

## Playing and toys



### Shirley Loo : Playing and toys

Child, in my memory, you rarely asked me to buy toys during your childhood. I wonder if this has anything to do with that time when I took you away from home to "Fun World."

Do you still remember standing in front of that plush toy? I made up many stories, saying that Ning Ning wanted to take them home, and they cried, saying "they didn't want to leave their own home." As a result, you believed it to be true and your heart softened, and you no longer pleaded with me to buy the plush toys. But it also let us know that plush toys were your favorite, so whenever we went on business trips, we would buy one to bring back for you as a souvenir. Do you still remember Dutchess, the cute brown pony?

Aside from plush toys, my memories related to toys are quite vague. I only remember singing games around the dining table after meals, playing with paper balls when you were recovering from a fever, and building sandcastles with you on the beach and catching crabs by the rocks, none of which involved spending money on toys.

I also remember setting a rule back then: no video games at home. You begged many times, asking why we couldn't buy an X Paradise to play at home, and my response was: "Once a week at your cousin's house is enough!" I wonder if this kind of "persistence" made you feel uncomfortable. I hope you understand the

good intentions of your mother, which was not wanting your thoughts and attention to be captured by video games. Seeing you recently bought a video game console with your husband and are enjoying it at home, you've finally found someone to play with, haven't you?

Recently, your father and I browsed through a toy store for a while, seeing a dazzling array of toys for adults, children, and babies. But we still firmly believe that no matter how fun toys are, they cannot replace the time parents spend playing with their children. After all, toys are not meant to "pass the time" for children, but are tools for creating happy moments between parents and children!

### **Ho Ying : Toys**

When I was young and went shopping with you, I would always see children crying and screaming at the entrance of toy stores, clamoring to buy toys. However, this situation rarely happened to me, not only because I had a deep affection for every toy but also because I had you to play with me, making every day feel new even if I was looking at the same toys. The stuffed toys at home would not only perform in stage plays but also interact with the "audience" (which was me), and they would go shopping with me and chat with "friends" on the street or in the stores.

The only toy I really wanted but never got was a video game console. Every weekend when I visited my cousin, he would always play different games with me, like basketball, ones set in the Warring States period, and racing games, which made me want to own one so I could play at home. But you would always say, "It's good enough to play with your cousin; we don't need to own one." Honestly, I really hoped that one day, when you came home from work, you would bring home a box of X Paradise, but that never happened.



Now that I've grown up, my husband and I finally bought one to take home. At first, I was very excited, thinking that I could play as soon as I got home. However, there were a few times when I was alone at home, I would play the video game for ten minutes and then do something else. It was then that I realized that what I enjoyed about playing was not the game itself, but having someone to play with. So, what's important is not the toy, but the interaction with family and friends.

Children of today's generation seem to only play games on mobile apps, and toys have gradually lost their status. Whether in restaurants or on the subway, the laughter of children is less heard, replaced by people of all ages looking down at their phones, the adults reading the news and the children playing video games. Most mobile games are single-player, merely interacting with a pre-programmed system, lacking the exchange between people. If possible, why not put down the phone, take out a stuffed animal or a robot, and bring the child back to that world full of fantasy and innocence!