

Knit One, Rest Two

by Jennie Gryczka

When I was pregnant with my daughter, my son was an active two and a half year old. While I desperately needed him to nap, he had other plans. Many days we would lie in bed, me begging for rest, while he jumped and romped about me. We still had our designated "quite time", but it was clear that my days of a leisurely two-hour mid-day break were nearly over. It was then that I started a ritual of afternoon "tea and knitting" time. At the point in the afternoon where one more request for play, food or attention was more than I could handle, I would simply announce - "It's time for my tea and knitting now, and when I am through, I will (fill in the blank with the endless litany of requests at hand)."

This daily ritual became a comfort to us both, it freed him up to enjoy play on his own, while knowing that I would be sitting in the same position for more than five minutes. Somehow both the structure and process of creation fulfilled us both. My son began enjoying the product of my creation. He became interested in my progress and was clearly excited by my ability to create, I made him a hat (my first knitting project that never quite fit, but I can't stand the idea of unraveling and re-knitting), we made bean bags together, I knit long "ropes" for his play, blankets for his baby, scarves for dolls or relatives, the beauty or functionality of the project really didn't matter to him or to me. Occasionally he would ask to be involved and I would offer the ball or yarn that he could hold and feed to me, or we would knit a few stitches together. We enjoyed the process together and both took pride in the fruits of our labor.

Ultimately though, I believe that it was the meditative quality of the process that benefited us both. So much so for my son that he began requesting that I sit outside his door during bedtime and knit. It was also an activity that we could easily turn to in the time after my daughter was born, resting in the comfort of ritual. We could both count on a time during the day to sit and be relatively quiet while repeating a simple process over and over. Breath, stitch, breath, stitch, breath, stitch, what a relief to us both.

© Jennie Gryczka Spring 2008
For Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH