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Joy in a Can

My sons, ages 8 and 11, teach me a lot of things—the newest Game Boy game vernacular (exactly what is Psynergy in the game of Golden Sun?), that dirty fingernails don't necessarily lead to disease and immediate death, that index cards are just the right heft of paper to create play swords.

What they have taught me recently is how easy it is to find simple pleasures, if you only take the time to look.

Our household is typical in terms of availability of kid snacks—sandwich creme cookies, granola bars, and crackers all stocked away nicely on shelves at kid level. The fruit bowl is rarely touched by my sons and so it gets relegated to a far corner of the kitchen counter. In the freezer, there are popsicles, ice cream, frozen pretzels, and \$1 frozen pizzas—the kind that only a kid would eat. And while these are readily available, it has become part of the standard after-school regimen—nothing too exciting by now.

I have been on a kick to “do something unexpected” for my family that brings both me and them more joy. And so, I found myself buying crescent rolls in a can at the grocery store. Breakfast in 15 minutes. Piping hot out of the oven. With an aroma that could sell a house without a real estate agent in sight. My sons raced to the kitchen table, completely dressed with smiles on their faces. The morning routine had never been so pleasant. I offered up jam, to which they replied that the buttery flavor of the rolls on their own was just fine. My older son delighted in unrolling the rolls to see the flakiness of the unraveled baked dough. My younger son devoured each roll as if he had not eaten in days. And I was beaming with the happiness I had brought to my children that morning. Could I really have found so much joy in a \$2 can of dough?

With routine, we take things for granted. With the unexpected, the novel becomes a delight. No matter how small or insignificant or commonplace. That's how it is when the tulips start to break through the mulch in early March, before I have started to think about the earth waking up for springtime. That's how it is when my husband comes home early from a trip. And that's how it is when a coaching client uncovers an “aha” in the conversation about getting bored again.

If you want more joy in your life, don't just look for the sizzle—the newest PDA-cellphone-digital camera-MP3 player doohickey or that shiny, powerful roadster. Look for the unexpected simmer that touches your heart. How much joy can you find with \$2 and a little imagination?

www.leadingwithawholenewmind.com, and www.consciousliving-leaving.com. Carol is an executive coach, organization development consultant, and writer with over 20 years experience in the telecommunications and energy industries. Carol specializes in helping clients get unstuck and into the flow of great work. She works her magic by bringing the power of the creative, intuitive right brain into a left-brained world. While her degrees in engineering from Northwestern University have served her well, it's been her life and work experiences that have moved her to do her best work. She is certified by The Coaches Training Institute and credentialed by the International Coach Federation.