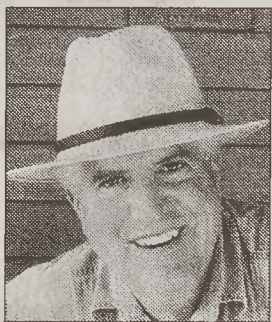


## SPORTS

# The best things in life are worth crying for

### OFF THE PORCH



**DICK JONES**  
Outdoor Columnist

The very best things in life are intangible. Things we own bring us short term happiness but really don't mean anything in our lives. Money is only something we can spend on things. It's true that we can give money away but giving the money doesn't bring us joy, the willingness to give it away is the source of the pleasure. It's relationships that make our brief stint here on Earth worth the trouble. My oldest grandson, Phoenix, has been one of my best friends from the beginning. Our relationship has sometimes been a source of frustration especially during the "terrible twos". I resolved not to spoil my grandchildren and I haven't. We do things together, but I don't let them get away with bad behavior. Phoenix was the first, and I learned a lot from him. When Phoenix was three, he was riding in a kid seat on the back of

my bicycle on the New River Trail. The New River Trail is a 54-mile long bike and walking trail that begins in Galax, Va. and ends in Fries, Va. Phoenix and I had covered about 10 miles out and were a couple of miles into the return trip to the truck. He was tired and began to complain. As is often the case with three-year-olds, he began to cry. I patiently tried to explain that crying wouldn't do any good. All we could do was peddle back to the truck and his complaining and crying wouldn't help us get there faster. All who've spent time with a three year old know how that didn't work. I then explained that, since he felt crying would help, I would join him and I began to cry. It wasn't real crying, it was the fake crying kids learn to use when they want something. I had more experience, though, and I cried louder than him with a pitiful snubbing inhale. Within a minute, he asked me to stop crying. I slowly cut the crying off and went back to the business of peddling us back the remaining seven or eight miles. Occasionally, he would begin to whimper and I would start crying. He would stop whimpering and ask me to not cry. I learned a lesson that day. When my grandkids cry over something they want, I cry with them.

To have a relationship with your kids and grandkids, you have to spend one on one time with them. Phoenix and I have fished, shot, kayaked, hunted, camped, traveled, snorkeled, mined gems, and biked together. In the process, I learned things about him and he learned about me. On a "School is Out Celebration" trip a few years ago, he began the trip by using his knowledge of me to push my buttons. I'm not going to tell you what this entails, because you might decide to use the information against me later, but he began the trip by pushing my buttons. It was clear he intended to use his new found power for the duration of the trip. You can't punish a child for pushing your buttons provided they know how hard to push and Phoenix was doing a pretty good job of knowing the limit. I devised a plan and worked it. I explained that I knew he was pushing my buttons; he innocently proclaimed he had no idea what I was talking about. I explained that, since I was the driver, I would get to chose where we would eat but if he could manage to not push my buttons between meals, he could choose. He chose the restaurant for every meal of the whole three-day trip. You couldn't ask for a better kid. Since

that time, this is our standard traveling procedure. If I especially want to eat at a specific restaurant, I ask and my gracious grandson almost always yields. When Phoenix was eight, I got him a shotgun and he started shooting; he showed real promise. At some point, he shot a gun that was too big and the recoil hurt him. He stopped shooting the shotgun. I backed off and didn't push. It took three years to get him back on the gun. It was hard not to push too hard, but I knew he had to want to shoot to enjoy it and if he didn't enjoy it, he'd never be a good shooter. Eventually, he asked to shoot again and he's doing fine now. What I'm saying here isn't that I'm a great grandparent or that I can tell you how to deal with your kids and grandkids. What I'm saying is they benefit from you being consistent, patient, and fair with them and they will most likely make the right decision if you set a good example. If I'd rushed Phoenix when he quit shooting shotgun, I might have turned him off it for good. It had to be something he wanted. This week, a tree fell across the driveway and Phoenix helped me clear up the mess. He volunteered to help and he worked hard in

### SHOCKED

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vis and Deon Thompson. The two have since announced they will be attending UCLA in the fall where they will sit out a year per NCAA rules. "It hurts because I lost two kids that I really enjoyed [and] it hurts because we lost two kids who were really going to be important to our program," Williams said. "I had also decided not to recruit a big man in the class behind them because I didn't want to over-recruit, so we lost two guys out of that class and we didn't have anybody behind them. So I haven't dealt with it very well personally or for our program." So just how wounded is Williams about the Wears decision? When a reporter started to ask a third straight question about the twins at the start of the press conference, Williams apologized for interrupting but had said he had enough. "Let's talk about the players in our program," Williams said. "It's kind of like in a game when you're mad at people that don't show up, you better be happy about

the ones that do show up. I apologize for cutting you off but that's all I'm talking about that." But Williams is still waiting for one of those players in his program to arrive. Justin Knox, a 6-9, 240-pound transfer from Alabama, will not join the Tar Heels until he finishes his undergraduate requirements in Tuscaloosa, Ala., this summer. The experienced big man — 6.3 points, 3.7 rebounds in 19.8 minutes last season — is expected to help fill the void left by the Wears' departure. "He has an opportunity to be extremely important and not just be a guy standing over there clapping, so I don't see any negatives myself," Williams said. Williams said immediately after he found out the Wears would be transferring, the entire UNC coaching staff began trying to find some players to fill out the frontcourt. He said they identified six or seven possible players but were fortunate to land Knox in the end. "He's a wonderful kid," Williams said. "He has experience, he has size and he's played in big arenas and in big games. We have a tremendous need."

**'It hurts because we lost two kids who were really going to be important to our program.'**

— Roy Williams  
UNC head coach

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