



BECOMING A TRUE GRANDMOTHER

By Carol Sill

Hello grandmother!
Welcome to one of life's most meaningful journeys.

A NEW LIFE FOR THE LATER YEARS

Your first grandchild is your initiator. Let this new person take you into a surprising love that you have never felt before, an enormous love which spontaneously pours through you.

They say the first grandchild receives a special dose of this love, and afterwards, the others who come later may not necessarily receive the same intensity. You might say that there is an initiation of the grandmother by means of the first grandchild. This new lovebond deepens and expands the family. In it, the love is different, the life is expanded.

But just here is where the difference between grandmothers occurs: some grandmothers don't take the next step. There is a promise which this initiation offers. It is a promise of remarkable self-development. Instead, they relive their own old child-rearing days, almost as if they were the mother of the grandchild only doing it "right" this time. This feeling is normal, but it is not the way the initiation works to take you beyond your normal frame. A new grandmother is to take the next step in inner development, not to relive her past but to go forward into a most enriching aspect of life, a new life for the later years. A life of love and wisdom.

NOT ONLY FOR GRANDMOTHERS

Becoming the kind of grandmother referred to here does not necessarily occur naturally when your child has a child. A woman grows into it. It can also happen to a woman when her child grows up. If she hasn't had any children, but reaches grandmother age and feeling, she can also choose to take this path, and there can be an initiation into it. However, a woman now has the other choice as well: continuing in life as it has been, with gradual age-appropriate transitions. In fact many grandmothers are also choosing this path, because our culture encourages this and we no longer lose vitality in later life.

I hesitate to offer this advice only to grandmothers, as many women are not at that stage, or never will be. I don't want to exclude them, but still must focus here on one aspect of life which is a reality for those of us who receive the blessing of the grandchild. It is a wisdom and a welcome we pass on to one another.



THE GRANDMOTHER LESSONS



NUMBER ONE

Let them come to you now

This means to let things be as they are, understanding them in their depth. Let events, people, ideas, and all come to you. Don't rush out seeking or drawing out or pushing. Be where you are. Establish that. Remain stable, steady, true.



NUMBER TWO

Encourage others

Let the younger people be your emissaries, arms, legs, feet, eyes, ears. Encourage them with your strength, your appreciation and your inner power. Young people need elders, they need to feel there is wisdom somewhere. They need to be acknowledged and given scope. It is not necessary for you to compete with them in their arena, instead mentor and encourage them. It is wrong to keep striving at this stage of life. Sit back and allow the fruits of life to ripen, harvest them and offer them. Do not compete against the young.



NUMBER THREE

Turn your direction toward the spirit life

Taking all the strength and wisdom of years of experience, turn your energies toward the inner life with great vigor. Leave the outer life to the young. It is the grandmother who nurtures the inner side of things. Why are so many devotees and church ladies older? Because that is the time for turning toward the inner life. It is an ancient imperative. Grandmothers hold up the entire world. It is important at this age and stage not to be selfish, but to be giving. Remember your purpose - to hold up the world. If the present day grandmothers choose to be active and living fulfilling outer lives, this is perfectly fine, as long as there is no competition with the young, and as long as the activity enables a deepening enrichment and includes the counterbalance of the inner life.



NUMBER FOUR

Appreciate the seasons

An appreciation of the seasons deepens each year as the years go by more quickly. This understanding of life's continuity can only come once you begin to experience the years' passings repeatedly. Patterns are experienced - in seasons, months and years. This understanding can be given to your grandchildren.



NUMBER FIVE

Be alive to the moment

Now is the opportunity to reawaken the senses linked to the wisdom of experience. Just as awareness of the seasons is heightened, so is appreciation of the moment. Certain moments become meaningful, inexpressibly so. The desire for expression may sometimes be turned inward, becoming inexpressible appreciation and gratitude.



NUMBER SIX

Don't worry

Don't allow your identity to become confused with mistrust and fear. Worry is unnecessary. Trust and appreciate, act when required. Whenever possible turn worry into an action, even if it must be only a ritual action, to dispel it from your being. Do not permit it in your emotional vocabulary, for it is the cause of so much useless sorrow. It will sap your strength. Grandmothers need strength. See worry as a warning, a call to action.



NUMBER SEVEN

Mind your own business

Grandmothers learn to leave their adult children alone. It is their turn now to learn life's lessons. Sometimes this can break your heart, but use your strength to continue. Remember your responsibilities. Give all you can but do not interfere. This retains your dignity and creates an atmosphere of mutual respect. This attitude applies to all dealings in life. If your wisdom is wanted, they will come to you. Otherwise do not be bossy or domineering. Take charge when necessary, but do not approach life from that attitude. Respect the young and appreciate them.



NUMBER EIGHT

Keep in touch with what is going on

Don't withdraw into your own little world. Open to the greater societal sphere. Maintain connection with this world, become and remain informed, no matter how strange or irrelevant this may seem at times. It is vital that our elders are able to communicate with youth. Open your mind and awareness to the world in which young people today are finding their way. Your ability is to be able to dive into it, but not live in it, for your life is elsewhere, looking toward the eternal.



NUMBER NINE

Fight for what you believe in

Do this for the sake of the future generations. Do not hold back in the face of injustice or wrongdoing that could have repercussions far into the future. Your accumulated wisdom combined with insight will indicate to you just what are the causes you should fight for, not to the exclusion of your peace of mind, but to add your voice, mind and heart. Write letters, speak out, help out, however your abilities can be used.



NUMBER TEN

Continue to work

Never "retire" or withdraw. Remain useful as long as you are physically capable, and even later, if you can, remain engaged right until the end. Produce, create, engage, develop. Never cease exploring.



NUMBER ELEVEN

Gather and share your history

Share your experiences. Give your wisdom freely. Your lifetime has seen many social transformations and your life experience has given you insights into events and human nature. Gather this history together, for yourself, for the record and for the future generations. Remember your own grandmother: what did you learn from her? Your mother? Keep these memories and pass them along to your grandchildren.



NUMBER TWELVE

Consider the whole world as your family

See all children as grandchildren and all young adults as your own children, all contemporaries as brothers, sisters and cousins, all older people as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and parents. This way you are never alone, never isolated, always with your loved ones, your relatives.



NUMBER THIRTEEN

Consider everywhere as your home

See all places on earth as part of your history, your home, whether you have been there or not. At your age nothing is foreign or unfamiliar to you. Someone you know or have known has been there, or perhaps via book or media you know it. Love these other places as you love your own home. Care for these places and their history and communities as you care for your home.



NUMBER FOURTEEN

Give love to all plants and animals

Give love not only by gardening and awareness of nature, but to the wild unseen animals as well. Just as the whole world is your family, all the animals are part of this family. Learn to know them, recognize their inner qualities, understand what gift they bring to the earth. This is a lifelong study which is made difficult in the current environment, so all the more valuable.



NUMBER FIFTEEN

Enable your intuition

Allow its development in freedom. Now you are older, you can be free of many of the social restrictions that block the free evolution of your intuition, a divine guidance. Do practices and observation exercises to awaken and enable your inner intuitive voice. Follow this advice and it will lead beyond the mind to wisdom.



NUMBER SIXTEEN

Remember the past but not to the exclusion of the present

Freshen your senses through meditation to perceive something new every day. Don't let the patterns of mind, which were formed year after year into deep rut-like grooves, control the direction of your perception or perceptive thought. Challenge these patterns. Perceive directly without the filter of the past. Remembrance is one thing, but remembrance as a constant filter of present experience blocks the light of awareness.



NUMBER SEVENTEEN

Cultivate happiness

Do this by giving appreciation to others, and to all around you. Enable yourself to produce and create this state of appreciation, and you will find the happiness path.



NUMBER EIGHTEEN

Regulate your rhythm

You can now control the rhythm of your own life and obligations. As much as possible, retain a regular rhythm of daily activities, giving yourself time to do the important obligations of life. Remember to keep a space open for the unexpected, however, or the regular rhythm will dull your life. Don't be too attached to this rhythm, as flexibility will be lost as a result. When traveling or visiting, don't frame your experience with an attempt at regular "home-base" rhythm, it will only cause you frustration. Participate in out-of-rhythm events as rare comets in the sky, beautiful to observe. Don't try to hold them back or deny them. Simply return to the regular life as soon as possible. This stability brings power and beauty.



NUMBER NINETEEN

Care for your body

Look after it well, and be conscious of its needs at this time in life. Move move move. Stay active however possible. Remember the power of touch, and touch others in love. Don't worry unnecessarily about health issues which are bound to appear as aging occurs. Do whatever is possible to alleviate problems. As time goes on, you will have to live with physical changes, instabilities or weaknesses. Do not, at the sign of one little weakness, cause all the other healthy aspects to be forgotten. Carry on by whatever means. Love your frustrating, not always reliable, body and make no one else responsible for your well-being. Control your body with your mind whenever possible, and let your heart do the rest.



NUMBER TWENTY

Act quickly on any intuition

Put it into practice as soon as possible. Being aware that life is short and that time has a way of rushing by, do not delay in applying the intuitions which direct your life's path.



NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

Relax

Let the waves of life's energy pass naturally through your days. It is important to remember that our lives do in fact change, and to therefore welcome the changes as they occur. Looking back over your lifetime, you can easily see the many transformations you have already experienced - some planned, most unplanned. There are more transformative changes to come - some visible as events and life-changes, others invisible as transforming new outlooks. All are to be welcomed, not resisted.

Life is leading you to the grandmother throne, a seated position of wisdom and respect. Do not try to resist this process.



NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

Bring calm, peace and cheer to your grandchild's family

Offer help (gently) when you sense or see that they could use a break. Remember your own parenting experience and offer space to the parents, who have so much to juggle.



NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

Be aware that the grandparent role is actually mostly unseen

You are not the parent, and daily care is not normally your responsibility. You can let go even of your concept of being a grandmother. Just get on with your life: a new life which can be lived more fully in this new light.



NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

Love for years to come

When loving your grandchild (or grandchildren) your natural relationship will awaken in them the pathways to lifelong communication between you. As you will normally be passing on before them, the loving communicative paths developed between you will open the child's heart, and educate him/her in the secrets of eternal love long after you have passed away. In this way, subtly and unseen, our grandmothers have blessed our lives since the beginning of time.

Following these Grandmother Lessons can prepare you for the next stages of this Journey, which I call the Grandmother Challenge and the Grandmother Wisdom.

If you're interested in exploring this view of what becoming a grandmother can mean, email me at grans@alphablogs.net