



Family ties

Growing up there were certain family rules in place that had to be followed to the letter. Number one being I always had to be in the middle. Number two being my pet chicken also had to accompany me. And lastly number three being while playing monopoly Pall Mall and Mayfair belonged to me and that all involved with the game were to turn a blind eye every time my hands wandered over to the bank.

There were stages of my life where spending time with parents were cherished and certain times when it was avoided at all costs. I like to think I have turned wiser now. (Somewhat wiser that is.) So I understand how important those bonding sessions were. It gave me an insight into their lives. Personally I would never let my children cheat in Monopoly. That is serious business.

I used to think my dad was the greatest gamer in the world. I remember sitting behind him while he played video games and staring in awe as he dispatched enemies effortlessly. My primary objective back then was to surpass his skills.

Another time I remember fondly was when I was in the phase of listening to really bad pop music. He simply said, "Let



me show you some real music." He turned up some progressive rock in full volume and we sat back just listening to the brilliance blasting out of the speakers. I remember thinking now that is real music. I do have my own taste of music now but progressive rock is still the truest form.

Bonding time with my mother was different with less blood and gore involved. It was a sober affair altogether. Tea parties she called it, sometimes with real tea in cups

and sandwiches. I watched her bake donuts where I would be given the all-important task of cutting the dough into a donut shape with a lid.

Other times when I was in charge it was just empty cups, which she would pretend to drink, then proceed to tell me how amazing it was. I patted myself on the back for that. A gourmet masterchef at the age of five. And I didn't even have to make anything. Let's see the other kids try to match that!

She left for the US when I was four for about six months. But she sent me Tweety bird tea cups with the earnest promise that we will one day use them for our tea parties. That promise saved my dad from many a sleepless nights because he did not have to console me about her absence. I was too giddy about the cups.

Nowadays bonding sessions are different. I do not watch my dad play video games instead he is the one who hovers over my shoulders. My patience for tea parties are gone and replaced by slightly more adult activities. Monopoly games have been upgraded into card games. The monopoly money is still being used though, only this time as chips for the poker games.

I know those days are more or less over but the board games are there in a neat box for when I become a parent. Who knows I might even let my kids cheat! (As long as that means I can too.)

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