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How a Bag of Nickels Saved My Mother's Sanity

Dana Troullier

One of my best memories of childhood was our annual vacation to Noah's Ark Water Park in Wisconsin Dells. Every August my family, plus my aunts, uncles and cousins, would pile into our cars and stay in a hotel for a few days to enjoy the city. Invariably, the three-hour drive from Manitowoc to Wisconsin Dells was the worst part of the trip. My siblings, cousins, and I constantly asked, "Are we there yet?" as we poked at each other and fought. My mother would threaten to punish us but the fighting always continued. Of course, when we arrived we all wanted money for the arcade games or the various shops nearby. What a bunch of rotten kids we were!

After a few years of these dreadful car rides Mom had a brilliant idea. Mom gave each of my siblings, cousins, and me a sandwich bag full of nickels, about \$5 dollars worth, which we could keep so long as we didn't whine, fight, fuss or ask "Are we there yet?" However, if we did any of the aforementioned things, we lost nickels from our bags. It worked beautifully. We concentrated so hard on keeping all of the nickels that we didn't fight. Mom uses this trick today with my younger siblings and cousins but, due to inflation, the bag is filled with quarters.