

## **The Washcloth and the Flute or The Bad Granny** by Nancy Dorrier

One night, when I'm babysitting my wonderful and perfect grandchildren, Davis, age 6, says as he is going to bed, "Get me a warm washcloth... No, that one is too cool. Get more warm water on it." I go back to do that, put it on his forehead, and then he wants to put it next to his bed in a cardboard box of books on the floor.

That's when I've had it. It's like he's pushing me to do one more thing for him, and I need to get downstairs to feed, medicate, and bathe 1-1/2 year old William. It's coming up on 8:30. I grab Davis strongly and all but jerk him to put him up on his bed from down on the floor where he was arranging his box to put the washcloth in.

"That won't work!" I say. And he says in an imploring voice, with his hands open in a beseeching gesture, "I am just trying to talk to you about it."

Which is all that he was doing, no matter that it wasn't going to work.

I could have gone downstairs and gotten a plate and put it on the floor and put the washcloth there. I could have folded up a towel and put it on the floor and put the washcloth on it. I could have done nothing but listen to his idea thoroughly and to why he wanted the washcloth.

I am quick to say "no" when I know the ultimate answer is no, and then I say yes many times and then think, am I ....

Yes to the marshmallow creatures. Yes to the cooking experiments. Yes to collecting the centipedes. Yes to sitting ... cream store and playing on the bench. Yes to climbing the tree.

No to one more dinosaur movie. No, absolutely no. No conversation.

No to sleeping with me. You are too wiggly.

I am all steamed up about one more thing.

"I just want to *talk* to you about it."

A few days later I'm driving home from Howren's Music with two more perfect grandchildren. Alexander uses his flute to hit his brother as I am driving. I pull over to deal with it. I am fierce with Alexander, 3. "No hitting! No throwing the flute!"

But what about Phillip, 6, continually interrupting while Alexander is telling a story? What is a little boy to do? What about hearing *that* all the way out?

I get steamed up when I don't get my way about things moving along peacefully and on schedule, and what for? My grandchildren live in a world of fantasy, wet washcloths and unabashed possibility.

“I just want to talk to you about it.”

Is it possible that others can come to a conclusion themselves about whether things will work or not? Maybe they will have a better idea, even a brilliant idea if I let go of “my way” and take the time to really listen.