



M.W. Story 11

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## Root Cause Analysis

My middle child, Jogi, has entered the “Why?” phase. Yup. You’re nodding your head because you know exactly what I mean. While it can be overwhelming, it’s also eye-opening and inspiring. He is *truly* trying to understand a person, situation, or thing and his curiosity and intention are something to be celebrated! It reminds me of my days in industrial engineering class studying Root Cause Analysis and the Fish Bone Diagram. Sounds fancy, right? But really, it’s just asking “Why?” repeatedly to get to the root of a problem. Basically a 3-year-old’s logic spun with fancy professional wording. The tool is used to solve issues by drilling down to diagnose the root of the problem instead of the surface level issues.

Lately when the kids start acting out we often conduct a mini-root cause analysis. While it might seem that the toy they are fighting over is the culprit, sometimes it goes deeper. I will point out that they aren’t acting quite like their usual selves. “Jogi, usually you are so good at sharing.” We try to figure out if perhaps hunger is the problem. If not hunger, maybe sleep? Or perhaps they don’t feel 100% - fighting off a virus? And sometimes, it’s just that they need to feel understood. Simple as that. I’ll admit I don’t always have the time (or patience!) to figure out the root cause, but if it can prevent a full-fledged meltdown, then it’s worth getting down to their level, on one knee, and calmly talking through the problem. Plus, sometimes it simply works as a diversion tactic. The kids start playing detective and forget what they were actually fighting about. Win either way!