

The Bed-Making Story

Submitted by Sarah Fitz-Claridge on 17 January, 2006 - 17:09

by **Publicfrog**

Oh. My. Gosh, would my dad harp on me about making my bed when I was a kid. I said the usual kid things – crazy, outlandish stuff like, “But it's *my* bed” and “So can't you just shut the door?” and “But it's just gonna get messy again tonight when I sleep in it” – to no avail. Grownups never fell for such flawed reasoning.

Later, at college and on into young adulthood, you bet I didn't make my bed! (*Take that, Dad!*) Still, I liked the feeling of having everything all in order before I slept, sheets all tucked in at my feet and blankets or comforter just so, and that required a made bed. So I'd make my bed just before climbing in at night. This was a drag sometimes, when I was tired and didn't really want to delve into sheet-straightening just now, plus for a while I had a partner who'd get annoyed when I'd say, “Wait! Wait! You can't go to bed yet! I have to make it first!”

So I started making my bed in the morning. Now I didn't have to do it at night, and as a bonus, it looked nice all day! For a while I had mixed feelings about this, though. I'd mutter in my head, *Yeah, yeah, Dad, OK, it's best to make the bed in the morning, you were right, now shut up.*

Later I started muttering stuff like: *Think you're so smart, Dad? Can you imagine if you'd just waited it out, never mentioning bed-making ever when I was young? I probably would have started making my bed in the morning long before this, with no prompting at all, and you could have come to my first apartment and seen my nicely made bed, and then you'd have seen how well I turned out and how I didn't need all the nagging to get that way. Oh, but then you'd have been unable to pat yourself on the back for having trained me that way, so I guess you wouldn't have like that so well after all.*

Later still, I thought something more like, *Well, regardless, your issues are your own, Dad, and I guess I can't know. I like making my bed in the morning. Guess that's all there is to it.*

Eventually I guess I stopped talking to my dad in my head quite so much around bed-making time. And many years passed.

A year or two ago, when Sammy was one or two years old, I asked some folks, in all seriousness, something like: “So at what point do you stop the playing and finish the job? Sammy and I have this great morning bed-making routine where I start to make the bed and he plays in the sheets and we play peek-a-boo and bury-the-baby-in-the-blanket and stuff, but eventually, I want to just finish the job even though he wants to keep playing, and also, if I don't show him that there's a purpose to all this tossing-around of sheets, how's he going to know we're supposed to be *accomplishing* something here – namely, *making the bed?*” I was afraid of being too lax.

Most people said something to the effect that it was wonderful to infuse some fun into a chore, but still, a child has to learn that at some point the fun stops and the work starts; this teaches responsibility, or something. Plus there are schedules to consider, things to be done. Can't just play *all* day.

Well, this was sort of what I'd been thinking myself – or maybe what I was actually seeking was somebody to talk me out of it by saying, “For heaven's sake, he's two! Lighten up!”, except no one did that – but somehow I found I didn't like those answers, so I ignored them. We've worked out a bed-making routine whereby I start making the bed, and usually Sammy plays in it while I do so, and sometimes he helps pull up the comforter or something but usually he doesn't, and usually I play with him for a while, too, and if he wants to keep playing on the bed after I'm ready to move on to the next thing and he's under the sheets or something so I can't finish the job right then, I just leave the bed half-made and proceed to the next thing I want to do, like maybe getting dressed. Eventually there will come a moment when he's not in the bed anymore, and I can polish off the job, and nobody has to stop anybody from doing whatever is they want to do.

Sooooo (this ties in, really!). . . A few days ago I bought myself a new pair of jeans (woo-hoo!). I haven't bothered to wear a belt in about 3 years, 9 months, but these jeans seemed to require one, so I dug deep into my closet and found one. (And it fit!) Sammy, who's never seen me put on a belt, stopped what he was doing (which was jumping on the half-made bed) to stare: *What the heck are you doing?* I explained: “This is a belt. I'm wearing a belt today.” He considered; he looked to the place where his Daddy's belt sits at night and in the morning before he puts it on again, and said, “Like Daddy.” I said, “Yeah, like Daddy. Daddy wears a belt, too.”

He gave a recap: “Mommy wears a belt. Daddy wears a belt. Sammy is a frog!” And he went back to the bed-jumping.

And I thought, *Life doesn't get any sweeter.*

to post comments

Comments

Funny. :)

Submitted by Leo on 18 January, 2006 - 12:09

I got the perhaps wrong impression in the middle that you were making the morning bed making routine with the goal to show Sammy it could be fun. I think the earlier message of letting children find the purpose of things for themselves is a much better one.

to post comments

the bed

Submitted by [andrew \(not verified\)](http://andrew1977.vox.com/) on 20 May, 2009 - 20:11

Good parents usually know whats right. Kids rebel and years later they say, you know what my parents were right.

to post comments

You're crazy

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 16 March, 2010 - 14:48

I don't think your dad was right. I think he conditioned you to the insane idea that making your bed was a necessary chore. Did you ever think that it's perfectly ok to NOT like the idea of a straight bed before you climb in? If you wouldn't let your partner go to bed because you hadn't made it, then YOU have a problem, not anyone else. Personally, I can't sleep in a "made bed" and I don't give one rip what it looks like during the day. Kids should be allowed to have their bed the way they want. If they turn out to be OCD about it later, then fine. If not, not. But a crushing insistence on making it every morning is just a wrong-headed way of trying to instill self-discipline. You might as well command your child to go dig a hole in the yard every morning and then fill it in before they go to school. In whatever kind of weather.

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habits

Submitted by harithamenon (not verified) on 7 October, 2010 - 09:04

if parents want to teach good habits, inculcate them in early childhood.

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Or she just likes made beds

Submitted by Kyoki (not verified) on 6 November, 2010 - 07:31

... Just because you don't like a made bed doesn't make her crazy for liking it. My mom never insisted on my bed made, but I still love the feel of washed, clean sheets pulled crisp and a warm quilt all nice and flat on my bed. I even like my folded footblanket at the bottom!

Some of us just like made beds. Some don't. Aren't both totally okay?

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"Kids should be allowed to

Submitted by kate hate (not verified) on 31 August, 2011 - 14:47

"Kids should be allowed to have their bed the way they want. If they turn out to be OCD about it later, then fine. If not, not. But a crushing insistence on making it every morning is just a wrong-headed way of trying to instill self-discipline."

we should look in the language we use for a source of our misguided ideas, making yr bed every morning (as opposed to at night before u sleep) b/c someone to you too (parents) is like the definition of an obsessive compulsive disorder, we just force ourselves to forget the part about where it comes from.

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