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August 22, 2017

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Anyone who knows me understands that I basically have the same sense of humor as an 8-year-old boy. Not only do I enjoy occasional toilet talk, I truly love sharing it with others who also appreciate this highbrow kind of humor — namely, our grandkids.

Going to Mass on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at St. Euphrasia Elementary School in Granada Hills, Calif., I gleefully embraced this 2,000-year-old truth: "A fart is never funnier than in church." I am confident that the origins of that phrase are in Greek or Latin.

Our youngest grandbaby, Mary, is nearing 2-and-a-half, and we have the great good luck of getting to watch her here at home at least two days each week. What this means for me is I can weekly count on enjoying poo humor with my like-minded little buddy.

Her serious and well-intentioned mother (my daughter) advised me early on that they were hoping to avoid certain words in Mary's vocabulary. They were training her to say "toot" instead of "fart," for example. Well, I am proud to share with my fellow naughty grandparents everywhere that a couple of days a week with Nonna has made that nice notion crash and burn.

If you have not watched that "Farting Hippo" [video](#) on YouTube — the one where the hippopotamus at the zoo is caught on tape expelling the most wonderfully long piece of gas on record with the volume of a chainsaw while his tail swishes away his poo like a windshield wiper — with a toddler, you have not yet lived.

If there is only so much wild giggling left in the world, that is one sure way to trap some and hold it tight.

I wish I understood why when we all grew up, we were supposed to stop finding poo and its attending accoutrement just plain hilarious.

These things unite us, after all. We all have it, do it, hopefully daily.

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After I delivered my first child, one of the first questions the nurse asked me was, "Have you passed gas yet?"

I remember that for all my exhaustion — and rage at some guy named Lamaze — I burst out laughing. No one had ever asked me that question with such a concerned look before. I was raised with three brothers, and when we asked each other if we had just farted, it always included a sneer and at least one punch in the arm.

So is our leaving behind the joy of tooting in childhood attributed to it all becoming so medical? Colonoscopies and fiber and turn-your-head-and-cough and such?

Or is it just because most of us have to grow up and work in offices with other adults, sharing cubicles and lunch rooms and toilet stalls? If church is where a fart is funniest, is a meeting with your boss and co-workers its toughest room?

I suppose the fact that I come from a family that boasts a shared experience with irritable bowel syndrome may have something to do with my being inured to bodily excretions and noises and smells. They are unavoidable, so heck, you might as well laugh.

When we get together, my brothers and I invariably trade our most exciting poo stories. I feel I should get the blue ribbon for my riveting tale of turning into a volcano-in-my-pants while in line for play tickets in New York's Times Square. My brother believes he wins for his most excellent and explosive story about his transatlantic flight from Los Angeles to London. We agree to disagree.

I recently realized that my lifetime of poo adventures was actually in no way accidental. As usual, I am continually impressed and humbled by how God sneakily prepares us to help each other.

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I had stopped at a local department store and, as is my custom, used the restroom. When I sat down in a stall, I heard a woman weeping in the adjacent one. I completed my business and was washing my hands, but I could not ignore that her crying had changed to sobbing. This lady was really distraught.

So I asked, "Um, excuse me. Are you OK?"

A choked voice from inside the stall said, "Oh. No. I'm not."

I said, "Um. Can I help you somehow?"

I heard a sniff. The voice said, "Oh. I don't think so. I have IBS, and I had an accident, and I don't know what to do." She started sobbing again, really hard.

Now, I know it sounds goofy, but I smiled. What are the odds that an old IBS veteran like me would be right here, right now? Right place, right time, right stuff? See? God is sneaky.

I said, "Oh, honey. I totally get it. I have IBS, too!"

She sniffed, "Really?"

"Yes," I said. "What is your name, dear?"

She said, "Joanne."

"Are you here by yourself?"

"No," she said, "My husband, Frank, is outside."

And yes, I have changed their names here. The rest is 100 percent true.

"OK," I said, "What does he look like?"

Now, here comes one of the sweetest all-time answers ever given on our planet.

She said, sobbing, "He is the most handsome man in the world."

Now I was crying and laughing. "Well," I said, "can you be a little more specific?"

She said, "He has a plaid shirt. And gray hair. And glasses."

I said, "OK. What size are you, Joanne?"

She told me, and I said, "OK. Stand by. I will be right back, OK? I promise."

Crying, she said, "OK."

So I walked out of the restroom, and there, pacing nervously, was a man with a plaid shirt, gray hair and glasses.

Now, to be honest, if I had walked by this man on the street, I don't think I would do a double-take and say: "Oh my, there goes the most handsome man in the world!"

I walked up to him. He looked at me, startled. I said, "Frank, my name is Amy. Joanne pooped herself. And we are going shopping."

He nodded obediently and followed me.

We went to the women's department and, based on Frank's age and what I assumed to be Joanne's, I picked out an outfit that I would have bought for my beloved Nonna: a pair of double-knit stretch pants and a matching floral knit blouse. Then we went to the intimates section, and I grabbed some underwear and socks.

Frank was wordlessly right behind me. He trailed me to the checkout counter. I laid the items next to the register, turned to him and said, "Frank, we are buying these."

He nodded and handed over his card to the salesperson.

We walked together back to the ladies' restroom.

I said to him, "It is going to be OK. You wait here."

Frank nodded. His eyes were soft and kind and startlingly blue behind those glasses. I was beginning to appreciate what inspired Joanne's ranking of this man's handsomeness.

When I entered the bathroom, I said, "Joanne, I just met Frank. He bought you these new clothes." I hefted the plastic bag over the top of the stall, and her hand came up to grab it. I said, "You can put your old clothes in the bag, OK?"

She was still crying, but more quietly. She said, her voice small, "But I am all dirty."

I said, "I know, honey. I am going to hand you wet paper towels so you can clean up. Then dry paper towels so you can dry off. OK?"

She said, "OK."

So that's what we did. Over the top of the stall, I handed fistfuls of damp paper towels. Then, when she told me she was ready, bunches of dry ones.

Finally, she said, "OK. You can stop. I am getting dressed now."

I said, "Great. I will tell Frank."

I stuck my head out of the door, and said, "Hey, Frank. Joanne is dressing now. She will be out to you soon, OK?"

Frank nodded and smiled. I noticed that his teeth were extremely white and his dimples were indeed very attractive.

As I walked back toward the stalls, Joanne emerged from hers. She had her new outfit on and carried the plastic bag full of her old clothes. She stuffed a huge wad of paper towels into the trash can.

Oh, my heart just ached at the sight of her. Her eyes were swollen and red and her face was puffy from crying. She looked completely exhausted. And such a lovely face, so kind. I couldn't help myself. I opened my arms wide to hug her.

She rushed into my embrace. She cried softly, and said next to my ear, "God must have sent you."

I laughed, both of us crying now, "Without a doubt."

I stepped back and looked her up and down, and said with total sincerity, "Joanne. You look very pretty."

She blushed, and smiled. A compliment only works if it is true.

I said, "Let's go see Frank. He has been worried about you."

She nodded and we walked to the door. I opened it for her and stepped back. She rushed through the door and into his arms. He crushed her to him. There was so much love, I had to look down.

When I looked up, he was smiling at me over her head. Yep. There he was. The world's handsomest man.

I change my grandbaby Mary's poopy pants every time I watch her. Someday, God forbid, she just might be changing mine. Poo unites us. We all do it. It makes us human. And when you watch a hippo's tail swishing it all over the place, to the sound of a chainsaw roaring, it is just plain funny.

[Amy Morris-Young graduated from and taught writing at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.]