

extra fingers

Newsletter number 19 • July 16, 2012

[VISIT THE WEBSITE CLICK HERE](#)



There'd have to be some

ISABELLA, reading off a billboard from the backseat of the car: "'Don't pay through the nose.' I always see that ad, Dad. It's always there on that sign over there."

DAD, quickly scouring the numerous billboards along the road: "Where?"

ISABELLA: "There. See?"

I couldn't, but nevertheless I said I could.

DAD: "Oh, yeah! Do you know what it means?"

ISABELLA: "No. Well, I suppose it could mean that it's much harder to pay money to someone through your nose than it is through, say, your mouth."

DAD: "Your mouth?"

ISABELLA: "Yeah. Because think about it. It's way harder to breathe through your nose

than it is to breathe through your mouth and that's the same as the room you have in your nose to pay money through. Compared to your mouth, your nose is way smaller. And your mouth also doesn't have that little line [the nasal septum] going through it."

DAD: "So you'd pay through the mouth, would you?"

ISABELLA: "Well, yeah. If that was your choice. If all you had to choose between was your nose and your mouth I would. Because it would be much easier to."

DAD: "Yeah, but, as if you'd pay through either your nose or your mouth. What a strange thing to do. Why wouldn't you just pay money to someone with your hands? You know, like any normal person."

ISABELLA: "I don't know. It's just a saying, Dad."

DAD: "Yeah, but, a saying normally has a meaning built into it. It's normally said for a reason. You know, during certain situations because people are familiar with it and it might quickly sum something up for them."

ISABELLA, her eyebrows now raised: "Dad! Not all of them."

DAD: "Yeah. All of them. A saying didn't get to be a saying without it having any meaning."

ISABELLA: "Yeah, well, this one's pretty weird, Dad. I mean, what could a nose ever mean to someone about paying for something? It's probably just a saying that doesn't have a meaning. There'd have to be some of those."

The power of a good sandwich

Isabella had tightly wrapped her arms around me after finishing her lunch.

ISABELLA: "I am so, so, so, so . . ."

DAD, trying to be humorous: "Glad you have a dad like me?"

ISABELLA: "No. Happy that I got such a good sandwich to eat."

Would you rathers . . .

HOLLY: "Dad, would you rather drive off a cliff and smash into rocks below knowing that you were going to die for sure or go over a waterfall in a ship or boat and smash that up?"

DAD, frustrated, as this was Holly's fifth would-you-rather in a row: "Oh, I don't know, Holly."

HOLLY: "No, you have to say."

DAD: "Oh, drive off a cliff."

HOLLY: "See? Now you know. My friends and I play would-you-rathers all the time at school."

DAD: "Why on earth for?"

HOLLY: "So we know what we'll do. Right. Another one. Would you rather be a candy cane dipped in mud or a chocolate frog that had been in a dog's mouth for a bit?"

A protracted problem

ISABELLA, as she was doing her maths homework: "Someone should send mail to the protractor people. Has anyone made a full one yet? One that goes right the way around and has all the numbers on it? No, of course not. So they should."

It's okay then

AMELIE, on when you can say goodbye very quickly to someone if you happen to be standing on their doorstep: "If a crocodile has just eaten someone you know to death and you have to go to their funeral very quickly, then you can go away from a person who's at a door straight away. It's okay then."

Now you're talking

AMELIE: "Hey, Holly. You've got to put your hand on Dad's neck. You can feel his 'talk'."

In Africa

AMELIE: "Mum, in Africa, the top bit, not where South America and Darwin are . . ."

No sympathy for Dad

DAD, walking with Isabella and Amelie through their school grounds one afternoon: "I'm complaining and hobbling a bit because I've got a sore foot."

ISABELLA: "Big deal!"

DAD: "Poor Dad."

A few seconds later . . .

ISABELLA: "Dad, just stop walking like that. Walk normal."

DAD: "What's that?"

ISABELLA: "Walk normal."

DAD: "But I can't walk normal; I've actually got a sore foot."

ISABELLA: "Well, don't go like this (*exaggerates hobbling*)."

DAD: "Don't go like what?"

ISABELLA: "Don't do it really obviously. Just go lightly on your foot."

AMELIE, butting in: "And don't mention it."

DAD: "But I can't go lightly on my foot. I have to limp like this because it's hurting that much."

AMELIE: "Dad, you're just trying to trick."

DAD: "I'm not trying to trick. It's actually sore."

ISABELLA and Amelie, together: "Yeah, we heard."

I had mentioned my sore foot earlier that day.

ISABELLA: "We don't need to be told again."

A few seconds later . . .

DAD, struggling to walk and grimacing: "It really hurts."

ISABELLA, in a loud whisper: "Daddy! Just shush!"

DAD: "Oooh!"

ISABELLA: "Daddy!"

DAD: "What?"

ISABELLA: "Just stop making sound effects."

DAD: "What's that?"

ISABELLA: "Don't make sound effects."

DAD: "But I can't help it; it actually really hurts."

ISABELLA: "You can't go 'oooh' . . . 'oww'! You can help that."

DAD: "I can't help that! It actually really stings."

ISABELLA: "Gee you look like a little kid who's pretending they have a sore foot."

DAD: "No, I'm not pretending."

ISABELLA: "You just went and did a big step then and you didn't even limp."

DAD: "Yes, I did. I am limping."

ISABELLA: "Liar."

POSTSCRIPT

Later that afternoon I took Isabella to her music practice, which is inside a shopping centre.

ISABELLA: "Are you going to be limping there?"

DAD: “Well, I hadn’t really given it any thought, Issy, but I suppose I will be seeing I still have a sprained ankle.”

ISABELLA, rolling her eyes: “Oh great!”

Crutches

ISABELLA to **HOLLY**, referring to my left foot that I sprained: “I didn’t want Dad to know this but I was secretly hoping he’d fractured his foot last week because then I could have used his crutches for Hospitals [a game she plays with Amelie]. It would have been very embarrassing if he’d used them, but I was still really really hoping anyway.”

Tying ties

ISABELLA: “You can never go away, Dad. Because you’re so good at tying ties. Whenever I try and do it it goes all wonky for some reason.”

DAD, laughing: “Is that all I’m good for, is it? Tying ties?”

ISABELLA: “Well, I wouldn’t laugh, Dad. It’s not a bad thing to be good at. Not everyone can tie a tie, you know. In my class there’s hardly anyone.”

Wrinkles

ISABELLA to **HOLLY:** “I don’t think Mum knew at the time she first met Dad that she’d be staying young and he’d be growing old.”

DAD: “What?”

ISABELLA: “Mum, did you know before you married Dad that you’d stay young and he’d get old?”

KARIN: “Well—”

ISABELLA, not waiting for an answer: “Now let that be a lesson for you, Holly. Not to marry people with a few small wrinkles because they’ll only turn into really big ones later on.”

She’s pretty so she doesn’t mind

ISABELLA: “Dad, there’s a girl in my class and she’s got a really red nose. From pimples or something I think.”

DAD: “Oh, the poor girl!”

ISABELLA: “No, she’s okay about it, Dad. She’s pretty so she doesn’t mind.”

God stuff

ISABELLA, on the way home from school: “Dad, there was one girl at school today who was really into God stuff. She was from another school and she was singing in our chorale. She’s right into something called reunion.”

DAD: “It’s communion.”

ISABELLA: “Yeah, that. She was going around asking lots of kids what they were. You know, what their religion was. She asked Annabelle and she just said, ‘I don’t know. Go and ask my mum.’”

DAD: “Did she? And what about you? Did she ask you?”

ISABELLA: “No. She just thinks you’re either Catholic or Christian so it wouldn’t have been worth her asking me.”

LAST WORD

I don’t get it

AMELIE: “I don’t really understand why you get presents for getting born. Because you don’t do the born stuff. Mothers do.”