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Help! The Kids Are Taking Over

By David Leonhardt

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Once upon a time, I harbored a quaint notion of child development.

In the my imaginary world, children eventually transmogrified into those horror-movie monsters called teenagers. They would overrun the house for a few years, scorching and pillaging along the way...but leaving no lasting damage that a new mortgage and a five-year Caribbean cruise couldn't fix. They would then transmogrify into wistful longings and fond memories of when they were just babies - when the parents were still in control.

My innocent notions have been sliced, diced and fed to that green creature so loyally following Captain Hook across the seven seas. My daughters are still both toddlers, and already their mutiny is almost complete.

Little Lady is just three-and-a-half. Two days ago, she took over the kitchen.

"No. Don't sit there. That's Lulu's chair."

"Lulu?" my wife asked?

"She's my imaginary friend."

"Well I have a real sandwich and real hunger and I'm going to sit my real bottom down on this real chair," my wife responded.

That's when the revolution began. Little Lady kicked up a fuss, wailing about how her imaginary friends had knocked on the door and how she had let them in and how could Mommy be so cruel as to sit on one of them.

"Your imaginary friend can sit on an imaginary chair," my wife finally said.

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"Noooooooooooo..."

"Do you want me to leave?" my wife asked.

"Yes. Go away." And with those words, the kitchen was formally occupied by the rebel insurgent army - one toddler and a handful of her imaginary friends.

Editor's note. The wailing eventually stopped. I was able to squeeze an apology out of Little Lady. And my wife did return to the kitchen. But Lulu was keeping one sentry eye trained on us.

This morning I was taking a business call. Nobody important, just Lady Banker. Yes, the same Lady Banker who technically owns at least half of our home and can at any moment shake the rug and send

us tumbling into the winter snow.

As I was trying to explain a delicate detail to her, Barney suddenly came blaring through the ear piece.

"What?!" Lady Banker and I cried in unison.

It took me a moment, but it slowly dawned on me that the living room had fallen to the enemy. "Please excuse me a moment. I think this is the work of foreign cannibals breaking through the basement foundation again." I didn't know if Lady Banker would buy my story, but I figured it would buy me some time while she considered it.

I rushed to the living room, and there was Little Sister, grinning in the full splendor of her 14 months and holding up the handset.

"I was on the phone with Lady Banker, Little Sister. She holds the mortgage to our house, you know."

The look on Little Sister's face said it all: "You think that's your biggest problem?"

I tried a few negotiation tactics, finally trading the handset for a limited edition huggy doll.

I returned to the phone. "The rebels are gaining ground, eh?" Lady Banker asked. I sighed.

It was true. Just yesterday, Little Sister scurried up the back staircase to the second floor. She had been playing right beside me, and I was certain she had just headed in the other direction to where her big sister was holding her mother hostage the living room.

But I had to make sure. I peaked my head around the corner toward the back staircase. Nobody. Then I saw it. Her little blankie lying at the foot of the stairs. I heard a thump above, and Little Sister's lifeless body flashed before my eyes where the blankie lay. I raced to the staircase, up the stairs and around the corner.

There she stood, grinning at me with her "You think that's your biggest problem?" expression again.

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The revolution is gaining momentum. They hold the kitchen. They won the living room. Now they have a toehold on the upstairs landing. It won't be long until the toddlers and their imaginary friends have overrun the house and declared it a free country. Bedtimes will be banned and candy will be the national currency.

When they leave home, I'll need more than a five-year cruise to de-stress. Maybe ten years will be enough.

David Leonhardt is author of *Climb Your Stairway to Heaven*<http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/Item.asp?Catalog=Books&Item=059517826X>Read more personal growth articles:<http://www.thehappyguy.com/self-actualization-articles.html>Visit his liquid vitamins store:<http://www.vitamin-supplements-store.net>Or his happiness website:<http://www.thehappyguy.com>

Introducing Your Kids To The Joys Of Camping

By Gabriel Adams

Taking your kids camping the first time can be a daunting task, if you're not well prepared. But a well prepared camping trip with your kids can be a great joy for everyone involved. Here are a few considerations and preparations you should make before leaving home.

First of all, choose an easily accessible location. You may want to choose a camping spot that is accessible by vehicle if your kids are relatively young. If you want to hike in to the camping spot, keep the distance pretty short. Also, remember that younger kids may not be able to carry all of their gear and food in, so you'll end up with one very heavy pack if you're not careful.

Here are a few tips for minimizing the amount of stuff you have to take in, if you're hiking to your camping spot.

First, choose a spot with easy access to water. That way you can take in dehydrated foods, and use the water at the camping spot to cook your food with. That will save you a lot of weight.

Also, try taking one or two larger tents to hold everyone, rather than several smaller tents.

A camp fire is another consideration. Campfires and s'mores are a must when you take your kids camping. Be sure you choose a location that allows campfires, and that has a readily available water supply to put the fire out.

When you take your kids camping, be sure that they have the same essentials that you take camping: extra clothing, a coat or rain jacket, food, water, a tent, a sleeping bag, a sleeping pad, etc.

One last thing: before you go camping be sure you give your kids a few basic safety instructions, such as safety with fire, snakes, bears (if applicable), etc. Safety first!

Visit [Outdoors And In](#) for your kids camping gear:



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