

The Counselor's Corner

"Queen for a Day"

January 7, my birthday, was one of the best. When I walked in the side door of school and passed by grades 1-4, students remembered that Mrs. Kraetke had added my name to the birthday announcements, and they were eager to vocalize their good wishes. It was wonderful, because I have lived through other January birthdays that were forgotten while people recuperated from the holiday hoopla. Things got even better this year when a little girl who shared my birthday entered with a crown on her head and another in her hands for me. It was almost magical. All day, there were wishes from so many students, because (of course) I was wearing a crown that said, "Today is my birthday." There were flowers from my husband and son and dinner plans, too, but there was something about that crown. Then, I remembered a time long ago, way before Burger King and Dollar Tree (when crowns were nowhere to be found), my aunt had changed me into a princess when I unfolded her special card that turned into a crown. That had been a most amazing day, and I got a chance to relive it this year. For a few short hours, I got in touch with my inner child.

Our inner child stays with us, but it often gets buried with work, laundry, bills, family obligations, health problems and more. We can easily forget it is there, but when we discover it, we are often refreshed. We are able to approach things in a different, less complicated manner, and that often reduces our stress. It seems like it would be most ideal to remain an adult but cultivate a less encumbered way of seeing the world. We can easily learn this technique by observing children. Then, it is in our hands to practice. Companies are eager to help with adult coloring books or paint and pour classes. Meditation experts encourage people to hold up their childhood photos and transport themselves to the past.

An article in "Dessert Alchemy" suggests that adults who were children in dysfunctional homes had to put childhood aside to protect themselves or siblings from abuse. In these cases, the inner child needs to be freed to move away from the critical self and more towards affirmation. A suggestion I really liked is for the adult to do something he/she was denied in childhood. For example, if we never had a birthday party, we should give ourselves one now. We could probably extend that list by taking piano lessons or art classes or even taking a trip to one of the Disney Lands. Who doesn't like Mickey?

I am blessed to be in an elementary setting where I am able to observe a level of behavior that is so beautiful and so fresh. Students are excited to celebrate any occasion, and they beam as they share cupcakes and other treats on their birthdays. A new snow fall takes on a special meaning. Teachers join in dress-up days and talent shows and compete in contests. However, when 3:30 comes, it is up to me to find fun in the adult world and turn some of my tasks into games. Thanks, Ms. Silvestri, for sending Emma with a special crown. I wore it proudly and was reminded that I need to stay in touch with my inner child, throw some more theme parties, and make a few more play dates with my friends.

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