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# THE PENIS PROBLEM

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It was Thursday. There is nothing remarkable about Thursday in itself other than this one was a government payday. The bank was busy. Which is where I was - stuck in a line up, my just turned three year old in tow. Slowly we made our way through the cattle lines.

About twenty minutes into the wait but only half way through the line, my son was getting restless and bumped into the woman well dressed in front of us. She turned, revealing a pleasant though fiftyish face.

"I,m so sorry," I apologized looking sincerely into her eyes, and I was. "It is had for the little guy to stay still for this long."

"I know," she replied, "every second Thursday is busy in this bank." Then she said to my son, "what a lovely boy you are. You have such beautiful big brown eyes and such long lashes. You will surely be a lady killer when you grow up."

Little Pauly beamed up at her, his little face in the most angelic of smiles. "I have a penis and you can't have one 'cause you're a girl," he announced, loudly enough for half the bank to hear.

A dozen or so people turned to glare at us standing there as the woman quickly turned away. I stood there feeling naked and shocked for a moment. "I,m sorry, I'm so sorry," I apologized to the air taking Pauly by the hand and dragging him from the bank, momentarily forgetting my need to make a withdrawal. "Oh God, Pauly, how could you?" I reprimanded him as we fled the bank, the multitude of eyes staring into our backs.

We rarely talk about the most embarrassing moments of our lives and when we do, it is usually as a joke. We try to laugh off our embarrassment, our fear, our shame. I was sure this was one. Someday, I prayed, I would laugh about this but at that moment, I wanted to crawl under a planter in the outer all and forget what had just happened. I sat for a moment to relax and to let the desire to strangle that small and beautiful creature abate.

People were coming out of the bank now, some accusing and others snickering in my direction. Pauly was unfazed by the experience, mow fishing in the chutes of the candy machines nearby, trying to figure out how to get the goodies out with no money to put in.

I suppose the problem is not that uncommon. There comes a time in every young man's life when inevitably, the diaper must come off and the child must learn to relieve himself in a more adult manner. All of a sudden there it is - free and accessible - one brand new penis. For a short period of time, it becomes the center of that small person,s even smaller universe. For the parent, it becomes a major source of embarrassment.

This is of course was not to be Pauly's last brush with death at his mother's hands for similar crimes of the mouth. No amount of dissuading him could convince him so stop telling occasional woman that they couldn't have a penis. He then began discussing the subject with various men.

It was common to hear him yell across a corridor, "that man is taking his penis to the store to buy somethin'. Mommy, can we have somethin' too?" And I would be so tempted to give him somethin' as I dragged him away down the concourse. Or, "I'm going to bed now, and taking my penis with me." He would tell an evening guest, usually someone from the church dropping by for tea.

He would tell me on occasion, "when I grow up, my penis will get big like the man from the bakery. He was in the bathroom with me. His penis was very big and he said it was because he was a big boy."

He went through stages of undress. There were days I could not keep his clothes on his back. I would walk into the living room to find him stark naked with his little member at full mast. "Look what my penis is doing now, Mommy," he would exclaim with pride. "Please put your clothes on honey," I would tell him, "it is a rainy day - you're going to catch cold."

I would tell him this even if the sun were shining though I wanted to scream, "I find you such an offensive, embarrassing creature and I am sick of looking at your penis!" But as parents, we have the responsibility not to give our children complexes.