

## Gift of a Flat (tire, that is)

Written by Gayle Nobel

Wednesday, 02 May 2012 14:20 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 May 2012 21:39

---

Yesterday we had an adventure. When I pulled my car out after music therapy, I discovered a flat tire. Darn! I had just put a piece of gum in my mouth to stay alert for the long drive home.

On Tuesdays, I have a defined agenda for most of the day. I leave the house at 12:45 to pick Kyle up from his program at 1. We drive an hour to get to OT (occupational therapy). After OT, comes music therapy and from music therapy we drive another hour to get home. Occasionally we get stuck in traffic, but usually it's a smooth ride in the HOV lane.

If I have been a good girl, dinner is waiting in the crock pot. I am only good 33% of the time, if that, so often I scramble to throw something together or pick up Chinese food for Kyle and scramble for our dinner. (I like Chinese but the salt gives me a food hangover the next day.) We have dinner without lingering too long and then head to Kyle's horseback riding. It's the longest day of the week, for sure, but very much worth it. When Kyle is feeling well, he really enjoys all these activities. And I enjoy watching him enjoy.

Upon discovering the flat tire, our normal agenda came to a halt. The myth of control is always temporary, isn't it? AAA told me it could be almost 2 hours before roadside assistance could come to help. In the meantime, Kyle's music therapist was called to the scene and he was already figuring out how he could change the tire for me. Did I need anything for Kyle? What could he do to make things as smooth and comfortable as possible for him? Kyle was sitting in the car, ready for the drive home, and as calm as could possibly be. He was clearly feeling good after his musical infusion.

When I told AAA my son with autism was with me and it would be difficult for him to wait that long (dinner bell!!), she put me on hold, talked to the powers that be, and told me there was a person in my area and it would be no longer than 45 minutes. Amazing how that works.

Apparently, there is a secret compartment in the back of my van which releases the spare tire which is under the car. I did not remember it from the previous time. Rich, Kyle's therapist, did not know about it so we determined it best to wait for AAA. It was really nice of him to want to try, though.

## Gift of a Flat (tire, that is)

Written by Gayle Nobel

Wednesday, 02 May 2012 14:20 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 May 2012 21:39

---

Kyle was beginning to sweat. It's already hot in Phoenix so we went into the OT waiting room. It was busy and noisy but Kyle was in the best place ever to be able to handle it. His OT and MT were angels bringing him water and making sure we had what we needed and Kyle was comfortable. This kind of change in routine, particularly at dinnertime, can be super stressful for a person with autism. On this particular day, Kyle was floating through it. I remained calm too. There was no reason not to be. I was grateful we didn't get the flat tire on the freeway.

AAA got the job done, minus putting air in the spare. Roadside assistance shows up with a broken compressor... hmmm. By the time we stopped for air, there was no reason to hurry home. Kyle got a meal at Wendy's out of the ordeal. Even though it was past his dinner time, he was calm and pleasant. OK, pleasantly ravenous, but still very pleasant. It was a long day. We got home late, but safely, and that's what counts.

The "Kyle stars" were well aligned to make this an easy event. He is capable of being flexible with life. Awesome. The therapists at Lauren's Institute were above and beyond helpful and supportive. Awesome (though not surprising). I recognize that unexpected events don't always go this smoothly. I am grateful. It's nice when life works out.

I write this from Discount Tire. It turns out that besides the nail in the tire, it was also damaged and will be replaced for free. However, the other tires are worn and in need of replacement too. Apparently, it has been 5 years and 60,000 miles on this set of tires. Time does fly when I am driving the mom-mobile.

Considering the long drive on Tuesdays and an upcoming summer road trip, replacing the tires is a good idea. The flat tire turned out to be a gift. How about that.

