

# Rejuvenile Yourself

Remember that old Disney World commercial in which Mom and Dad dump the kids at Grandma's and head to the theme park by themselves? If you've ever been tempted to do that; genuinely enjoy Spongebob Squarepants; or have more toys than your kids do – you might be a “kidult.”

“Kidulthood” is all over our culture, from Peter Pan and the movie *Big* to the existence of an actual World Adult Kickball Association.

In *Rejuvenile: Kickball, Cartoons, Cupcakes, and the Reinvention of the American Grown Up*, author Christopher Noxon writes: “Twenty years ago, a grown man who built a skateboarding ramp in his backyard or filled his office with superhero paraphernalia would be viewed as soft-headed or not quite all there. Today, he's more likely to be celebrated as iconoclastic and hip.”

According to Noxon, rejuveniles – or kidults, whichever you prefer— aren't necessarily in an unhealthy state of arrested development. They're functional adults with careers, mortgages and families. In fact, they have disposable income to spare on toys and comic books, making them an attractive demographic to advertisers. Hence the revival of “vintage” everything: Converse shoes, the 50th anniversary of Barbie, that Kid Rock song about growing up in the 80s, etc. Even General Mills cereals and Pepsi products are reverting to their original packaging for a special promotion this summer.

Last month, the New Kids on the Block came to town on their reunion tour. According to local media coverage, the audience was mostly the group's original fans - women now in their 20s and 30s, some of whom brought their kids along for the fun. Carly Holmes, 27, was one of the first people in line for tickets and went to the show with two friends.

“I was transformed back into a giddy nine-year-old when they came on stage,” Carly says. “For two hours, I forgot about all of my worries and just let loose. I sang along, screamed ‘I love you Joey!’ at the top of my lungs, and cried happy tears as confetti dropped from the ceiling. It brought me back to the carefree Carly that I used to be. The next day, it was back to reality. Back to doing laundry, cleaning house and paying bills. Putting on their greatest hits helped get me through it, though.”

There's nothing wrong with indulging your childish side, especially when it helps you connect with the children in your life. Kids love it when you really get into playing with them, and they can tell when you're faking it. One summer, during a babysitting gig in which Nickelodeon was a daily feature, I got seriously addicted to the cartoon *The Fairly OddParents*. Suddenly, I had something to talk about with my little brother and sister, who were 7 and 6 at the time. I was 18. Now that they're preteens, I'm happy to sit and watch an episode of *iCarly* with them.

So bust out the Wii, take a turn down the water-slide, or watch *Yo Gabba Gabba* with the kids - or without them. Thanks to modern pop culture, there are hundreds of ways to stay young at heart. Oh, and check out [kickball.com](http://kickball.com) to join an adult league near you. 🎯

~STEPHANIE BARNARD

“It is never too late to have a happy childhood.”

~Tom Robbins

