

Keep Calm and Kerri On: January 16, 2022 "Eye of the Beholder"

Dear Friends,

For the most part I'm comfortable with my age. I mean, my daughter is 21 and will graduate college in a few months, so there are no misconceptions from me about where I am in life. But there are times when I feel like I came from another time period entirely.

Earlier this week I was driving my teenager to school, and we were talking about the news of Bob Saget passing away. She knew him from the show "Fuller House". If you don't know what that is, it's a reboot of the show "Full House" that ran from the late 80's to the early 90's. In "Fuller House" the original kids are all grown up with families of their own, living in the same house in San Francisco.

Anyway, I told her how much I enjoyed the original show and how sad I was to hear that "Danny Tanner" had passed away. I shared that I remember watching the T.G.I.F. lineup with my family, and that "Full House" was a part of that. She asked why we all watched it together, and I told her that we only had one television in the house, and that's what we did on Friday nights.

Her eyes bugged out, mouth dropped open, and she said "Wait, you only had one TV? Why didn't you just watch it on your phone or on the iPad?"

I explained that we didn't have cell phones when I was a kid, or the ability to stream shows, that we only had one computer in the house, no internet, and that iPads didn't even exist. I also shared that I didn't have my first cell phone until I was twenty years old, and it was a pre-paid phone that could only make phone calls.

The look on her face was hilarious. She suddenly got very serious and said "So what did you do all day? Weren't you bored? I don't understand this?!"

As I headed off to work, now ancient in my daughter's eyes, I started thinking about all the ways I spent my time when I was a kid. "What did I do all day?" I thought. I certainly don't ever remember being bored or feeling like I was missing out on anything. Technology as we know it today didn't even exist, so we didn't know what we were missing. But were we missing out?

One way I spent the majority of my childhood was with my nose in a book. I read anything and everything that I could put my hands on. I was a little Matilda-esq in that way (also a great book).

The first "young adult" books I ever read were "The Little House" series by Laura Ingalls Wilder and I got them from my local library. I read them very quickly and soon I started signing out as many books that were allowed at once to avoid having to go back to the library more than once a week.

When I found myself between books, I would wander over to my mother's collection of Stephen King, John Saul and Michael Crichton books. I read "The Stand" when I was about 12 years old, and I clearly remember one book by John Saul "The God Project" that really freaked me out.

I was never sure if my mom would be ok with me reading her books, so I was sneaky about "borrowing" them. I would take a book off the shelf, then rearrange them so it wasn't obvious that a book was missing. I like to think I was sneaky, but there's not a lot that you can get away with that your parents don't really know about. It's a secret you don't truly understand until you have kids of your own. I am guessing that my mom was probably just happy I was such an avid reader so she would let it slide.

Laughing about the conversation I had with Grace, I shared the story with a friend of mine. We had a good time reminiscing about all the things we did as a teenager, life before the internet. One of those memories was how we listened to our local radio station, with a cassette player and a blank tape ready, trying to record our favorite songs.

How many of us had these mixed tapes where maybe the first notes or line were missing because you were late in hitting the record button, or you caught the DJ at the end who came on before the song was over? I also had a notebook full of lyrics that I painstakingly recorded by stopping and starting my cassette with the recorded songs.

My mom was big into crafting, and we often made dolls, games, and toys out of whatever we had in the house. We also never saw a rock we didn't like! I have great memories of spending afternoons with my mom and sister creating animals, flowers and designs on rocks we collected. Yup, like the cave-families of old, we painted rocks for fun.

I feel incredibly privileged to have the memories that I do. My generation was the last one that didn't have the noise of the internet, the stress of social media, and the "get it now" mentality that generations after us now have. Life before you (literally) had everything in the palm of your hand.

I was never bored, and we always made our own fun. Whether it was riding our bikes, exploring, listening to music, playing games like hide-and-go-seek, red rover or freeze tag and the endless summer nights playing manhunt with all the kids in the neighborhood. I wouldn't trade those memories for anything.

So now my youngest thinks I am an ancient relic who paints rocks and wants to be left alone in a library. On second thought, that does sound like fun.

Be well,
Kerri