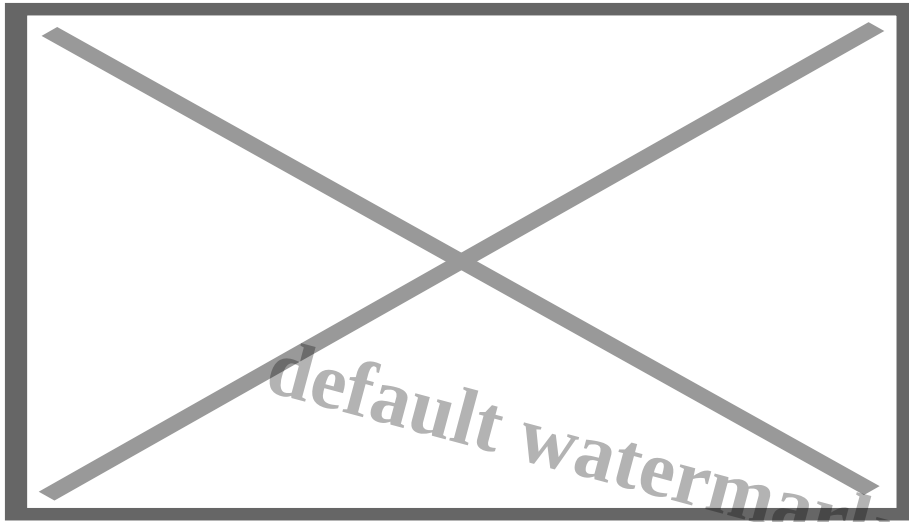


6 Ways Playing Halo Prepared Me to Be a Dad

Description



Parenting means trading this sticky grenade for poop. Basically the same thing!!

Ahhh, the days of playing Halo on Xbox! Most of my college days were spent slaying and being slayed in multiplayer battles with people all over the world. And let's not forget the epic Capture the Flag (CTF) sessions; loved those!

Well, first we used giant, 75ft Ethernet cables to connect multiple Xbox's before Xbox Live became an option, but either way, it was a blast.

Long gone are the days of playing video games, I don't even own a game system now, but there will always be a gamer inside of me. I'd be lying if I said I don't have the urge to play every now and then, but I'd much rather be doing something active as a family so we can set a good example for Avery. I know we'll allow her screen time and maybe we'll even get another game system to play together one day, but we won't let it become a habit.

Over the years of my Halo playing, homework was pushed aside more often than not, and I'm sure I even missed a few classes as a result of staying up too late to play. But that's not to say I have nothing to show for my countless hours of battling opponents across the globe and going back and forth with smack talk as we sat in the "waiting room" waiting on our game to load. Actually, in retrospect, Halo has taught me several things that have helped prepare me to become a parent.

1. **Hesitation can get you killed.** When battling an opponent in Halo, hesitating is a guaranteed way to get pistol-whipped in the back of the head or sniped from afar. This applies to parenting in that hesitation can result in lost opportunity. If your baby is starting to crawl, do you run and grab a camera, and if so, digital or video? You have to think fast, without hesitation, or you'll miss capture the "first" moment to relive years down the road.

2. **Teamwork is key.** When in battle, sometimes you need to leave your ego at the door and help your teammates instead of getting all of the kill points yourself. Or during an intense CTF session, you work with your team to decide who defends your flag while others seek to capture the opponent's. You never know when you'll need help from a teammate, so keeping them on your good side is vital. Going Mom and I have our differences, as do all couples (right?), but I know that by having her back and working with instead of against her makes things much easier for the both of us. As a SAHD, I am the guardian of our flag (home and Avery), while Kelley works to capture the flag (earn income). So far, we're both "winning".
3. **Experience yields success.** The first time I played Halo, I could hardly figure out how to move in a straight line, much less actually shoot something! But over time, maybe too much time, I was on the leaderboard when facing many opponents online and amongst my friends. Practice makes perfect, right? Same goes for parenting; you learn as you go. As every month passes, Kelley and I are just a little more experienced than the last and feel more confident in our parenting skills. Now we are better able to tell if Avery's cries are purely for attention or if she has a poopy diaper.
4. **Anticipation is education.** Educating yourself to know what your opponent will do before they do it is key to survival. If you know one of your enemies has a favorite hiding spot, you get there first and surprise attack him when he arrives. As a parent, it's important to create a daily routine so your baby learns to anticipate most of the daily activities. Also, when playing with your baby, they learn anticipation when you do things like gently blow in their face/ear, tickle them, or just make a surprise sound with exaggerated facial features.
5. **Winning and losing comes in streaks.** There would be some sessions where I was on a role and get several "Killtaculars" (it's a Halo thing if you didn't know), and then other days I'd just get killed the moment I respawned. Its life, it happens. As a stay-at-home parent, I have awesome days where Avery is a happy baby, we enjoy time together, and she takes the bottle without fussing. But then other days it seems as if she has a personal vendetta on daddy and screams at the tiniest indication I might set her down, and there's no way in hell she's having a bottle. Understanding I'll have these streaks allows me to move on and simply look forward to the next day without stressing over lost battles. Even though I sometimes still do
6. **Don't try to be Legendary.** In Halo, you can play the campaign on an Easy, Normal, Heroic, or Legendary setting. As you would guess, Legendary is extremely hard and even the weakest alien opponent can do major damage. In parenting, this equates to biting off more than you can chew. Our babies aren't asking us to be "Legendary", just give them love and attention and they will love you for it. As cool as it might be to do everything and then some, focus on what matters, your baby and family; other things can wait.

I'm extremely guilty of trying to be Legendary, which results in me getting killed (a.k.a overstressed) as a result. As parents, we are never done learning, but thanks to those years of playing Halo, I'm a little ahead of the game.

Can you attribute anything out of the ordinary to helping you prepare to be a parent? I'd love to hear your input in the comments below.

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