeing her go to a summer day camp program reinforced how much the social aspect of her life was missing and she thrived making new friends and seeing a beloved teacher. She is busy making plans for when she goes back to the school the bus takes her to. I am thinking about the fall and believe that our kids need to go back to school even for a little bit but fear that they won't or that some of the policies put in place to be safe will be more detrimental to them.

Another sadness, I struggled with was picking up the last costume for a recital that would have been this weekend. We both knew it would not happen this year but I think as an adult, date awareness played a role. It would have been our 10th year...that is a big chunk of time for a child to be doing a specific activity. (For context...most sports players her age would at most have 7 years of organized play if they started in Kindergarten.)

My middle child is more likely to be happy at home. He still has days he needs to get out but we don't go to our usual spots around here as they are busier than some of our secondary spots. He asked why he does not have summer activities but the ones he was looking forward to were cancelled and the other activities are not his thing. I hope to have something for him but it just might not happen.

The uncertainty of Covid19 is wearing. It is a constant battle with making it okay for my kids through encouraging them that we can do it. We are finding new routines, activities, and letting go of other things like the missed recitals. They have fears and anxiety that I have to reinforce that it is not so scary if we do our part. It is wearing to constantly think about the choices I make for my family while considering how others will perceive my decisions or worse.

These are the unique reasons I had for sadness this week but we still laughed, had fun, read, played games, had family time, there may have been some bickering, some imperfect parenting, love, good conversations, snacks, food, orthodontist appointment, chores, errands, sleepover with a cousin, dolls, video games, outdoor tae kwon do, walks, sun....summertime so only a little math! And of course....there were dishes!

Things are different but life carries on and we can find joy in the small and big things. I think there are two really important traits we can teach our children. One is kindness (which includes empathy) and the other is adaptability. I was able to have a conversation about being adaptable with my oldest. She is getting a little concerned she does not have a plan (knows what she wants to study in college/career). We were able to talk about how it is great to know what you want to do but that she still has a lot of

time to figure it out. High school classes, advisors, experiences will help her figure out her likes and dislikes. I tell her that she may not have a traditional job but could see her with a business degree to help with all of her ideas. But mostly, even if we have plans, we cannot be so rigid that we cannot adapt.

In order to handle life changes, we have to adapt in order to keep going forward, to find new ways of happiness, joy, peace, love, and that it is a conscious choice to adapt. I told of a personal experience that took a long time to overcome; but by knowing in my mind that I had made the right or only choice I could make that my heart was able to make peace with those decisions and what life had in store for me.

So there was sadness last week but it will pass. We are not alone and we will get through this.