

Moments

Written by Gayle Nobel

Tuesday, 08 December 2009 10:11 - Last Updated Tuesday, 08 December 2009 14:33

We were at Cheesecake Factory celebrating Kyle's 26th birthday. This evening was very much a celebration of Kyle. A few years ago, I may have said this would be impossible for all concerned. A year ago, I may have said it would be a big stretch for Kyle. This year, on this birthday, it seemed like the natural place to go. It was a culmination of all that he had accomplished and worked toward over the last few years.

For many families, celebrating a birthday with a dinner out is typical and probably taken for granted. For us, it was anything but typical, and we certainly didn't take it for granted.

From beginning to end, this was an evening of moments. Though Kyle had never been to this particular restaurant before, he seemed comfortable from the get go. Even walking in through a revolving door (brand new experience for Kyle) did not seem to phase him. In the past, that might have been where the evening ended or perhaps it would have "thrown" him into stress for the rest of the night. Thanks to Kim, his friend, mentor, and coach, restaurants have become familiar, enjoyable territory for Kyle.

I sat across the table from my son who sat quietly (yes, quietly!) , calmly and patiently as he took in the surroundings. Comfort and joy were planted firmly on his face. He sipped his strawberry lemonade delicately through a straw. The glass was full to the brim but this was not an issue for Kyle. He had to wait for quite a while for his meal, but again, not an issue. He seemed to be enjoying every moment of this birthday celebration. Many times, he turned to the side to look at Kim, his friend and mentor. He was connecting and checking in with her (another big accomplishment for Kyle).

Tonight it didn't feel "hard" to be with Kyle in a nice restaurant. The evening was enjoyable and comfortable. I was proud of my son.

"I thought about what brought us to this place in time. There were so many roadblocks and unexpected twists and turns. How did we get here? There was no magic formula; just persistence, I suppose. Believing in more than what we could see. Trusting ourselves, yet also allowing others to teach and help. Growing in our own roles as guides in the school of relationships and life, as Kyle grew as apprentice.">

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And, watching for those moments.

PS My holiday wish for you, dear readers: keep putting one foot in front of the other and believe in and go for more than you can see. And most importantly, notice and CELEBRATE those moments!

*From my upcoming book, "Breathe" 52 Oxygen-Rich Tools for Loving and Living Well with Autism

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