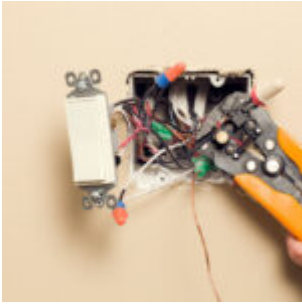


My Father the Engineer



My father was a mechanical engineer. On weekends he spent his time working on projects around the house. One day he might be fixing a bicycle. Another he might be re-wiring a lamp. One morning I found him in the bathroom with his head behind the toilet.

I was bored, so I sat down on the edge of the bathtub and commenced whining. I was going on about how the weather was yucky and there was nothing to do. My father cut me off in his usual fashion.

“Come closer,” he said. “I’ll teach you how to pull a toilet. That’ll give you something to do.”

Not to be one to question my father’s requests, I pulled up where I could see what he was doing. That was the day I learned that the toilet was not permanently hooked to the floor. I was amazed.

My father knew so much. If it had to do with anything mechanical, he knew about it. I even heard that when my family moved into the house I was born in, that my dad and a few of his buddies completely re-wired the house for the “modern” electricity of the time. One of the guys was an electrician, so

I guess it was alright to do. The thought of messing with anything electrical gave me the hee-bee gee-bees; and still does to this day.

There are other things I'm not so afraid of. I can read directions and put together most things. I spent one full Saturday, decades ago, putting together a barbecue grill. I never did that again. I decided it was much more efficient to pay someone else to do it. There are guys who work at those big box places who can put together 20 grills in a day. Not me. I barely got one done.

One time I saved the day by putting together the new bike rack that attached to the back of our car. My husband was grinding his teeth when he tried it so I volunteered to do it. We were supposed to be leaving for vacation that morning, so we didn't have time to fight over who was going to do it or take all morning getting it done.

To this day, when I face a project like that I tell people, "I'm putting on my mechanical engineer hat," and I go at the project.

Works pretty well most times.

Thanks for the genetics, Dad.

Cheers,