

# WHAT WAS MY CHILDHOOD LIKE?

Season 2, episode 11

I was born in the 1980s in northern Minnesota. Life was different when I was young.

When I was young I spent a lot of time outside. It didn't matter what the temperature was. My siblings and I were outside in the summer and we were outside in the winter. In the winter we built snowmen. Sometimes there were ten or more snowmen in the yard. When there was a lot of snow, and there always was a lot of snow in northern Minnesota when I was young, we built forts. We made two forts, one on each side of the driveway, and we would throw snowballs at each other.

Another favorite activity was sledding. There were a lot of places to go sledding and it was always fun. We would go so fast down the hills. We would push up the snow and make jumps. I didn't like the jumps as much because it hurt to fall. After sledding, we would go home and my mom would make hot chocolate. She warmed the milk on the stove for the hot chocolate and it took a long time. By the time the hot chocolate was ready to drink, we were already warmed up, but it still tasted really good!

In the summer I spent a lot of time outside. I liked helping my mom in the garden. We had sweet corn, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, raspberries and cherries. I used to pick carrots right out of the garden and wash them off with water from the hose for an afternoon snack. We had a very big raspberry patch and I would hide in it and eat so many raspberries. Raspberries are still my favorite fruit.

When I was very little, I rode a tricycle around the yard. We had a good driveway and my siblings and I would imagine that we lived in a big city and there was a lot of traffic. We would drive like crazy people on our tricycles and bicycles and someone always got hurt, but we would put on a bandaid and keep going!

In the summer evenings, we often rode bikes as a family. My dad would take us kids on a bike ride around the neighborhood. He had a special seat for little kids on his bike. I don't remember riding in the seat, but I remember my siblings on the kids' seat while I rode my red bike with its blue and white basket.

Sometimes I rode with my sister on her bike. That practice was not safe. Once my sandal got caught in the wheel spokes. My whole ankle quickly got stuck in the wheel. My sister and I fell. My sister ran to the house for my dad. He cut the spokes to free my foot. I was crying a lot. I twisted my ankle and I hurt my knee and elbow. I didn't ever ride on my sister's bike after that.

I also spent time outside with my friends. There were a lot of kids on my street and we got together all the time. We rode bikes and played hide and seek and other children's games. One of my friends had a little play house in her yard. During the summer, the girls in the neighborhood would play "school" in the little house. One of us was the "teacher" and she would teach basic concepts like colors, shapes, and numbers. We did practice sheets in the pretend school. We were smart girls, maybe because of our pretend "summer school".

I also spent time indoors. I played board games like Chutes and Ladders or my favorite, Trouble, with the special bubble you had to push to move the die inside. I played card games like Uno and Go Fish.

In addition to board games, my sibling and I played hide and seek a lot. There were many places to hide in the house. We also played house or store. I liked to pretend to be a dog and I would crawl around the house barking.

I shared a room with my sister Miriam until I left home at the age of 18. Miriam and I played with dolls. We had Barbie dolls and some small dolls called Glamor Gals. We made clothes for our dolls with tissues, tape, and deflated balloons. When I was little I really wanted a Ken doll to play with the Barbie dolls, but I never got one.

Miriam and I did not always get along well. We were very different people and we fought a lot growing up. We fought over the dolls or about who would sleep on top the top bunk and who would sleep on the bottom bunk. Later we fought over having privacy in the bedroom or about the music we wanted to listen to.

I didn't just play with my sister, I also played with my brothers. My brothers and I played with cars. We built cities of blocks with streets for the cars. The cars had personalities and families. Sometimes Godzilla would destroy the city and attack the cars. I didn't like when Godzilla attacked the city because he would always destroy my house first.

My brothers and I also played with Lego a lot. I liked to build houses and make up stories for the Lego people. My brothers liked to build cars and make them crash into the houses and people. Sometimes it was hard to play with my brothers.

As a child I thought my two older sisters were super cool. They had long hair, while I always had short hair. They had a big bedroom in the attic and I felt so special when they invited me to their bedroom. Sometimes my sisters would bring their radio to my room. They played music by the Bangles, Madonna, and Michael Jackson and we would dance and jump on the beds.

My mom didn't work when I was a kid, she stayed at home to take care of her children (my parents had ten kids total). My mom was a wonderful mom. She

prepared delicious meals, made sure we always had clean clothes, and take us where we needed to be. When I was very young, my mom read to me. We had a lot of books and she read to me every day. When I could read on my own, I read to my younger siblings to help out my mom and because I just really liked to read.

I liked reading with my mom, but my favorite activity with my mom was baking. We would make cookies, pies, bread, and rolls. My mom still makes the best rolls.

My dad worked as an electrical engineer. I didn't do much with him during the week, but I have good memories of the weekends. My dad prepared dinner on Saturdays. He made pancakes with eggs and sausage or bacon. He would play music from the 50s and 60s and we danced in the living room. On Sundays my dad made popcorn on the stove. Later we would eat the popcorn and watch a nature program on TV. Sometimes he made caramel popcorn. It was, and still is, the best!

When I was a child I collected teddy bears. I had a lot of stuffed animals, but the bears were my favorite. My bear collection continued for years. I still collected teddy bears when I was in high school. I received teddy bears for my birthday and Christmas.

As a child I loved Christmas. It was my favorite holiday. I liked decorating the tree a lot. My dad would cut a tree in the woods. Now I see pictures and the Christmas trees seem so small, but when I was a child they seemed big and perfect. My mom would unpack and put hooks on the ornaments and my siblings and I hung them on the tree. There were always sections with a lot of ornaments. I think my mom fixed those sections when we weren't looking.

Christmas was always chaotic. We received a lot of presents from my grandparents and there were a lot of wrapped boxes under the tree. After opening the boxes, there was a lot of wrapping paper. My mom liked to save the pretty paper to use again.

I have other childhood memories of traveling and visiting family. I have nice childhood memories. I am grateful for my parents, siblings, and friends that helped me form these memories. Now I work to create nice memories for my children.

And you? What were you like as a child? What did you do outside? Who did you play with? What did you play? What memories do you have? What was your childhood like?



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