

Shoulda, Coulda, Woulda

Written by Gayle Nobel

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We were at our cabin up north this past weekend. The trees were heavy with snow and the whole area looked like a winter wonderland. For some reason everything seems quieter and more peaceful after a heavy snow. I hiked the snowy roads and trails and even got caught in a snowpour walking back home. Toasting myself in front of our wood stove afterwards felt really good.

Kyle is in a good place right now and was happy and peaceful. He was a bit intimidated by the snow and the uncertainty of walking on it. It's been awhile for him, so other than venturing out on our deck a few times, he was very happy being inside.

Living in Phoenix, Arizona, I don't have to put up with snow unless I choose. Often people don't realize Arizona gets snowfall but there are many areas of the state which do. Snow is kind of a treat for us Phoenicians and it's easy to appreciate its beauty when you don't have to shovel it on a regular basis. I'll try not to rub it in too much northerners.

We had a wonderful weekend. My husband, Neil and I were able to go out and hike TOGETHER twice because we brought our helper, Tammy, along. Our neighbors down the street let her use their cabin when they are not there. It is a sweet deal for all involved. She can come to "work" when we need her yet we have our private family time when we want and she has her personal time at their cabin. It's one of the perks of her job and a win-win for all of us.

Walking along the snow covered creek trail, Neil and I were so grateful we were together and not having to hike in shifts as we have done for the last 18 years since we built the cabin. Such a simple pleasure, but for us, it has never been simple. Though Kyle enjoys hiking, his pace is not our pace. Therefore, we have always hiked in shifts, sometimes alone and sometimes with our neighbors.

As we walked and talked about how nice it was to be together, Neil asked why had we not done this years ago. Kyle is 28 now so why had we not thought to hire our "thannie" (therapist/nanny) along time ago? We have had many helpers over the years but never the type of arrangement we have now. I don't know. Why didn't we? Things had to get to a crescendo of severity before the idea popped into my head. Maybe I finally had to admit I needed more help than I ever thought I would (or should).

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Or perhaps the changing seasons of my life are what prompted me get the message. We can't be typical empty nesters, but we have figured out a way to be partial empty nesters.

Honestly, I wish we had thought to hire someone like this along time ago. We "could" have done so much more together and even more with our girls. I "should" have thought of it years ago. Life "would" have been easier. However, the hindsight of soulda, coulda, woulda is probably not particularly useful unless a life rewind button becomes available.

Moving forward and enjoying this season of my life, I'll try to remember everything happens when it's supposed to according to a divine plan.

