



Kidisms: What They Say and What They Really Mean

Cathy Hamilton

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Did you ever notice that every utterance that comes out of a child's mouth ends with either a question mark or an exclamation point?

Since the dawn of time, the peanut gallery has been driving their parents crazy-occasionally entertaining them-with the same phrases uttered over and over and over again. Kids are never neutral on *any* subject. Nor are they always understood. That's why Cathy Hamilton has written *Kidisms*, a book of kidspeak translations for the parentally challenged. It explains timeless phrases used by all children.

Are we there yet?

Children under the age of 25 have no concept of time, especially while traveling cross-country without the calming effects of an Enya CD or Auto Bingo. The average kid will ask this question every five to ten miles unless his parents can explain the estimated time of arrival in terms he can comprehend:

Okay, pay attention. We left our house at the beginning of *Sesame Street* and we need to drive through *Blue's Clues*, *Barney*, *I Love Lucy*, and *The Gong Show*. We won't arrive at the hotel until the end of *Nick at Nite*. Got it?"

Other gems translated for the first time:

* I know you are, but what am I?

* Where do babies come from?

* He started it!

* But Dad already said I could!

Those who suspect that their mothers and fathers took closely guarded secret courses instructing them on "the significance of enigmatic utterances" won't be surprised to learn there are indeed clandestine languages for parents. And here are the books that decipher them.

Finally, Dad's ambiguous responses like "Go ask your mother," cryptic commands such as "Don't make me pull this car over," and the puzzling question, "Do you think I'm made of money?" are explained in comic detail in this handy reference. And Mom's warnings, "Don't you ever let me catch you doing that again!"(implying that you can *do* it, I just don't want to *find out* about it) and probes, "Is that what you're going to wear?" are made clear. (Translation of the last Momism: "I wouldn't be caught DEAD in that outfit.")

Dadism and *Momisms* compile these silly turns of phrases handed down from time immemorial. Interpreted for the new century, each one is translated with tongue-in-cheek humor and insight.

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