

A Trip To Walmart That Made Me... Happy?!?

It's been awhile since I've posted a venting complaint post about Walmart. It seemed like every time I went there, they were changing around their prices in some way that added to their profits from my pocket – it was aggravating. I got used to it, and I haven't noticed anything new (or let it get to me anyway) for awhile. Today after a very long day, I had to go to Walmart, and I actually left happy about THREE things!

1. They had my shoes back!! The black Brahma Bravos they haven't carried for a year! It was enough to put a smile on my face and for me to give my cashier an earful about my quest for shoes. I've been toiling over my [shoe issue](#) for about a year, and now I found the exact ones I wanted, for the price I wanted – YAY!!! So tempted to buy two pair, just to put one away in case they decide to shoe-starve me again, but that would just be a waste of money...

2. The whole reason I went to Walmart in the first place was to find a snack for my daughter's Kindergarten class. Our turn to bring snack is tomorrow, and you are supposed to bring a snack that coincides with the letter they are learning about that week. Our letter? X – quite possibly the most difficult letter in the alphabet! I've been pondering this one for a few weeks ever since the snack list came home, and I came up with nothing. That's why I had to make the last-minute trip to Walmart today, exhausted as I was. So I went up and down a few aisles, searching for X snacks – I had long since decided to settle on a snack with an X in it instead of one that started with X, so that made it a bit easier. Trying to also be budget conscious (there are about 20 kids in my daughter's class), I boiled it down to 3 choices: Trix, Chex Mix, or Stax potato chips. Hmm, tough decision. Of those, the cereal seemed the most healthy, although the Chex Mix had a double-

x... I could not decide. But then again, I was up at 6:30 this morning to get to the middle school to attend a puberty talk with my daughter. More on that later, aren't you excited? So I called my husband about the X snack – I was so tired, I just couldn't figure it out. He said to go with the Stax based on how much the kids would like it and the fact that it was the best value. Fine. No one ever said these had to be healthy snacks.

3. I found a booster seat for under \$15. Ohio is one of the last states to pass that booster seat law – you know, the one where kids under 8 years old or shorter than 4'9" have to be in a booster seat? Well, that would include two of our kids, and we had only 1 booster seat. I think it's a dumb law; sure they say it's safer, but who funded the studies -Graco et al.? I'm from the 80's – you know, the era where we kids lay sprawling in the backs of the station wagons, free as birds, feeling safe as can be while our parents braved the Chicago expressways... Me and everyone I played with in the back of our parents' station wagons made it into adulthood just fine... not that I'm saying it was safe, but I just spent \$13 on a booster seat, so I deserve to go off a little. But I expected to pay much more, so I was happy. Besides, like I told Hubby, \$13 is a heck of a lot cheaper than the \$100+ ticket it would have cost had our kids not been in the booster. And I have a question – what about adults who are under 4'9"? Do they have to ride in a booster seat in Ohio? You know what, I won't go there – it's rude ☐

So, yeah. Three reasons Walmart made me happy today; that's unusual. Maybe they're messing with my brain – I had 5 items on my list and came out with a \$60 bill; how could that make me happy unless they're brainwashing me? That must be it...

Or maybe I'm just excited to have gotten out of the puberty talk at the middle school unscathed. My husband (bless his heart) was the only male in the room. We asked our daughter last night if she wanted both of us, just me, or none of us to

go, and she chose both. I won't go into detail, but it was kind of a reality check. Man, kids sure don't stay little for long, do they? Luckily for us, the talk was given by the school nurse, who is also a friend of the family from our church. She handled it wonderfully, primitive sketch and all. And that's all I have to say about that. 1 (puberty talk at school) down, 3 to go...

Slippers In The Store

We took a family walk down to Walgreens last night, and about halfway there, I happened to look down and noticed that my husband was wearing his slippers. We proceeded to give each other a hard time, neither one understanding the other's point of view.

MINE: It's embarrassing. I don't really concern myself with what others think for the most part, but I also know that many people are judgmental and will treat you differently if you have the appearance that you either don't take care of yourself or are dirt poor. I don't want to make either statement about my family, and I don't like drawing attention to myself or my family. I definitely don't want our daughters to have any excuses to not want to go places with us as they approach their teen years, when they will fashion plenty of these excuses themselves. I will teach them not to care what other people think in that way as much as I can, but teens will be teens. Besides, the signs on public places say, "No shirt, no SHOES, no service." Technically, slippers are not shoes, and I like to follow the rules.

HIS: I'm comfortable. Who cares what people think? If they judge, that's their problem. The signs on the doors of public

places are referring to no BARE feet.

I told him if I wrote to Dear Abby, she would say wearing slippers in public is not appropriate, and he challenged me. So I said I would make a poll on my blog. What do you think?

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The First Time I Had To Call Poison Control...

...was today, and I hope it's the last. I have 4 kids, the oldest of whom is 10 years old. So I've been doing this kid thing for more than a decade, pretty much a third of my life if I shave off a couple of years, which I'll gladly do. My older kids are girls, so why am I not surprised that the boy is the one who prompted the call to Poison Control. The good news is, everything is fine.

This morning, Beeber (an affectionate nickname for my son Christopher because this is what his older sister called him when she was 2) was out of my sight for just a few minutes – I think I was cleaning up some sort of mess he made as usual. In the back hall we have a pet cabinet (which will now be moved) where we keep leashes, dishes, rawhides, etc. Back by the pet cabinet, I found an open, empty package from a dog's heartworm pill. It was opened neatly, and it didn't look like it had been opened by a 21-month-old expecting to find candy. I checked his breath and his teeth (the heartworm medicine

looks like a chunk of dog food – I would think if my son had eaten it, then some would be stuck on his teeth), and there were no signs that he had eaten it. Perhaps the last adult to give the dogs the medicine had put an empty package back in the cabinet. Or, knowing my son, he might have just fed it to the dogs. But I had to call Poison Control to be sure; the chemicals listed on the box sounded frightening. Poison Control said they didn't expect a problem, which I thought was a strange response but a better one than I had hoped. I thought they would at least tell me warning signs of trouble or something, but I'm just glad they gave the all clear and that we didn't have to make a trip to the ER or worse.

Ah, Poison Control, the number every mom should know: **1-800-222-1222**. They are very calming, friendly, and they can actually speak English unlike a lot of places that we call these days, so don't hesitate to call them if you think your kid might have gotten into something they shouldn't have. Better safe than sorry!



Daily Bread

My Daily Bread spoke to me today. [Our Daily Bread](#) is a little book that contains small daily devotions. I keep mine in my bathroom; that way I can flip through it while I'm bathing a kid, or, er, whatnot. Lately I've been struggling with being overwhelmed by back-logged home repair and organizational projects that I know I really shouldn't waste time and energy worrying about. Some people would say 'just do it' – then I'd be less overwhelmed as the things start to get done, but with

4 kids, I just don't have the time (see my post about [Poison Control](#) and you'll see what happens if my kids are left unattended for mere minutes), and I'm tired all the time and also kind of lazy. So anyway, I'm trying to just let go and not think about my To Do list, and here is the Daily Bread for today; maybe it will help others in my boat too:

It's been a long, cold winter, and I am eager for warm weather. I'm tired of seeing bare trees and lifeless brown leaves covering the ground. I long to see wildflowers poke through the dead leaves and to watch the woods turn green once more.

Yet even as I anticipate my favorite season, I hear my mother's voice saying, "Don't wish your life away."

If you're like me, you sometimes hear yourself saying, "When such and such happens, then I will . . . or, If only so and so would do this, then I would do that . . . or, I would be happy if . . . or, I will be satisfied when . . ."

In longing for some future good, we forget that every day—regardless of the weather or our circumstances—is a gift from God to be used for His glory.

According to author Ron Ash, "We are where we need to be and learning what we need to learn. Stay the course because the things we experience today will lead us to where He needs us to be tomorrow."

In every season, there is a reason to rejoice and an opportunity to do good (Eccl. 3:12). The challenge for each of us every day is to find something to rejoice about and some good to do—and then to do both.

*Just as the winter turns to spring,
Our lives have changing seasons too;
So when a gloomy forecast comes,
Remember—God has plans for you. —Sper*

Every season brings a reason to rejoice.

Am I A Denzel Fan?

I've heard a lot of people say they are Denzel Washington fans, and I didn't really get it. But then I watched [Inside Man](#), and I enjoyed it. I then saw [Book of Eli](#) in the theaters, which I really liked a lot, and it's become one of my husband's favorite movies of all time.

Last night we watched the 1998 movie [Fallen](#), also starring Denzel, and it was one of the best crime-thrillers I've seen in a long time. As usual with these types of movies, I hesitate saying too much because I don't want to ruin anything for anyone. Let's just say that I highly recommend *Fallen*; especially if you like the genre; especially if you like Denzel. Always intriguing; at times it was genuinely creepy, though never gory, and most importantly, it did not leave the audience distracted with guessing possible twists – just a good crime drama which left one waiting to see what unfolds next. John Goodman, James Gandolfini, and Donald Sutherland all provide excellent performances rounding out the acting roster. At one point, there was an expression on Denzel Washington's face that was utterly perfect for the circumstance at hand, and that's when I realized that I was starting to become a fan of his acting. If you would have asked me before today who my favorite movie actor is, I would have said Tom Hanks. I loved *Forrest Gump*, *Splash*, *League of Their Own* and *Toy Story*, and I thoroughly enjoyed a host of other Hanks films: *The Terminal*, *Castaway*, and *Big* just to name a few. Hanks' diversity, comedic abilities, and every-man qualities make him fun to watch. So after thinking about all these great movies again, I guess I would still maintain

Tom Hanks as my favorite movie actor, but because I judge movies more from a whole-picture perspective, Denzel's films are starting to catch my eye – he knows how to pick 'em!

I've seen Bone Collector (push-knob car locks have never been the same), but it's been a long time, and I don't remember much about the movie except that I liked it (and those darn push-knob car locks). So now, being a Denzel Washington fan, I will have to watch Bone Collector again.

So the point of this post is? See Fallen – it's good. And we have SO broken the stinker movie trend around here. Hallelujah!! And thank you Denzel!

Something New

We were looking for a family-friendly activity to do with our kids on Saturday. The zoo was out since we're chaperoning a Girl Scout field trip there next Saturday. Our original plan was to take our very furry and smelly dog to get groomed, but when we called around for prices, the quotes were much more than we wanted to spend on something that will just have to be done again in a few months.

So my husband searched around and found [this: Roller Derby](#). Do you remember Roller Derby? It was popular in the 70's and 80's, and there was a recent movie about it called [Whip It](#), which was also Drew Barrymore's directorial debut. We saw the movie not too long ago, and it was enjoyable, but now I'm going to have to watch it again after seeing the sport played live.

Roller Derby is a sport played on roller skates by women. I asked my husband why men don't play, and he said they'd get

carried away with the aggressiveness and kill each other. I think there are some men's leagues, but they aren't professional like the women's league. So anyway, a basic game of Roller Derby has two periods separated by a halftime. Each period has several "jams". Basic game play consists of a pack of skaters skating around a circular track. There is one "jammer" on each team, and she is supposed to break through the other teams' pack of players, scoring a point for each opposing team member she passes. There's more to it, but those are the basics. The action is fast, the sport can be brutal, and fights occasionally break out. It's a lot of fun to watch!! Especially if you're brave enough to sit in the "suicide seats" where you sit on the floor next to the track. Our friends were brave enough to try, and they came out in one piece! If you are interested in watching a bout or maybe even trying out to be a Derby Girl, check out the website of the [WFTDA – Women's Flat Track Derby Association](#) – they have a list of teams so you can find one near you. Here is a video from their website explaining the very basics of Roller Derby:

It was a great time – fun for the whole family, and I highly recommend it as something different to do. Tickets are pretty cheap – we paid \$12 for each adult and \$7 for my oldest daughter – the rest of the kids (5 and younger) were free. For that, we got about 5 hours of entertainment. The atmosphere is family friendly (despite some of the dirty innuendos some of the players' names imply that would go right over most kids' heads), and there are clowns running around providing additional entertainment. At halftime, my kids got to go out in the arena and play a racing game with the clowns, and they also do skits and make free balloon animals. Each kid gets a little noise maker when they walk in the door, and they also have a Hokey Pokey time and do the bit where they throw beach balls around the audience. While it was family friendly, my little ones were bored at times (they didn't understand the sport) and our little guy, who is not even 2, kept us from watching much of the action with his shenanigans. The lady who was waiting for me to finish with the changing table in the bathroom said, "I'm never bringing her to something like this again!" as she pointed to her little girl who looked about my son's age. So you might want to prepare yourself with lots of snacks, activities, and candy if you bring your kids. The kids ended up having a lot of fun, mostly because of all the yummy concessions Dad bought them and the little toys they got to take home. Hubby and I are going to check out a bout sometime for date night without the kids though so we can actually get into it and watch the game. And hopefully, there will be closer scores with a little more excitement – we witnessed two blowouts. In the first game, the Fort Wayne SWAT team got creamed by a team from Rockford, IL (where we used to live, what a coincidence!), and we left the second game early since it was getting late and the score was Fort Wayne – 154, Dayton – 13. OUCH!!

2010 Academy Of Country Music Awards

Today is one of those days that come only twice a year – one of the two annual country music awards shows. I've been super excited all week, well, for months actually; even if a few of the nominees are anonymous to me. Country music is changing, and I just don't have the time to keep up with who the new artists are and what their sound is like. Consider that my disclaimer for doing badly on my picks, haha. Here is the list for the major nominees with my picks in green. I will change them to red as the show airs if I get them wrong, but I'm being optimistic by putting them in green – as winners are announced, I will change the category color to red for wrong and green for correct. Good luck to everyone, guessers and nominees alike! Whatever happens, I know I will have a great time watching as always!!

Entertainer of the Year:

• Kenny Chesney • Toby Keith • Brad Paisley • George Strait • Taylor Swift • Carrie Underwood • Keith Urban • Zac Brown Band
(Now that hurt. I'm not a big fan of Taylor Swift, but she won Entertainer of the Year at last fall's CMA awards, plus she is favored to win by industry experts Reba McEntire and Blake Shelton. Unfortunately, this is not about who I want to win, but who I think will win.)

Top Male Vocalist:

• Kenny Chesney • Brad Paisley • Darius Rucker • George Strait • Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist:

• Miranda Lambert • Reba McEntire • Taylor Swift • Carrie

Underwood • Lee Ann Womack

Top Vocal Group:

• Lady Antebellum • Little Big Town • Randy Rogers Band • Rascal Flatts • Zac Brown Band

(Another tough factor pick – I love Rascal Flatts and want to see them win – they deserve to win; they're awesome! But Lady Antebellum has so much buzz, so again, logic prevails for this pick. I actually hope I'm wrong here, but only if Rascal Flatts takes the prize.)

Top Vocal Duo:

• Brooks & Dunn • Joey + Rory • Montgomery Gentry • Steel Magnolia • Sugarland

Top New Solo Vocalist:

• Luke Bryan • Jamey Johnson • Chris Young

Top New Vocal Duo:

• Bomshel • Joey + Rory • Steel Magnolia

Top new Vocal Group:

• Eli Young Band • Gloriana • The Lost Trailers

Album of the Year:

• "American Saturday Night" – Brad Paisley • "Lady Antebellum" – Lady Antebellum • "Play On" – Carrie Underwood • "Revolution" – Miranda Lambert • "The Foundation" – Zac Brown Band

Single Record:

• "Need You Now" – Lady Antebellum • "People Are Crazy" – Billy Currington • "Red Light" – David Nail • "Toes" – Zac Brown Band • "White Liar" – Miranda Lambert

Song:

• "Cowboy Casanova" – Carrie Underwood • "Need You Now" – Lady Antebellum • "People Are Crazy" – Billy Currington • "White Liar" – Miranda Lambert • "You Belong With Me" – Taylor Swift

Video:

- “Boots On” – Randy Houser • “Need You Now” – Lady Antebellum
- “Welcome To The Future” – Brad Paisley • “White Liar” – Miranda Lambert • “You Belong With Me” – Taylor Swift

Vocal Event:

- “Hillbilly Bone” – Blake Shelton featuring Trace Adkins • “Honky Tonk Stomp” – Brooks & Dunn featuring Billy Gibbons • “I Told You So” – Carrie Underwood featuring Randy Travis • “I’m Alive” – Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews • “Seeing Stars” – Jack Ingram featuring Patty Griffin

TOTAL SCORE: 5/13 – Not my best, but slightly better than I thought I would do, I guess... FUN SHOW, and that’s all that matters! Don’t think I’ll be winning the \$1,000 from CBS.com though!

Dove Tale

For the past month or so, our family has been keeping tabs on a mother dove sitting upon her nest, nestled way high on a ledge upon the neighbor’s tall house.



This is the nest after Mom had left it

She sat there all day, every day; through rain, shine, and even a few nasty thunderstorms. And then one day, she was gone. I thought about her all day, wondering if she had abandoned her nest, especially since we never got to see the hungry open mouths of the baby doves (squabs?). A few hours later, I spied this scene in the tree right in front of our house:



It's Mom with two babies! I guess doves grow faster than the traditional robins whose nests we are used to watching. The dove chicks, er, squabs (as a quick internet search led me to believe they're called) hatched and left the nest before we even realized it! A day after the above picture was taken, Mother dove was gone and the two babies sat in the same place, cuddling and preening. They sat there for about 2 days, and I was worried that Mom had left them too early and they would starve. Some more quick internet research told me that Mourning Doves grow rather quickly, and that the mother leaves the babies shortly after they leave the nest – so our doves were behaving normally. I also learned that the mother and father doves take turns sitting on the nest. The male usually takes care of the daytime duty, while the female relieves him at night. Since both genders look alike, unless you are watching the nest constantly, you won't notice the switch. I was wondering how she didn't get extremely bored sitting up there 24/7!

Every day these little guys grow by leaps and bounds, and this

picture was taken only one day after the above picture, note how mother has left the babies to fend for themselves:



The day after this picture was taken, there was only 1 baby left in the tree, and now there are none. We enjoyed watching these little guys grow up, and I hope it's true when they say that a pair of mated Mourning Doves will reuse the same nest over and over again – I'll be watching the nest and waiting!

Dead Forever

A cute Spring video I shot the other day of my 3-year-old daughter Disney explaining what would happen if a ball rolled into the street and got hit by a car:

A Break From The Stinker Trend

My husband and I have been watching some stinky movies lately. Many of them have had something in common, but I don't want to say which ones or what their common trait is for fear of making these movies predictable and even worse for people who might decide to watch them. I will just name the titles of the movies we've watched lately that weren't any good along with some quick notes:

[Edge of Darkness](#) (recent Mel Gibson mess), [Shutter Island](#) (so looking forward to this one and it let me down), [Memento](#) (man loses memory and uses Polaroids to remind himself of his mission in life), [Fight Club](#) (made us permanently question imdb.com's rating system – this one got an 8.8 and we hated it), [The Skeleton Key](#) (Kate Hudson voo-doo flick – need I say any more?), [The Machinist](#) (the best part of this movie was Christian Bale's acting – what does that tell you?), [Angel Heart](#) (more voo-doo, this time from the 80's with Robert DeNiro and "Denise" from the Cosby Show which will never be the same for me again – I saw more of Denise than I ever needed to see; there was little about this movie that wasn't disturbing – why they are bothering with a remake in 2011 is way beyond me), [Surveillance](#) (I liked this one a little, but my husband did not. One of the rare movies upon which we disagreed. Bill Pullman was pretty good), [The Collector](#) (a horror movie that wasn't quite as bad as the other mentioned above. VERY gory, and the amount of squirms and gore did not outweigh the good things about the movie).

Some of those movies are newer and we saw them in the theater; others are older releases watched at home. There just isn't

much coming to the theaters these days. The Nightmare Elm Street remake is coming soon, but my hopes are not high for that one – the Halloween remake was awful, and the redone Friday the 13th wasn't much better. I did enjoy My Bloody Valentine 3D that came out a few years ago, but then again, I never saw the original.

At least we've been offered a break from all the stinkers. We saw the Steve Carell / Tina Fey comedy-adventure flick Date Night for **our** date night the other night, and it was enjoyable. Better than I thought, actually. Steve Carell plays an everyman suburban husband who takes his wife out for a date night, and they say they are another couple in order to get a table at a swanky restaurant. Problem is, the couple they pose as are mixed up in no-good business – hijinks ensue. Steve Carell wasn't given much to work with for his character, but it amazes me how he brings life to every one of his roles and makes every character different from one another – how does he do that?

And surprisingly, we got a break from our stinker-streak for at home movies too with a Sarah Michelle Gellar suspense thriller that was actually quite enjoyable, despite my usual disdain for the actress. It's called [Possession](#), but don't let the title fool you – it was a pretty good suspense movie with a crummy title. The movie follows a young couple who are very much in love and celebrating their first wedding anniversary. Complicating their lives however, is the husband's convict brother, who has just been released from prison and is staying with them. There is a horrible car accident, and both brothers end up in comas with the brother-in-law waking up thinking he's the husband... sounds like a cheesy soap opera, but it was well done, and we liked it. From what I've been reading, it's a remake of a Korean movie called Addicted; I might have to check out the original. There is also an alternate ending, but I'll stick with the ending I saw – the alternate sounds dumb.

I'm just glad that we broke our stinker-streak, even if it did have to involve Sarah Michelle Gellar. Consider this blog post your warning to stay away from the ones I listed above – some were almost bad enough to add to my “horrible movies” list; one that includes such bombs as The Love Guru and The Night Listener. You've been warned!!