

Mitch and Ned

I never wanted to have children of my own. I told my mother this when I was about twenty years of age and she looked stunned and worried. Perhaps because she had a home and souls to nurture and maintain throughout her life, she assumed everyone wants that same path of fulfillment. A home is a tough thing to maintain and children and spouses are tougher still. I have great admiration for homemakers and my mom. I did not think I'd have admiration for children.

Strange my initial career path was to potentially teach children. Other people's children are delightful and at the time I was in college and looking at a career, it was advantageous to be a male in the elementary education field. I really wanted to be an art teacher, but it was more practical to get a degree in general education. Student teaching and the stress of surviving that experience proved three lessons for me. First, at that time, I did not have the stamina or the psychological patience to educate other people's children. Secondly, I was afraid I would resent myself if I didn't pursue more cosmopolitan interests. Thirdly, I had no idea what my true cosmopolitan interests were, but I knew procreating or teaching those others procreated was not it. Boy how I have evolved.

Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast and I was safely on the west coast of America when I decided to adopt Mitch. I wanted to take in one of those black babies I saw on the news and television. My heart went out to images of suffering and hunger. Labor Day was a sad time for me, as my mother's birthday always fell around its arrival and in 2005, the country and humanity seemed belabored. Maybe I was ready to be a parent. Perhaps that was most cosmopolitan interest I could have developed at that stage of my life. I had a selfish need to open my apartment and my heart. I had less desire to teach.

Mitch is a growing treasure. He is much like his father in that he is lazy when he shouldn't be, enjoys the slower pace of life and is artistic. I've seen him make a mess in the bathroom with no desire to clean up after himself. I see him thank me for the little things in life, as I did with my own parents, but he is self-contained and sporadically dissident. He has a charming nature and guests always enjoy his company. He speaks when he has something to say. He didn't say much when Ned arrived but opened him into his life.

Ned, like his brother, is a beautiful little black male. He is a born teacher and both Mitch and I get tutored daily. Ned is everything I was not when I was a child and most things that Mitch is not. He is athletic and so confident. He fights with his brother, takes things without asking. He misses curfew and this year, had an incident with the house, that I'd rather not mention. I had to recall the teachings of my own mother, as she demonstrated a home and its occupants can be tough to maintain.

Ned and Mitch are the two students I would never have been lucky to have in any classroom. They give me pride when I turn on the news and see the worst of society being shown by the media. They fulfill me when a career does not. They keep me grounded when I think I should be doing something more exciting on a weekend. They motivate me to want to be less selfish and work towards giving them the kind of home I had from my mom and dad and want for them. They make me richer and warmer and kinder. Had my mom lived to see them, meet them and love them, she would have been stunned and worried again. She thought cats just give you fleas.