

One, Two, Two

Written by Sue Wilkinson

It was somewhere amongst the kindergarten pasting shapes and coloured blocks that I learnt how to count. It seemed a natural thing, one, then two, then three...and so on. So, why then is it that somehow there are so many people who are just unable to grasp the concept of three following the number two? Am I making any sense?

Henry was my first pregnancy. When he died we (dear sweet husband and I) made the decision to have another child. Now let's make it simple – one plus one equals two – RIGHT? To some, that is obviously was not the sum total. To compound the problem I went ahead and had another baby (YAY) Now, when Grace arrived just recently she was welcomed with the same open arms and joy from family and friends, but somehow, and we all know what I'm about to say here – One plus one plus one still somehow only equalled two! How is that? Einstein would never have split the atom if he couldn't get past the basics! Ok, so he was slightly (but only just) smarter than the rest of us, but still...

I threatened my mother in law with a severe and brutal death if she continued to not count Henry in the long list of grandchildren. The axe I held over her head was an obvious sign that I wasn't kidding. But why should I have to continually ask that he be included? Friends popped over the other night and one said "Well, how does it feel to be the mother of two?" I should have simply replied "I don't know, it seems like ages ago I only had two..." But instead I made the point even more apparent when I simply bit back "THREE"

It's a different story (well sometimes not) when strangers ask how many children I have. I of course say three and hope that they don't ask any more questions. To be totally honest I have almost had enough of watching the faces drain from a smile into a sympathetic stupor. Ok, so I'm a little jaded, but I find it hard sometimes to spell out the details of something so very painful to someone I will never meet again, and who, by interest only is just trying to be friendly.

A few months ago on the weekend of the Cherubs get together I was waiting for Danielle at the local train station. A young woman wheeling a pram saw me with a big belly and doing my best to control Mabel's pusher on the station platform. She asked me the 'How many' question and in a split second I thought I'd try out saying two. Well, not a good idea. I felt sick. I felt guilty. It was completely wrong for me. I then spent the next few minutes 'apologising' to Henry (no not out loud – as if I need any further help in looking like a nut bag)

I've spoken to lots of mum's and we all handle it differently. Some find it too hard to tell strangers the correct number in fear of further questions, others jump at the chance to talk about ALL of their kids, and there's me – sometimes in the middle, sometimes upfront,

but always thankful of those early learning years - happy enough to be able to count to three. Next job – the atom.