

Laurie Leinonen

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Topics: Joy, Disappointment(s), Significance or Potpourri

Disappointment

The smell of fresh cut pine, the magical sight of glittering colored lights reflected in glass ornaments and silvery icicles on the tree is embedded in my memory of childhood Christmases along with fidgeting at the top of the stairs in the early morning darkness, waiting to be called to come downstairs. It seemed to last forever as we squirmed about and heard them pattering downstairs...the sounds of a fire being made, the rattling of dishes and the smell of bacon cooking. Finally Pop would say, "OK, come on down!" He and Mom would be standing at the bottom of the stairs while we rushed past to get to the tree and marvel at all the packages that had suddenly appeared overnight. Santa, of course, had enjoyed his cookies and milk. We checked to make sure.

I really wanted a new bicycle. So did my two older brothers who had outgrown theirs. I had just learned to ride one of my brother's old bikes and really, really wanted my own. Specifically, a bright red "girl's" bike like the ones my girlfriends had. When we came downstairs that Christmas morning, there were 3 bicycles lined up in front of the tree, shining brightly in the glow of a blazing log fire and the colorful Christmas lights. The bikes had tags and bows on them. The smallest one was mine...and while it was bright red and like new, it was obviously the one I had just learned to ride and still a "boy's" bike. My father, ever practical, had taken great effort to spruce it up since their budget didn't allow for 3 new bikes. I was crestfallen when I realized what it was. I'm not sure that I cried but I do remember my mother saying something to the effect of "I knew she would be able to tell...."

I survived and came to love that little red bike and tore around the neighborhood on it for quite some time. I met a guy, randomly, when I was a teenager and no longer lived

anywhere near that neighborhood. I was surprised when he remembered me. I didn't recognize him but he said he used to see me leading the pack on my red bike and always wished he could join us. I felt bad about that...not only that I didn't remember him but that we were such a little clique at 7 or 8 years of age.

As I grew up and that Christmas magic began to pale I found myself going out of my way to make holidays extra special. First, for my Jewish husband and then for our children. I still love how the holiday lights glow when all the other lights are off along with the comforting scents of the season. I enjoy shopping for just the perfect gifts but have difficulty accepting them myself. For whatever reason I attribute that to that one Christmas morning and the hand-me-down bike.