

Pushing buttons

There's was a time, not too long ago, when I announced to the world my daughter had learned how to PUSH MY BUTTONS!

Well, she always knew how to pull on my heartstrings. And she has shown her father's knack for simultaneously frustrating me while making me laugh. But it was just too funny when she learned to literally push buttons!

It started with the cordless phone. My baby Melise figured out that the big button, when pushed, made the dial tone sound. One day I let her sit in my lap and push that button over and over to her heart's content . . . until I heard "Hello?" coming from the phone. Her daddy had timed his call just right for Melise to answer without the phone ever ringing! I barely managed to pry it away from her before she hung up on him.

Next was the label making machine that I had left on the coffee table. Melise found it and turned it on. Then she hit the "Feed" button—presumably by accident—which caused the machine to make a lovely whirring noise and spit out some label. I caught her at that moment and turned off the machine, but let her continue to play with the buttons.

My husband Roy asked why I didn't take it away. I said, "It's off. She's harmless." Those were famous last words as Melise hit the power button and feed button again in sequence! She was just so delighted in the whirr of the new label printing that it broke my heart a little to take it away.

Then, the buttons that probably provided the greatest glee for Melise—the T.V. buttons. If it weren't for Melise I would likely have forgotten that there are buttons on the front of the T.V. Unless we lose the remote, how often do any of us actually touch the television set?

Well, Melise found their secret! She learned the colorful screen can turn black or static at the

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merest touch of her little pointer finger. And the best part of all was the power she wielded over Mommy and Daddy, especially if she hit the button when they seemed most engrossed with the tube! In a flash, one of us would be by her side, negotiating release of the buttons with full awareness the wrong move could turn giggles to tears! Ah, the drama!

Dear readers, you are probably wondering at this point if my daughter had any normal, infant toys. Of course she had many toys and some even had buttons! There was the infamous moon rattle that played “Twinkle, twinkle” when pressed.

There was an electronic piano that played five notes (Why not a full octave? The question will haunt me to my grave!). There was a pretend cell phone that she was given after she killed my cell phone with drool. It would ring and beep and she would even hold it to her ear and pretend to talk!

But even infants know their toys are just colorful imitations of the real things. That is why the timeless struggle of parents to protect their delicate possessions from their children—and protect the children from them—will always persist. Always.