

"Because I Said So."

I think it's safe to say that parenting skills are not genetically inherited. Especially in my case. By all means, my parents did the best they could, but some stuff rrm certain was not passed down. I think it's also safe to say that each generation inherently repeats parts of its own childhood in some ways, and overcompensates for shortcomings in others. My mom would unplug her phone when she went to bed, even with three teenage boys going in and out of the house. I have tracking devices on my kids' phones so I know where they are at every waking moment. Surely there's a happy medium.

Here's a slice of my childhood *to* give you a point of comparison. My best friend growing up was Jeremy Wal-

len. He loved fucking with me because I was the perfect kid to play practical jokes on: I already came equipped with a good amount of anxiety. We used to walk home from school together, but one day in October, he didn't wait for me and purposely beat me home. His dad had just gotten him a gorilla suit for Halloween, and Jeremy had a perfect plan. He ran over to my house dressed in the suit, with the gorilla head under his arm, and rang my doorbell. He caught my mom between naps and asked her if I was home. Mom said, "I don't think so, darling, not yet. I don't smell Pop-Tarts."

Jeremy said, "Great! Mind if I hide in his bedroom closet?"

Mom said, "Sure."

Try and grasp the dysfunction. After thirty years of therapy, my shrink still comes up dry. Moments later, I walked my lanky ass into my room, threw my books on the bed, examined a zit in my mirror, and BANG, Jeremy bolted from my closet in full gorilla regalia. As my girlish screams turned into wailing, I shoved my mom toward the gorilla and fled the house at a speed never to be equaled by any white man . . . as I was peeing. That's right. I said it. Fuck you, too. I was eleven and halfway down the block until I collapsed with exhaustion. Jeremy wasn't far behind, with his elfish laugh coming from under the rubber mask I could have killed the little prick, but he definitely would have kicked my ass.

In case you're not quite clear on what a Jewish mother is like, this will help you grasp the mind-set attributed to the

breed. What was my mother's comment when I returned home, seething with anger and smelling of piss? She said, "I can't believe you would push your own mother into a gorilla." I didn't close my closet doors for three months.

Upon becoming a father for the first time, I quickly learned there is nothing as powerful as the love for your child. But it is without a doubt the toughest gig in the world if you're doing it right. I think this level of dedication comes from a certain kind of chip that is found more often in females than in males. It's a caregiving attribute that I truly feel is in the DNA. I will never forget the day my son was born and I cut the cord, uttering the words, "It's a pound over, shall I wrap it?" Or that day in December 2001, when my daughter took her first step, teetered, fell forward, and then puked on my new Italian slip-ons.

I learned early on that there is nothing as unbridling and forthright as a child's honesty. Especially compared to a parent's. Ironically, kids are also the most brilliant liars next to politicians. My son at age five actually once told me, after hitting his sister, that "God told him to." An unsettling lie that made me rethink the theory of evolution. What if the kid was right? He is known to move in mysterious ways. This was the same kid who told the waitress at IHOP that "Daddy farted in the car on the way to breakfast." An unfortunate truth that has destroyed my love of pancakes and Sunday drives.

I once caught my four-year-old daughter chasing her big brother with a bat because he put a booger on her Malibu Barbie. Thank goodness I caught her in midswing as she cried bloody hell. When I questioned her intention with saliva propelling from my mouth, her excuse was "CCI was just seeing how heavy the bat was, Daddy. I'd never hit him." Uh-huh. As much as we love them, they are most definitely out to kill us.

You will be astonished at how many things your kids can break, lose, throw, and just plain fuck up in a matter of minutes. Remotes in the toilet; tuna in your shoe; ice cream on the dog; a flashlight in the aquarium. All things that make you ponder a vasectomy with the intensity of a jet fighter. An argument between your kids in the backseat of the van after a ten-hour day at Disneyland will make you decide: "... I am letting someone take a knife to my testicles and tie the arteries to my balls so I will never have to relive this day." And I thought it was the happiest place on earth. To quote one of my heroes, Rodney Dangerfield, "Now I know why tigers eat their young."

I almost gave myself the procedure inadvertently one day when I was putting the Christmas ornaments away in the attic. I was in the farthest part of the attic that I could find, because let's face it, being a Jew, I wasn't supposed to be playing with that shit in the first place, right? Being totally unaware how an attic is constructed, I decided I would straddle a large beam to secure my stability. As foot left and

foot right stepped onto the ceiling drywall to balance my jumbo frame, well, I guess there's no other way to say it: my balls broke my fall. I landed squarely with my friggin' plums on the beam, and as my legs, covered in red sweat-pants, shot through the ceiling above where my four-year-old son was playing with his new train set, I vaguely heard him yell, "Santa's back!" "Vaguely," say, because I almost passed out from the impact. If I had been lucky enough to miss the beam, I would have fallen through a different part of the ceiling and encountered a thirty-foot drop. Had that happened, I would be writing this by holding a pencil in my mouth. Tough to erase stuff that way.

The key to parenthood is not only having a great nanny who can't write English (thus sparing you the possibility of a tell-all book) but also the ability to be a great friend *to* your kids without being their best friend. You're a parent first, a friend second, a slave third, a defendant fourth. They are sponges who will illuminate your faults and elevate your talents. They will get the runs at the worst possible times and make you drive them around at three A.M. as if you've forgotten where you live, just so they'll fall asleep. Your life, as you know it, will be over. And you will spend the next twenty years trying to regain what you once had. You will experience a lot less fun but a lot more joy.

Before my seed ever found purchase, whenever I heard about a guy becoming a father at fifty or sixty years of age, I would think, *What a selfish bastard. His kid will be ten and*

hell be seventy! After becoming a father, I now think, *That guy is a genius.* He figured out that by the time his kids are teenagers, he'll be battling dementia, in a coma, or dead. Sitting shell-shocked in a home, eating pudding with no teeth, unaware that his teenage son put something on Instagram that is unrecognizable unless you turn it upside down and close one eye. "Out of sight if you're out of your mind," I always say. Have them late in life and your excuses for bad parenting are endless *and* validated.

I'm always amazed at the clueless parents who expect random people in public to put up with their kid's shit. The ones who leave brutal messes under their child's highchair for the poor restaurant server to deal with after Chucky throws all his uneaten crap on the floor. The relentless screamer with the parents who act like they can't fuckin' hear it. Take them outside for a walk until they chill out, Trailer Trash. Pretend you give a shit. The crier on the plane? Shouldn't be allowed, sorry. I have kids. Bring shit for them to do and to eat. Yes, their ears will sometimes hurt, and I know that's a bitch, but pull your tit out and make the plane happy. You squirted him out, we didn't. My earbuds are only so big. And who knows, maybe the consideration for others will eventually rub off on your offspring.

As the saying goes, there's nothing more fun than seeing the world through the eyes of a child. Yet I believe this phrase was written by a child. It's not always that fun. It's at least much better than through the eyes of a guy hitting

"the double nickel," which is where I find myself today. But every stage has its challenges, even though I did my best to prevent my children from all forms of adversity. ■ I was determined to be with my children through every possible step in their young lives. I tried to predict accidents before they would happen. I wrapped my house in Styrofoam, padding, and duct tape so every slip and fall would be bolstered with a cushy landing. My tendency was to be what many experts refer to as a "helicopter parent," always checking, foong, and planning. I wanted their lives to have the structure that my early years lacked. And sometimes, through that desire, I oversteered or unconsciously robbed them of the experience that comes from things not being perfect or easy. I overcompensated because of my feelings of guilt fueled from my divorce. At times I acted like a damn teenager myself.

Being a father was so important to me that I had times when I forgot to *breathe*. I forgot it the other night, when my kids decided to fry Oreos in hot vegetable oil in a skillet. Not sure why. They didn't see it on the Food Network; they weren't even high. Just had a great idea that resulted in a grease fire that was quickly doused with water. Which my teenage kids, both in chemistry, didn't know could lead to an even worse fire. I took a breath and ended up spurting out more F-bombs than Kanye's box set. Yes, my heart has been mostly in the right place since that day in October 1998 when I became a dad. And again in February 2000. Learn

from me, if you're a parent or planning to become one when you hit sixty-five, do your best, and also know you can only do so much. There will be times when you will save the day, and also times when you'll be the biggest dick in the room. In a bad way. But if you can teach your kids two things, aim for *compassion* and *courage*, two crucial ingredients that are missing **all** too often in this world.

One way in which parents attempt to teach compassion is by buying a pet. We think it will teach them responsibility, but we all know how that turns out. The first pet I ever bought for my kids was a hermit crab. Ifs either that or the carnival goldfish, which has the life expectancy of a hiccup. After unsuccessfully dropping fifty dollars at the Ping-Pong-ball-goldfish-toss, we headed to Petco.

These days it appears to be okay to decorate hermit crab shells using various types of (what I'm hoping is) nontoxic paint. Ours had a tiny lighthouse and beach painted on its shell, I guess to make him even more homesick for his better days. We purchased the hermit habitat along with the food, the tiny sponge that needed to remain wet, "special" sand, and a ceramic sailboat: again to remind him of his life a few weeks ago at Martha's Vineyard. The whole setup cost around eighty dollars. If we could have just won that fish . . .

The kids named him or her Shelly, and they used to fight over whose room it would sleep in. Until they stopped arguing and agreed to share, Shelly would sleep in my room. That arrangement lasted only a couple of days. What I didn't

know was that these fuckers are nocturnal and scrape and scratch around at night. Me being a light sleeper, Shelly soon became a kitchen dweller.

What the guy at the pet store never bothered to mention was that hermit crabs grow out of their shells. Apparently, a bigger shell needed to be purchased and put in the tank for Shelly's inevitable move on up to the east side. Honestly, if the clerk *had* shared this info on the day of purchase, I probably would have looked at him strangely, like the cynical guy I am, because let's be honest, who the hell would think that a hermit crab would need a newer, bigger shell? Dogs don't grow out of their coats, right?

Sure enough, after about four months, we find one morning over breakfast that Shelly has vacated her shell. Have you ever seen a hermit crab sans shell? You may never eat popcorn shrimp again. Horrifying. At this point I had no idea about the crab needing new digs. We assumed she was stepping out to get some fresh air, and figured she'd go back in her shell at night, like *all* good crustaceans. Unfortunately, this didn't happen. Once a hermit crab leaves a shell, it never returns. Kind of like the ghetto. Mind you, this was before Google, so we thought all was okay until the next day, when we noticed that Shelly had lost a leg. The day after that, another leg was gone, and so on. It was like Hanukkah, *Sopranos-style*.

Shelly was failing, and the cage began to smell like Red Lobster. When the kids were in school, like most good par-

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ents, I rushed to the pet store to inquire why the crab was shedding appendages. I was hoping they would grow back, like a lizard's tail. No such luck for Shelly. They explained to me what they failed to explain the first time around. A new Shelly was purchased, along with a larger spare shell. Painted on her shell were palm trees and a coastal sunset.

Recently, I found myself in a public restroom at a restaurant with another dad who had a teenage son. After the teenager peed, he went to leave and the father said, ".Aren't you going to wash your hands?"

With that typical teenage attitude, the son said, ".The sign says you only have to do it if you work here."

My son, Max, is sixteen and my daughter, Hope, is fifteen, and I have to say, I have loved every stage of their childhoods. I changed their diapers and took the feeding shifts at night and reveled in the process. My nipples still hurt. Those early days are when the real bonding happens, so it's important for fathers to take part in caring for their kids early on.

All things considered, I'm surviving the teenage years quite well. Their mother and I do all we can to keep them busy and keep them talking. Trust is the key in any parent-child dynamic, but trust must be earned, and it's hard to balance that with the certain amount of privacy they need and deserve. Sure, we've had our difficulties, like all families, but my best times are when they're by my side. My excitement

for their future revolves around their discoveries and growth as young, positive-thinking individuals empowered by their self-esteem and the willingness to pursue careers fueled by love and passion for whatever they choose. These are my desires and wishes for my children.

In closing this chapter I want to mention that I started my own nonprofit organization called Maximum Hope Foundation back in 2000. We provide immediate, practical assistance to families who are caring for a child with a life-limiting illness, and we're doing some pretty amazing work nationwide. To learn more, please take a moment to visit our website (www.MaximumHopeFoundation.org).

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Bad Decisions With Good Intentions

Bad decision #1: trying desperately to hold on to your youth.

If you're in your mid-forties or older, you're not allowed to get a tattoo or an earring if you don't already have one, understand? I'm speaking mostly to the men. It's one thing to yearn for your youth, but I can't allow you to look like a douche while you hold on to it with a death grip. If you have tats and earrings, you better be a recognizable rock star or belong to a motorcycle gang. It's no different than seeing a sixty-year-old broad in Daisy Dukes and a tube top. She's the only one who enjoys that, not us. It's desperate and unattractive. (Note: I'm writing this wearing my dad jeans, a T-

shirt with a duck on it, and warm slippers-join me here on the older side of denial and don't look back. Or do what you want and come off as a sad, insecure imbecile who's praying that Blue Oyster Cult reunites.)

Also, attention, any asshole over twenty-three who rides a skateboard: you're affecting our reputation as a species that walks upright. Get a fuckin' clue. If your skateboard loses a ball bearing, what's your option? Your little sister's Big Wheel? Unless you're cruising for kids, buy a friggin' car, for crying out loud. You can get one on Craigslist for two grand (the same place you bought that futon for your room in Mom's basement). If you think you look cool, buy a full-length mirror and reevaluate . . . pre-bong hit. Grow up. It's more fun *to* be a big kid. If you're worried about looking cool, how about getting a job? That's kind of cool.

Not to sound like an old fart, but I also really need you younger kids *to* think long and hard about getting tattoos. They're forever. When you're in your twenties, you have no idea what forever is, but think twice before getting that red hibiscus flower inked over your taint or the Tasmanian Devil forty-five degrees south of your left nut. And if you think they were painful to apply, the removal is ten times more painful. I don't know this firsthand, but have friends who are ex-cons, and we all know they don't lie.

To the kids who get piercings in their noses, tongues, lips, eyelids, labia, not to mention the bread plates stretched into the lobes of rebellious teens from the Valley who think

they have a spiritual connection to the people of Uganda, I say: "Next!., Please, save something for Halloween. Yes, I believe in self-expression and thinking differently and with authenticity, but some of this shit becomes an addiction and a form of self-mutilation. If you have a bone in your nose, saucers in your ears, and a tribal tattoo on your neck, you better have some great dance moves around a huge kettle as you prepare to eat a missionary. If not, stay the hell out of the show, light-skinned Makumba.

Most of this book is aimed at people of my generation, but for any youngsters reading, please set your feelings of invincibility aside for a moment. We age, and that means YOU WILL, TOO. So ladies, know that the cute little scorpion tattoo you have on your perky titty is sexy today, but when you're seventy, it's gonna look like a lobster hanging by a claw. And the last thing the kiddies need to see at Thanksgiving is Grandma's lobster dipping into the yams. Nor do they need the pressure of getting your shiny nipple ring away from the kitten. Ifs the holidays, for Christ's sake.

Now I need to address the tattoo the ladies get right above their bunghole, also known as the "tramp stamp." First of all, being right above your crack, ifs close to impossible to see without a mirror, correct? Unless you're an owl with 180-degree head-turning capability. I knew one girl

who had a dragonfly and a butterfly right above the Chattahoochee Canal. Guess what? Not that attractive. I don't know about you, but I'm not big on seeing flies of any kind emanating from that area. Dated a "dancer" for two hours who had a skull and crossbones in the same place. Lovely. Nothing better than feeling like you're fucking a pirate or a poisonous substance.

Here's a thought: get a tattoo for us guys to enjoy, since we're the ones back there trying to get you back to the barn. Something motivating like, I don't know, a cheeseburger, or maybe a tattoo of your sister who'd we really rather bang. Or maybe I'm just jealous because I don't have the cojones to endure the pain of getting some ink on my rumply ass or lack-of-bicep.

Oh, and a note to my African-American brothers and sisters: most tattoos are a waste of your time. They just end up putting extra pressure on your friends to try and figure out what it is you've got on there. How can I say this without being offensive? Because as we know, that's not my thing . . . but it's hard as shit to see. That's why Mike Tyson said, "Fuck it. It goes on my face." Save us all the trouble or use Wite-Out.

We must face the truth and move along, people. And not on a skateboard, wearing an earring, and sporting a snake tattoo. Because it's been done way too much, and you're better

than that. And people *are* pointing and laughing, you just can't hear it over the carny music that continually plays inside your head. Be yourself. Shit, maybe that *is* being yourself . . . if so, I don't know what to tell ya.

Just use your common sense, okay? Ask yourself, "Will this make me look like a douche?" "Am I too old for this bracelet?" "Should I shave the beatnik patch of hair off my four chins?" "Should my car be red if I'm not Persian?" "Is it better to have my hammertoe fixed before buying new sandals?" "Is it okay for my necklace to have a Jewish star *and* a crucifix?" "If I text a picture of my penis, can I keep my shirt on?" Only you know these answers, and I trust you.

Bad decision #2: filling the void with too many pets.

One of the nice things about growing older is you can have as many pets as you want. But as with cookies, your parents were right: there is such a thing as too many. Being deprived of this privilege as a kid, I more than made up for it in my adult life. What I love the most about dogs is that, unlike people, they are exactly the same every day. As predictable as a sunrise or a cold sore on picture day. Also, unlike people, they shit, piss, and puke on various items that happen to be nowhere near a toilet. Not to mention the incessant licking of their baggage in front of dinner guests. So why the hell did I acquire four?

My herd is comprised of the following: I have a blue-

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tick coonhound named Betty who was a rescue and hiding among a group of various Labradors up for adoption. My son, Max, picked her out of the doggy lineup. Next is Chester, the West Highland terrier. He was a gift from the ex-wife in exchange for the house, the cars, my dignity, etc. Then have Lucy, a twelve-year-old yellow Lab who is showing signs of old age and suffering from dog-mentia: barking continually at imaginary objects. Last is Bernice, a Bernese mountain dog, a breed known for pulling small wagons in the Alps. Bernice is practically maimed from a rare neurological disorder, thanks to the puppy mills that sell to high-end pet stores, so there will be no pulling of anything. She wears a harness with a handle so we can lift her up when she needs help. My daughter, Hope, calls her "Lunchbox." She's not in pain, just a big pain in the ass who has to be lifted and pushed to go anywhere. Just imagine Lany Flynt if he were a dog.

The thing that gets me most crazy about Bernice is that she eats her own shit. I'm a huge animal lover, but when I witness this, I consider burning my PETA hoodie and ordering veal. I've tried for years to convince her to stop. Yelling, offering cookies and bones instead of her feces, pleading with embarrassment when she displays this habit while company is over, all to no avail. I took her to my trusted veterinarian, Dr. Lisa, and said, "Bernice eats her own shit, and I'm losing friends. What can you do?"

The good doctor replied, "Brad, this is very common in

the canine world. \Vb.at you need to do is put something on the shit to make it taste bad." (Please reread the last line and let me know if you blanked like I did.)

"What? Put something on the shit *to make it taste bad?*"

I retorted. "What on God's green earth can I possibly put on shit to make it taste worse than *shit*? You're losing me, Doc."

She said, "Do you have any Tabasco around the house?"

"I'm sure I do somewhere. I mean, I'm not sure, but I can tell you I don't think it tastes worse than shit."

"Listen to me. When the dog is done pooping, immediately take the Tabasco and pour some right onto the crap. She won't eat it again after that. Guaranteed." Now, there's the paranoid part of me that thinks I'm being punk'd and this is going to end up on a blooper show. But she is a doctor, so she must know what she's talking about.

Cut to six-thirty the next morning. I was standing in my robe in the backyard, sprinkling my dog's steaming pile of shit with a newly opened bottle of Tabasco. I was staring at Bernice like "Don't you make a liar out of Dr. Lisa, you hear me?"

And the dog was looking at me wagging her tail and, I swear, actually smiling as if to say, "You are the best owner ever! I can't believe you're seasoning my shit! No wonder we're best friends! Can't wait to tell the cat."

In the end, the dog ate her crap faster than she's ever eaten anything in her life. I'm not proud *to* say I wanted to hit her with the Tabasco bottle, but it's rather tiny and

wouldn't do much to a hundred-pound dog who's already crippled. Plus, the neighbor was watching.

When I shared this fiasco with my buddies during a poker game, one of them piped up and said, "Don't use Tabasco, man. You're supposed to use pineapple. Everyone knows it's pineapple."

"Do they, Leonard?" asked. "Pineapple will keep them from eating shit, you say?"

"Yep. Worked with my Yorkie. And they say dogs that eat shit are vitamin-deficient."

"And what better place to find nutrients and vitamins than in one's shit, right?" I mumbled.

"Try the pineapple, Brad. Thank me later."

I never did try putting pineapple on the dog shit. I figured if the hot sauce didn't blow off the deal, a sweet Hawaiian fruit wouldn't turn the bitch around, either. And I wasn't willing to risk it. Because I love pineapple. And I want to keep it that way.

Just have to close with one last note about the so-called designer dog breeds that have hit the market over the last several years, each costing literally thousands of dollars. The Puggle, Labradoodle, Yorkalier, and so on. Guess what? They're just mutts, people. The neighbor's German shepherd getting out and having its way with the Jones's bulldog does not make it okay to sell the offspring, known as Gerbulls, for twenty-five hundred each. If a poodle is fucked by a Rottweiler, I think a discount and possibly a lawsuit are in

order, not an opportunity to drop three grand on a species that wasn't meant to evolve. Why are the mutts at the pound free and the others cost a fortune? And why stop here? Let's really bastardize the genetic relevance of what's acceptable. How about hooking up a harbor seal with a Chihuahua while we're at it? Imagine the bark on that pup. Plus, they can swim back to the border where they originated.

Bad decision #3: overcompensating with wheels.

The classic bad midlife-crisis decision inevitably involves a vehicle. I firmly believe that expensive sports cars would not cost nearly as much if guys didn't buy them to get laid. Most guys in a Ferrari have no right to be in one. Including me. Been there, done that.

I remember a few years back, when my midlife crisis was in full swing, I decided to drop close to three hundred grand on a gorgeous yellow Ferrari 360 Modena. I knew nothing about that car, but I knew my penis would be thrilled with the purchase. I showed up with my cousin Darren at a luxury automobile agency in Beverly Hills and inquired about a test drive. Most guys would get laughed out of the showroom, but television is a powerful thing, and the sales manager proceeded to move the 360 from the center of the showroom to Wilshire Boulevard. It took me three attempts to physically get into the car. Like all sports cars, it wasn't designed for a giant. The car salesman, being a whore like they always are,

convinced me he knew a guy in the Valley who could put the seat rails back and get me another two inches of legroom. "We did that for Shaq," gloated the greaseball.

The extra legroom wouldn't have mattered, since I hit my melon hard trying to enter the cockpit. As I grabbed my left leg to pull it into the car, my shoe popped off and got stuck under the clutch. I proceeded to take the other shoe off. The manager photocopied my license, gave me a three-minute tutorial, then Darren and I were off. It was a manual transmission, which I always wanted in a sports car because that was "real driving." The problem was, my last stick-shift experience was in my first car, back in 1976, and that was my dad's '72 Pinto Runabout. This Ferrari transmission was just not as forgiving.

As I hit 75 mph in first gear, I noticed a lot of white smoke accompanying my jerky shifting. This particular model had the glass covering the engine compartment directly behind the driver seat. Now the smell of smoke was oddly creeping into our area. *What a piece of crap*, thought. *What new car smells like this?* Afraid of blowing up, we raced back to the dealership, where we were met by a very irate sales manager and an Italian-speaking Ferrari technician. The interior was full of smoke. Seems had burned out the clutch. "That's impossible!" said I, the idiot. I was looking at a nine-thousand-dollar repair. In my dire compulsivity, I convinced him to write off the repair if I bought the car in an automatic model. He, of course, obliged.

"But you can't even fit in it," said my practical cousin.

"Relax. Don't confuse me with logic," muttered, and drove home in the automatic. I will not lie, it was pretty amazing. Except for the fact that my left leg fell asleep after three miles, and I was afraid to get out of the car in that condition; we've all had to walk with a sleeping leg at one time or another, and it's never pretty. Especially after exiting an Italian sports car.

I had never wanted to be five-ten more in my life than the day I took the Modena to a racetrack in Lancaster to partake in a driving school where owners of every car imaginable could show up and go out on the track with a professional driver. The idea was the pro would give you a crash course on driving for about thirty minutes as he drove your car, and then you would drive him around for thirty minutes while he critiqued your technique. After that, you were on your own for the rest of the day while you practiced what you had learned. At least that's what it said in the brochure.

I met Dirk, the driver, in his silver flame-retardant jumpsuit. He told me to get a helmet from the race shop and meet him on the track. I have a large head, and they had only one XXL left. I managed to squeeze it on, but unfortunately, it made me over seven fuckin' feet tall. This posed an even bigger problem: there was literally no way for me to fit into the car. If the helmet came off, I wasn't allowed on the track for legal and insurance reasons. Helmet on: "Big Jew, no fit." That's Cherokee for "What the fuck was I thinking?"

I'm trying to save you time, money, humiliation, and permanent damage to your body and ego. Like you, I wish I could hang on to my youth, adopt every non-shit-eating puppy I see, and own every hot rod known to man. But sometimes we have to know when enough is enough. Or when *none* is enough. And even if you don't listen to me, at least you can't say I didn't warn you.