Opinion



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by Christian Mocek

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"Where's voting at?" my son asked as we got into the car to drive to the early voting center.

"We are going there now," I said, probably for the fifth time.

Toddlers have a way of surprising themselves with their own coherence. As if their brain finally managed to piece together a series of words that makes sense to other people, so they say it as much as possible.

"Where's voting at?" he said again, and again, and, well, you know. He's already developed the Midwestern habit of adding prepositions to the end of sentences.

"We're almost there," I responded along with, "It's around this corner. … We're in the parking lot. … It's inside this building. … I just need to sign this paper. … I'm voting right now!"

On our way out of the building after voting, my son, who I'm attempting to raise into an intelligent human being, asked, "Where's voting at?"

"Sweetheart, we just …"

I stopped myself. It was the perfect fall day. The ones that come only a few days a year before all the leaves fall off the trees. Everything was golden and the temperature — a cool 55 degrees — was refreshing.

I took a deep breath, and then said, "You probably have a point." I placed the "I just voted" sticker on his coat and picked him up to walk across the parking lot.

When we arrived home, a Democratic Party volunteer was knocking on our front door. He was young, bright-eyed, and stylishly dressed — kind of like he just popped out of an Apple Store. The quintessential young Democrat.

He came over to my car when he saw me pull up, freshly fallen leaves crunching under his leather boots.

"You just voted!" he said after seeing the sticker on my coat, "Thank you!"

"You want something warm to drink?" I responded. "I'm sure you have a full day."

"No thank you, I have 50 more houses to go," He said excitedly as he started to walk down the street, "I hope I get to them all!"

After I unbuckled my son from his car seat, I turned and shouted down the street, "Thank you for doing this!"

"I'm glad to," he shouted back.

I then turned to my son and said, "I think he's your answer."

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While it's true that decisions are made at the ballot box, there's a lot more to voting than showing up to vote. That's a big part — don't get me wrong. But no matter the outcome, the real fight is before, during, and after the election.

My son, the wise toddler, whose hair was in pigtails when we voted, had a point.

Where's voting at? Well, it's a lot of places, of course.

It's in getting your family ready to head to ballot box, sometimes, like in my case, succumbing to your son's demands to put his hair in pigtails so he looks like his mom.

It's in learning the issues before you go and understanding where the candidates stand.

It's in the long day of the trendy Democratic Party canvasser, knocking on doors and sharing with passion why showing up to vote is so important.

It's in the fresh fall days, the crunchy leaves, and in the fight for what you believe in.

The election's over. In one sense I'm sad to see it go. I've been heartbroken for the two years since President Donald Trump was elected.

That night, this date, two years ago, my wife and I were celebrating our second wedding anniversary. We were sharing a glass of wine, reminiscing on our wedding day that took place two years prior, and anxiously awaiting the news of our first female president. That glass of wine turned into a couple as the night dragged on; giving us news we never expected to hear.

I'm sad to see it go because this election brought the kind of fervor and intensity the progressive cause should have had two years ago. But where's voting at? It's in continuing that far beyond the election. It's in working really hard for a better world, a more inclusive world, and for a country that isn't scared of those searching for a better life.

None of that should stop on Tuesday. In fact, it should be a new beginning. That's why in another sense, I'm very happy to see this election over. No more political ads spamming TVs and my beloved Spotify account.

But more importantly, a renewed chance to continue fighting for what I believe in.

A fight will never and should never stop. I'm just happy I can have my son with me, teaching me lessons — both about where voting truly is and how to put hair in pigtails.

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