

## Goodnight, Grandpa

On February 1, 2005 my grandson Justin spent the night at “Grandma and Grandpa’s” house. I wrote to my son and his wife about bedtime that night.

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Dear Nate and Shari,

Tonight as Justin went to bed at our house, Kiff’s friends were arriving for bridge and it was difficult at first for him to settle down. I had put a small mattress on the floor in my room upstairs and then a sleeping bag over that and added a pillow. I put another pillow on the floor next to his bed and turned down the light dimmer to its lowest level. Bedtime stories were over and it was time to settle in for the night. I stretched out on the floor next to him and we listened to the guests arrive. At first he didn’t want me to stay but then he said I could stay for a little while. We talked quietly. Was that another car door? Did you hear that laugh? They’re coming up the stairs. Grandma must be showing her guests the house. I hear the cups rattling in the kitchen. Can you smell the coffee? No, I guess not.

Justin asked for two pieces of tissue and I helped him blow his nose. It took a few more than two and then he was satisfied. He snuggled into the sleeping bag and said, “It’s time to close our eyes” and I said, “Okay” and we both rested in the dark. The women downstairs were busy chatting before starting their card game. A distant dog barked somewhere in the neighborhood.

After a few minutes, in the dark Justin said, “Grandpa, what are you thinking about?” I said, “I’m thinking about friends.” He said, “I’m thinking about friends too.” I asked, “How many friends do you have?” never missing a chance for a math lesson even for a two year old. “I have five friends. They are waiting for me at home.” I told him I would be taking him home tomorrow morning, and then we were both quiet again in the dark.

A few minutes later when I thought he was surely asleep, he said, “Grandpa are you very happy?” I said, “I am very happy.” In the near-dark I saw his head going up and down emphatically as he said, “I am very happy also.”

Again, quiet. I waited. Surely he was asleep. Then I felt a little hand on my shoulder. Nothing was said. Nothing needed to be said.

Much later, I got up quietly to go downstairs. Surely he was asleep. But no, as I was about to close the door a little voice asked, “Grandpa, are you very happy with me?” “I am very happy with you, Justin. I love you. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight, Grandpa.”

Thanks for sharing Justin with us this evening.

Love,  
Dad