

My parents are what you would call hippies, in that they would rather spend the weekend at a Phish show than say, a dinner party. My mom has always been incredibly passionate about live music and the culture that surrounds it, the experience of twenty minute songs, hula hoops and glow sticks. My parents have always tried to include my brother and I in this, and every summer they've taken me to a music festival in Scranton, Pennsylvania called the Peach Festival. It's mostly that same jam band/hippie scene and while it was fun, I always felt kind of removed from it. At this age, I always wanted to hate the things my parents loved, so I sort of resented going to the Peach Festival.

In order to easily access the stages and food stands and everything else at the festival, you had to camp on hills and walk down every day. Camping has never been something my family was into, but if it involved live music, we did it. If you drove to the festival, there was a parking lot where you would have to leave the car and take a small, hay filled, open shuttle with several other people to the camping site, where you'd set up your tent and walk down to the stages. Finding a place to set up is always the worst part, navigating through all of the drugged out wooks and trying to find a spot farthest from those who will blast their own music all night.

It was the first day of the festival, and as we'd parked our car and went to find a shuttle, we were hit with torrential downpour. Unbelievable rain, soaking us and everything we were carrying as we sprinted to find some sort of cover. We managed to find a shuttle, but it could only take us so far and it was hard to see spots to set up on through the rain. My brother and dad decided to split off and find a spot, while my mom and I waited with our soaked clothes and tent. After a very freezing thirty or so minutes in the rain, my brother and dad returned and told us that we'd had a spot to set up camp. We walked all the way to the spot, fairly high up on one of the hills, and set up our tent and belongings inside. The rain had slowed down a bit, and we decided that we may as well check out the festival and try to enjoy the rest of our day. We saw one or two shows, and by that point the rain hadn't gotten much better, so we figured we may as well return to the tent and try to get some sleep. When we returned to our camp, however, the tent was floating on about two inches of water, and all of our belongings inside were completely drenched. My mother instantly started to panic, questioning how we were going to get through the night when it was so cold and wet. My dad, too, didn't want us to sleep in the freezing tent and insisted we find someplace else to go. But considering we wouldn't be able to get another shuttle and it was getting very late, Eli and I resisted and said that we'd be just fine sleeping in the tent, and that it wouldn't be too bad. My dad had disappeared at this point for whatever reason, and my mom was really starting to panic. Realizing we actually wanted to stay at the festival, Eli and I stayed resilient and refused to leave, insisting that we'd be just fine.

Eventually, my dad returned and said that we would need to stay inside somewhere that night. With no shuttle, we walked all the way to the parking lot to the car, and drove to the closest hotel. When we returned to the Peach festival the next morning, the sun was shining and the ground was slowly drying. We went back to our campsite to hang up our tent and clothes on trees, and went down to the stages to watch some shows. When we got back, our tent was completely dry and we really enjoyed the last two days of our trip.

Through all of this, I realized how important it can be to make the most of the situations you're in, and to not take advantage of the experiences your parents give you. I didn't want to go on this trip, and resented my parents for making me go, but by the end I realized how much I truly did enjoy it and how lucky I was to be able to go. And though sleeping in the tent that night probably would've been a nightmare, my brother and I were able to see that things could always be worse, and you have to make the most of the situation you're in. I think my childhood was somewhat unique in our trips and ideas of vacation, but I would never have wanted to spend them anywhere else.