

Me and My Grandmother

~ The Interaction Between Children and the Elderly ~

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Since my parents both worked full time, I used to spend most of my time after school with my grandmother. Some of my fondest childhood memories involve cooking, gardening, and painting with her. She taught me many important lessons. One thing I learned from her is to appreciate the little things in life. She grew up in Hiroshima, and she was 9 when the WWII ended. She had to take care of her three little brothers when she was in elementary school. She says it was a hard time, but she always looked for things to appreciate, such as her family and friends. She also taught me to try new things and to step out of my comfort zone. Although she is 83, she is always trying to learn new recipes, make new friends, and travel to new places. She is my teacher, my role model, and most importantly, my grandma.

Recently, as I was talking with her, she mentioned that spending time with me has kept her active. In fact, at the age of 83, she is one of the most energetic people I know. She goes to many different gatherings with friends every day, like swimming, painting, and crafting. She said that interacting with a young child like me was very important for her to stay active and healthy.

This made me think about the benefits of the interaction between young children and the elderly, which can benefit both. The children can learn from the older generation, and the elderly can gain energy from the children and prevent diseases such as dementia. There is another benefit. Today, there is a separation between generations. The young see the elderly as annoying, and the elderly see the young as lazy. This gap will become greater if these two generations don't come together. We must start communicating.

However, since many children these days don't live with their grandparents, they cannot spend much time with the elderly. As a solution to this problem, I suggest the local government host events for children to interact with the elderly living in the area. One idea is to host a gathering as

a part of moral education classes in elementary schools. The gathering should consist of activities that both parties can enjoy, such as singing, crafting or cooking. Through these activities, the children and the elderly can talk and bond. Another idea is letter exchange between elementary school children and the local elders. The children can learn how to write letters in class and send the letters to senior citizens in the area.

Also, there are some small things we can do as individuals. One is to talk with anyone around you who is a senior citizen. You could even organize a gathering with their friends and your friends. You can attend festivals and gatherings in the neighborhood, or even just say hi to the old lady watering a flower on your way to school. All of them count as an action to promote communications between different generations. The important thing is to appreciate the people around you and step out of your comfort zones, just like my grandma taught me.

Today, many people see senior citizens as a burden on society. However, they are an important part of it. They are the generation who made Japan what it is now. By interacting with them, children can learn many important lessons, just like I did from my grandmother. For the elderly, spending time with children is a very effective way to make their lives meaningful and interesting. Furthermore, with these kinds of communication between different generations, the whole society will be able to unite as one. So, let's take action so that children and the elderly can become each other's heroes.