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Dressing A Toddler, Whomever She Is Today

By David Leonhardt

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by: **David Leonhardt**

Some things we take for granted. Like getting dressed. Unless we are paraplegic, an absolute klutz or have just smoked far too much cabbage, getting dressed is a cinch.

Sure, if you happen to be the winner of the 2004 Imelda Marcos Shoe Collection Trophy, you might have trouble choosing just the right shoe for the occasion. But actually slipping your foot into your selection should be a cinch.

The only time getting dressed should pose a problem is on April Fools Day. Underwear is pretty hard to put on when it is drenched in water. Harder still when it comes straight out of the freezer. And even harder when wrapped around last year's frozen Christmas cake. But that still leaves 364 days of easy dressing.

Some things we just take for granted...until you become a parent.

"No!" Little Lady screams in mock rage.

Just come back here so I can pull up your pants and slip on your shirt.

"No!" the toddler repeats in defiance.

Did you know that there are some things you can do at 30 miles per hour? Putting a shirt on an agile toddler is not one of those things. Around the chair. Over the back of the couch. Under the table. Into the bathroom. SLAM!

Ouch. Make that: into the bathroom door.

"No!"

Dressing A Toddler, Whomever She Is Today

Please, Little Lady, let me put on your shirt.

"I'm not Little Lady. I'm Baby Swan."

OK, Baby Swan. Let me put on your shirt.

"You're Papa Baby Swan."

OK. You're Baby Swan. I'm Papa Baby Swan. Just let me put on your shirt.

"Now I'm Tutter."

Tutter is a mouse puppet in a children's show she watches. OK, Tutter, let's put on the Tutter shirt."

"No. You be Tutter."

OK, I'll be Tutter. I'll be whomever you want be to be. Yesterday I was Big Spider. The day before I was Spider Web. I remember being a crocodile, a monkey and a detective. I have no idea who I am anyway, so I might as well be Tutter.

"Are you Tutter?"

We hear a lot about the "terrible twos", but we don't hear much about the identity crisis years. Speaking with mothers down at the play center, it seems many kids go through this phase.

"I saa-aid, are you Tutter?"

You probably did, too. Ask your mother if you ever went through a phase when you were always pretending to be someone else...so much so that you were almost convinced it was real.

It's bad news if your mother's eyes gloss over nostalgically and she answers, "Yes dear, I remember when you were quite convinced you were an African dung beetle."

It's worse news if she adds, "I think the pre-teen years were the hardest. We had no idea how to explain the birds and the bees to a beetle."

But the worst news is if your mother sighs and says, "I remember well. Your father and I are still hoping it's just a phase you're going through."

The best of us go through identity crises now and then. I am The Happy Guy. I am also a writer. And a search engine optimizer. And a husband. And a homeowner. And a father.

But not this morning. This morning I was a very tired and frustrated Tutter mouse puppet...with generously distributed bruises to prove my credentials.

"No!"

Aw, c'mon, Baby Swan. This is your Tutter speaking. Please come out from under the staircase.

"No. You be Baby Swan."

I suppose that at her age, she can probably get away with going topless. But sooner or later she'll get hungry. And when she comes out to feed, I'll get that shirt on Baby Swan. Or Tutter. Or whomever that toddler is today!

David Leonhardt publishes The Happy Guy humor column:

And A Daily Dose of Happiness:

Read more articles on humor:

Or on personal growth and self-actualization

Should You Buy Toddler Size Furniture

By Bob Benson

Your baby has grown into a full-fledged toddler and is ready for a "big girl" or "big boy" bed. Have you seen the latest toddler furniture? It's cute! But you really don't have to spend a lot to make your toddler comfortable in his or her bedroom.

Your first decision will be whether to buy a toddler bed. The toddler bed is a piece of furniture sized just right for babies who are too big for their crib. Most use the mattress from the crib, however, so they are not actually that much bigger in size. Toddler beds just get the child accustomed to sleeping without rails all around and is low enough that if the child rolls out, he won't get hurt.

Has your child grown quickly? If so, you might think about skipping the toddler bed as furniture and buy a twin size bed instead. You can purchase rails made of cloth and plastic that do a fine job of keeping the child in the bed and allowing him more room for movement. If you are looking to save money, this is one way to do it. By buying a twin bed you've eliminated the often expensive toddler size furniture that will only have to be upgraded later.

Should you buy a toddler size dresser? Again, the toddler furniture is precious, but do you expect your two or three year old to always put away his socks, underwear or t-shirts? The purchase of toddler size furniture is less about function and more about how absolutely adorable it is. Unless you just have money to blow, invest in furniture that will last the child (or someone else in the family later if it doesn't match his room any more) for a lifetime. If you buy a six drawer dresser now you can still insist your toddler help put his things away by putting items like socks, shirts and under clothes in the lower

Dressing A Toddler, Whomever She Is Today

drawers. Since the furniture will be heavier, help open and close the drawers for him to avoid smashing his little fingers.

When considering furniture for a toddler's room remember to keep special needs in mind. Some children have allergic reactions to compressed woods, or the glues used to hold them together. If you have just bought new furniture that seems to have a loud smell and your child develops allergy symptoms, let your doctor know. It may help pin down the allergy culprit without undergoing a lot of tests.

Use the money you save by not buying toddler furniture to change the décor in your child's room often. A toddler who likes Big Bird one day may be crazy over princesses or Thomas the Tank Engine another day. Use standard colors that match the furniture you've selected and you can change themes of the room as often as your child changes favorites. Your toddler's room can still be cute and as unique as his ever changing personality even if you don't sink a lot of money into toddler sized furniture.

Bob Benson is the founder of

online. You can check out our website at

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