

SURREAL REALITY CHILDHOOD EDITION



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Everyone has a different image of their own childhood. Some had their days filled with joy and security, whereas others may not have been so fortunate. But the one facet of every child that stays constant would be their untethered imagination, unbound by natural laws, logic, or even morality. This in turn allows children to let their creative minds run amok and spill imaginative rethinking on virtually everything, which makes for great stories when they grow up.

One of the most prominent examples of this would be the storylines we used to create for our toys. Whether that's playing with dolls or action figures, kids tend to create intricate backstories and plots like they're living out a soap opera. The narrative can be inspired from all sorts of things such as TV shows or cartoons, movies, books, and even real life experiences. While it may seem adorable on the surface, the plots tend to be filled with magic, suspense, violence, etc. Speaking from personal experiences, as a kid I used to make up expansive murder mysteries with my friends for our dolls. The role of the perpetrator somehow always ended up being assigned to my raggedy Winnie the Pooh plushie.

On the subject of dolls, one particularly fond memory that sticks out would be watching the incredibly well-made animated movie "Toy Story" for the first time. The memorable and wholly lovable characters made us latch onto the franchise as children and eagerly await the second instalment. Finally, we completed the cycle as adults when we watched the third instalment. But through it all, who can forget watching the first movie for the very first time? The biggest takeaway from it would be the fact that most of us suspected that our toys might be alive as well and the thought was equal parts awesome and absolutely terrifying. Thus began stakeouts through half-shut eyelids where we would try to catch the toys in the act of "waking up" but unfortunately, no reports have been made about the lively nature of toys. Yet.

To take a look on the more niche, abstract, and "avant garde" side of things, we have the overly sentimental kids who assigned personalities and backstories to virtually everything. One of the most common examples would be making up personalities for numbers, like authors making cohesive and fleshed out backstories for their characters. It should be noted that this was not limited to numbers only. If you were sentimentally creative enough, no number, colour, object, building, plant etc.

could escape your personifying wrath. However, even though a lot of kids participated in this same exact activity, no one really had the same views on each number, colour, object, and so on. This created a lot of variation in the way we ended up perceiving our "characters" and always makes for fun recollections during storytelling.

Finally, the one creative exploit that almost everyone can relate to: daydreaming. The act of daydreaming leaves no one untouched and, to a kid with an overactive imagination or otherwise, this becomes their respite from the world. Standard daydreaming would include conjuring up intricate scenarios in your head that could probably never happen, which is sometimes everyone is guilty of diving into. But daydreaming mixed with exposure to fiction with elements of fantasy in it opens doors to a lot of new avenues. The activity now involves imagining yourself in the stories that you've read or have seen play out. You were the main lead in every world you could think of. You were out trying to rescue a lad/damsel in distress, braving

blistering cold and scorching desert. You were the child of some great sorcerer, destined for greatness. You were the ogre in the domain of your swamp. The possibilities were limitless and the worlds were endless.

Though all of these branches of indulging in imagination may seem unnecessary or like a waste of time sometimes, one cannot deny how great it is or was to possess the childlike sense of wonder that we had cultivated at the time, which manifested itself in these activities. They helped us to look at our surroundings in a different perspective and even increased our appreciation for the things, material or otherwise, that make up our every day lives. Who knows whether we did these to occupy our growing minds or to try and make sense of the bizarre majesty of existing? At the very least, we all got some fun stories out of it.

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