

Are We There Yet?

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Are we there yet? A recent trip to Florida resurrected this question that I hadn't heard since the days of summer vacations with our children, Stephanie and Ryan. Our most recent journey to the sunshine state included our three oldest grandsons Caleb, Luke, and Isaac (Stephanie and youngest grandson Jude met us in Orlando). Needless to say, the burning question was asked so many times I lost count in North Carolina. As a wiser, more mellow grandpa I found the incessant questioning less irritating and even humorous at times. I was keenly aware that as a young father I would have been more focused on the destination while as a grandfather the experience of being with "the posse" meant a lot.

We are a destination and productivity obsessed society. Are we there yet? How will we know? What measurements tell us we have arrived? Much of our energy is spent on destination at the expense of quality relationships, living in the moment, and the lost art of listening to one another's stories. While destination and productivity are important, the price we pay can be too much if the result is a life lived running from place to place. An important part of the work in counseling is to collaborate with clients on ways to relax and enjoy the journey. An interesting paradox is we possess many comforts and gadgets to make life easier, while much research states we are more stressed and depressed than at any time in history. I have personally seen a rise in anxiety disorders among teenagers recently. I suspect a "switched on" culture and unfettered access to technology has not helped.

Many of us as children heard the phrase, "Stop, look, and listen before you cross the street." Paying attention to those words improved your chances of getting to your destination safely. May I suggest, in the interest of enjoying the journey that we slow down, pay attention to our surroundings, and listen to one another's stories. Who knows, we might find the journey much more interesting than the destination.

Grace and peace as you travel!