

# FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

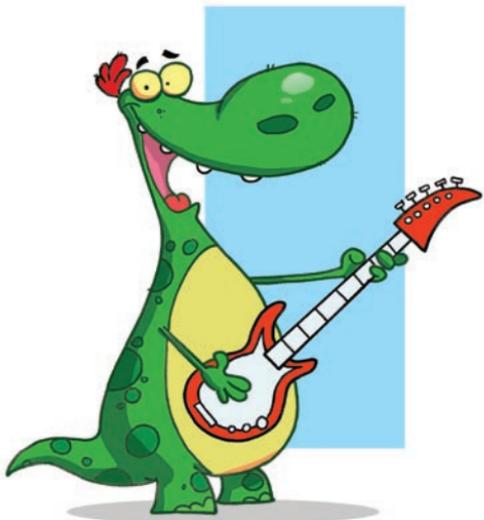
## Three Kids & An Old Guy

It's probably no accident that we were given two ears and one mouth. It suggests that we should listen twice as much as we talk. Which is good advice, I reckon, for parents and grandparents – because KIDS (as Art Linkletter and Bill Cosby discovered) SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS! They don't mean to say them; they often just slip out; and if we adults aren't listening with our mouths wide shut, we can easily miss them. Like these three conversations that were recently deposited in my memory-bank:

**1** If you know anything about small boys, you'll know that small boys often go through a stage when, every time you look at them, they seem to be fiddling. Fiddling with their small-boy parts, if you know what I mean. Plucking at the front of their pants. It's not rude or disgusting. It's a harmless small-boy habit that small boys are often unaware of. But it's one that parents, understandably, try to discourage – especially when it's their small boy – and especially when they're out in public.

It's a habit my wife and I are accustomed to, having raised two sons and helped raise eight grandsons – all of whom were small boys at one point, and most of whom did a bit of fiddling en route to growing up.

Like the other day. I couldn't help noticing that one of our still-small boys



was at it ... repeatedly. But when I gently suggested that, perhaps, he should leave it alone, he cheerfully explained:

*“Dad told me if I didn't stop fiddling with myself, it would fall off. But Granddad, he's such a LIAR – because I HAVEN'T stop fiddling, and it HASN'T fallen off!”*

SOONER OR LATER, EVERYONE STOPS SMOKING.

**2** Staying with Gran and Granddad is almost as good as going to the Gold Coast – just ask any Cooney grandkids. And when our shy, quiet, eight-year-old came to stay the other night, he and I got to talk.

I can't remember how the topic came up, but he showed an interest. So I held the floor for a while with one of my favourite seminars: "*What Life Was Like When I Was A Boy!*" I had covered the first two bullet-points, how, in the old days, we had no family car (just bikes) and no TV (just a radio) ... and I was in the middle of describing how, in the absence of Play-Stations and computer games, we just threw rocks at the boys down the road – when my grandson interrupted.

"Granddad," he asked, suddenly quite serious and rather concerned. "*When you were my age, were there dinosaurs?*"

**3** To our total of eight grandsons, my wife and I have also added four granddaughters – all of whom love being asked to lend Granddad a hand in his office. Putting newsletters in envelopes, sticking stamps on envelopes,

and counting envelopes are the kind of tasks that boys equate with *punishment*. But the girls? No, they're in heaven! They do it eagerly, they do it fast, they act like they're in charge, and they boss me around as if they own the show!

My five-year-old granddaughter did it for an entire hour just recently. She sat herself down beside me at my desk, looking terribly grown-up – and, in no time at all, she was putting and sticking and counting and bossing like she was the Personal Assistant to the Chairman of the Board.

Once the job was done-and-dusted, I thanked her from the bottom of my heart. "You've worked so *hard*," I told her. "You're such a clever girl ..."

"Yes," she agreed matter-of-factly. "*I sort of know everything.*" Then, having thought about it for a nano-second, she added humbly: "*I'm nearly like God!*" ❁

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JOHN (GRAPEVINE'S EDITOR FOR THE PAST 300 YEARS) IS YOUNG-AT-HEART AND SLIGHTLY OLDER IN OTHER PLACES. BUT, HE CLAIMS, "THE OLDER I GET – THE BETTER I WAS!"

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**THORT**



***Why do people keep running over a string 10 times with their vacuum cleaner, then pick it up, examine it, and put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?***