The Most Surprising Thing about Family

Perhaps the most *surprising* thing about our journey as a family is that it *is* so *surprising.* The most predicable thing about life is its singular unpredictability. Think about all the things that you've experienced in your family that caused you to shake your head and say, "Well, I didn't see that coming."

I'd venture to say that most of us who grew up watching TV dramas where the dog was lost and then found, or the misunderstanding finally clarified, or the seemingly impossible rescue was attained in 59 minutes with room for ten minutes of Madison Avenue's best pitches to boot. But then we encounter the glorious, sometimes maddening concept of REAL LIFE.

We look back on this adventure and discover that instead of 2.5 kids, including male and female actually turned into all boys or all girls or one adopted, or one magical downs syndrome child, or no biological kids but three international adoptions. We look back on our journey and say, "Wow, I didn't see that coming."

We head off for that planned paradise at Wally World with all bags neatly packed, prepared for every eventuality and then find ourselves holed up in the hotel room riding out the storm of the century, having the time of our lives playing board games and eating cheese nips.

Ah yes! These are the moments that we look back on and say, "Wow God, I didn't see that coming but help me remember how incredibly, astoundingly grand it was. We realize that the greatest joy of our small, fleeting adventure is often what happens on the journey rather than the destination. Our

agendas are often blown to kingdom come and all we have is a story. And the story is far more transcendent than our pseudo-sacred agenda that we so carefully crafted in our imagination.

Sometimes it takes car crashes, health crises, diaper disasters, canceled flights, split jeans and chicken pox to get us to where God wants us to be. And when we get there we dust ourselves off and do the dance.

My cautious nature, so attracted to spread sheets, games plans and satellite navigators is often reminded that life is a precarious narrative that is intricately woven together in a divine, sometimes dubious backstory of spiritual adventure. Even the small moments of surprise rise to the surface as signs that we aren't alone. We are being guided by Someone who sees the bigger story and knows exactly what we need. This is the very definition of family– a band of souls brought together through blood, blessing and bedtimes. We do life together and we find that there's always a place we can call home. It really doesn't have anything to do with brick and mortar. It's all about love and belonging. Unpredictable? Yes. Unnecessary? Never!

And at the end of the road, with gray heads and crooked smiles, we can look back on it all and say to our beloved family, "Man, I didn't see that coming but I'm sure glad it came!"