

## Psychological Changes in a Human When He Grows Old

Life Transition – Becoming a grandparent

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### Abstract

When one considers the different transitions associated with the human life stages, many of them are associated with childhood, youth and middle age and are talked about and studied more than the life transitions that happen during old age. One such transition in the last decades of human life is becoming a grandparent. In this essay we are going to look at the elements of this transition and its impact on relationships and concepts of self as well as what the literature has to say about this stage of life.

Many of us dream and prepare for being parents from when we are children and often have an idea of what kind of parent we would like to be. Sometimes reality is the same as our ideas and sometimes parenting turns out to be different, more difficult or more rewarding, but in any case, parenthood is often anticipated and planned more than grandparenthood.

Let us now look at some predictable and unpredictable elements of becoming a grandparent. The first unpredictable element of being a grandparent is that unlike choosing to become a parent, becoming a grandparent depends on the choice made by another individual – a son or daughter, to become a parent.

The first time one hears the news about becoming a grandparent can be a delightful or a stressful event (Cunningham-Burley, 1986). To some prospective grandparents, having grandchildren comes as a sign that old age has arrived and can become a cause of stress. In today's society, grandparents are increasingly assuming the role of caretakers for their grandchildren (Bert Hayslip Jr, 2005) and the anticipated changes in lifestyle and also the changing perception of themselves as now officially entering old age can be a cause for stress for many people who become grandparents for the first time in a society where youth is valued over old age. (John Bond, 2007)





Assessment Two – Final  
Essay



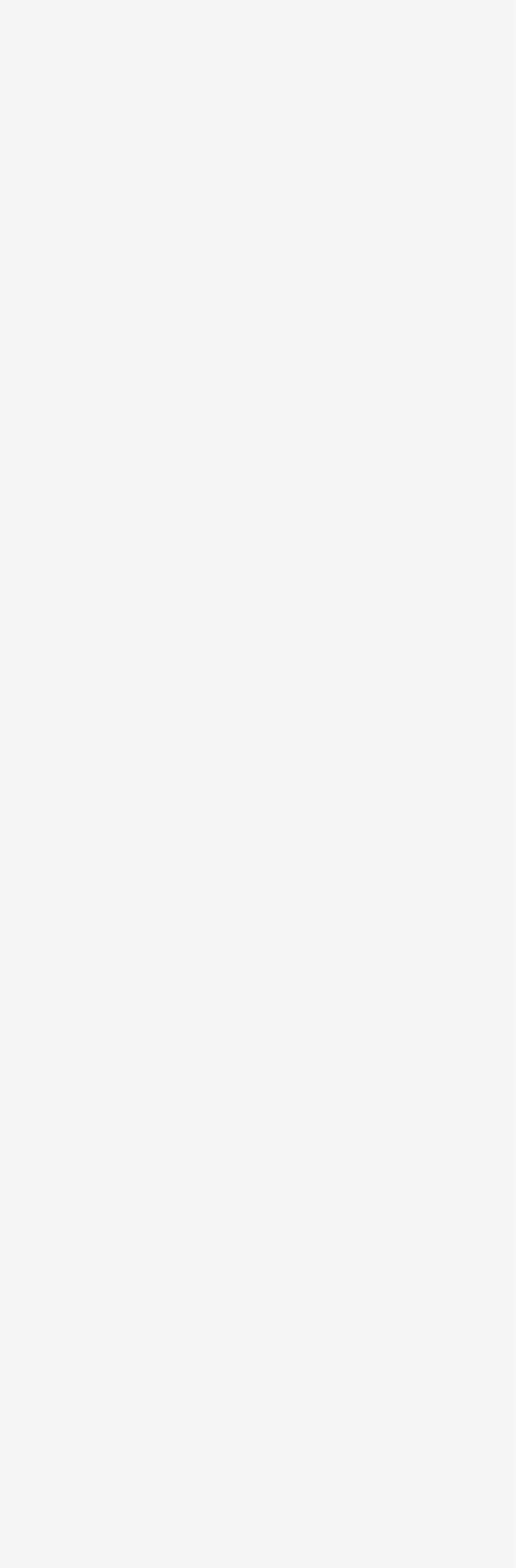
Life Transition – Becoming a  
grandparent



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## Introduction

When one considers the different transitions associated with the human life stages, many of them are associated with childhood, youth and middle age and are talked about and studied more than the life transitions that happen during old age. One such transition in the last decades of human life is becoming a grandparent. In this essay we are going to look at the elements of this transition and its impact on relationships and concepts of self as well as what the literature has to say about this stage of life.

**Commented [A1]:** The scope of work is a very important point to be mentioned in the introduction

Many of us dream and prepare for being parents from when we are children and often have an idea of what kind of parent we would like to be. Sometimes reality is the same as our ideas and sometimes parenting turns out to be different, more difficult or more rewarding, but in any case, parenthood is often anticipated and planned more than grandparenthood.

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many people who become grandparents for the first time in a society where youth is valued over old age. (John Bond, 2007)

**Commented [A2]:** Using of appropriate reference with every fact presented is important to consider the authentication of work.

In relation to the concept of self, of an aged person, grandparenthood is being presented as a way of bringing “agefulness” into old age in a society which values youth over old age. (Gerben J Westerhoff, 2007). While the nature of grandparenting can vary depending on age, socioeconomic factors, sex and the ethnicity of the person involved (Erber, 2011), we live in a society where older people who have to deal with the loss of many of their physical faculties due to ageing are finding it difficult to be accepted for their wider experience of life and the wisdom they bring to various life situations. (John Bond, 2007). In such a scenario, grandparenthood becomes a way of passing on their skills and life experiences as well as being a meaningful contributor to the family and society, inspite of their reduced physical faculties and earning capacity. Thus grandparenthood can lead to an increased concept of self for an aged person, making them feel that they are contributing to family life in a meaningful way.

Research findings show that the stress factor in becoming a grandparent has decreased over the last couple of decades and many grandparents report an increase in their sense of being well connected with becoming a grandparent. (Donald C. Reitzes, 2004) In fact, in the same research many people report more satisfaction in their grandparent identities when compared to their other adult identities (Donald C. Reitzes, 2004). This is a significant finding from which I would like to infer that grandparenting is less stressful than parenting, which could be an area of future study. The increased sense of well being in becoming a grandparent could be because of the less active role of parenting required in becoming a grandparent (Jetse Spray, 1982)

**Commented [A3]:** Findings have been well elucidated

When the expectations and experiences of grandparenthood were compared using sex of grandparents and lineage as criteria, it was found that the experience of grandparenthood was different for men and women. Grandmothers reported more satisfaction in being a grandparent than grandfathers and maternal grandparents were more satisfied with their experience of being grandparents. (Karen Somary, 1998) An interesting work on the influence of grandparents speaks of the role of grandparents as rescuers during family crisis in a society with an increasing number of teenage pregnancies, single parents and working parents. (Szinovacz, 1998)

The study of grandparenthood has changed over the decades to include various dimensions. The developmental gains for children due to the influence of grandparents and the major influence of grandparents on grandchildren's socialisation as well as their vital role in family life has received a lot of attention in recent years. (Szinovacz, 1998) High levels of youth achievement are expected when there is an incidence of higher education among grandparents combined with high levels of youth-grandparent interaction (Karen Albright, 2004).

The research into grandparenthood over the decades has traditionally concentrated on homogeneous groups of white families, but over the last decade the cultural differences and the impact on children are being increasingly studied. Many cross cultural differences have been noticed in the role of grandparents in the lives of their grandchildren. The role of the grandmother in native american families involved an educational role, where she is the main source of passing down of many different branches of traditional knowledge to the next generation. (Cimons, 2010)

Overall, cutting across all cultures, one finds that the role of grandparents in the lives of children and in society has increased in importance over the decades. There has been an increase

in positive perceptions and reported increased wellbeing associated with grandparenthood. (Peter K Smith, 2004) This has a direct impact on nursing and midwifery practice, since grandparents are now becoming increasingly involved in all aspects of birth and child rearing in our society (Andrew Cherlin, 2009). Many grandparents are now involved in the care of the grandchildren right from birth. Care givers of early years today are often involved in interacting with grandparents as well as parents about various aspects of child care.

The role of grandparents in children's developmental growth is of particular relevance to educators. Involvement of family in the education of the child has always been reported as an important factor in improved literacy and educational achievement of the child. (Eve Gregory, 2004) While grandparent involvement in grandchildren's education had been always high in traditional societies and many ethnic groups like Chinese, Indian and Hispanic communities, the role of grandparents in raising educational achievement of all children is increasingly receiving the attention of educators. (Walker, 2001) (Alison Richards, 2001)

## Conclusion

While not all influences of grandparents on grandchildren are reported as positive, what I infer from a study of the literature for this essay is that grand parenthood is a significant event in the lives of people, families and the children involved. Grand parenting of the previous decades is different from grandparenthood today; the role of grandparents is also evolving and changing with changes in society.

With increasing number of elderly people living with their grandchildren – the number in the US is 5.8 million of 3.6 % if the population were living with grandchildren under 18 years of age (Tavia Simmons, 2003) and increasing economic worries and disruptions to nuclear family life and the prevalence of single parent families, the role of the extended family in child care and child education needs to be studied with greater care. Grandparents are the most easily available and accessible of the extended family in the western world and it would be ideal if the role of grandparents and grandchildren in each other lives involved the care, development and well being of both the grandchild and the grandparent.

**Commented [A4]:** References should not be used in conclusion. This shows the work lacked detailed planning

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Criterion	Levels of achievement		
	Exemplary	Good	Poor
<b>Writing style and presentation are clear</b>			
• Title	Title is concise and informative so readers can anticipate the contents of the contribution and interested people look forward to reading it.	The title gives a general indication of the material covered in the contribution, but have to read the document to fully appreciate what is covered. Some potential readers may be lost because they can't clearly anticipate the material covered by reading the title.	The linkage between the title and the text is not clear. Reader may skip the contribution because they don't appreciate its relevance.
• Introduction	Introductory statement clearly indicates the main purpose of the contribution and suggests the plan of organization, so the reader can anticipate the text that will follow.	Introductory statement indicates the main purpose of the contribution in general terms, so the reader has some idea of what will follow.	The introduction does not give an overview of the contribution so the readers are not sure what to expect as they read the text.
• Main Body	Main body of contribution makes connected points that clearly build the argument so the text flows from introduction to conclusion in a logical manner, thereby helping the reader to follow the thinking behind the text.	The main body presents a number of points that allow the reader to understand the argument, but lapses in the writing may force the reader to make some connections between the parts.	The text is not well structured so the reader must stop reading at times to try to makes sense of the text.
• Conclusion	The main point of the contribution is clearly indicated and reinforced so the reader can clearly remember it.	The main point of the contribution is indicated, but may be stated in an unconvincing manner.	The concluding section does not reinforce or revisit the main point so the reader is unsure about it and likely to misinterpret or forget it.
• Written expression	Sentences and paragraphs are well structured and clear so the reader can focus on what is written. Each paragraph has a topic sentence that indicates the subject matter.	Minor lapses in sentence structure, such as run-on sentences and unnecessarily complex sentence structures, force the reader to pause and reflect on the meaning of the text. Paragraphs present a complete argument, but may not flow so well.	Many sentences are poorly structured so the reader must stop often to reflect on the meaning of the text. Many paragraphs lack topic sentences or have poor flow so the main points and linkages among explanatory text are not clear.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grammar, punctuation and spelling</li> </ul>	Grammar, spelling and punctuation are flawless, which allows the reader to focus on the message.	Some minor errors in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation detract from the quality of the text, but do not impair the communication.	Many errors in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation make reading the text difficult and communication is impaired.
<b>Concepts and arguments are well developed</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accuracy</li> </ul>	All information is accurately reported using appropriate terminology so the information is reliable.	The information is largely accurate but imprecise language could lead a reader to misinterpret aspects of the text.	Although the gist of the information is correct, there are problems with the interpretation of it. A reader can be misled by the text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance</li> </ul>	Connections between the contribution and the main topic of the discussion are clearly indicated.	Connections between the contribution and the main topic of the discussion are indicated or implied, but the reader needs to pause to clarify those connections.	Although the text is relevant, this is not clearly indicated, so the reader must guess how the text relates to the main topic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significance</li> </ul>	The reason why the contribution is important to the overall discussion is clearly described and discussed so the reader takes the contribution seriously.	The reason why the contribution is important is touched on but not elucidated, so the reader must make some interpretations about the author's view of the contribution's significance.	The contribution may include significant material but this is not indicated, so the reader must guess it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity</li> </ul>	The main points and new technical terms are clearly described and/or explained so the reader is left with no ambiguity about what was written.	Although the text is clear to informed audiences, unexplained points may leave room for alternative interpretations of the text.	Key points and new technical terms are not explained so the reader is confused.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independence</li> </ul>	The contribution is completely self-contained so the reader does not have to read other contributions or published materials to understand what was written about.	The text is sufficiently clear that the reader can understand the main point without further reading, but some parts of the text are not clear without consulting earlier contributions or other sources of information.	The text is written in a manner that presumes considerable prior knowledge, so the reader must have a thorough knowledge of what has been written about the subject in order to understand the main point of the contribution.
<b>Contribution is responsive to another contribution</b>	The writer links ideas submitted by others to their own contribution in a manner that substantially strengthens the group's efforts to	The writer makes references to earlier works that are a starting point for new ideas but, apart from the reference to the earlier work, not much information is	The text mentions other contributions but neither explains the reference nor substantially adds to it, so

	resolve the main problem. This linkage can include elaboration of what was previously written, a critique or questioning of it, demonstration of linkages among two or more earlier contributions, and/or utilization of an earlier contribution as a foundation to build your own.	incorporated	there is no clear benefit to the resolution of the main problem from citing the earlier contribution.
<b>Text is supported by references</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sources indicated</li> </ul>	All information and ideas that are not commonly known are supported with references to sources, so the reader has confidence that the information is not based on hearsay or the writer's opinion or assumptions alone.	Most sources are indicated, but in only a few cases the sources are not given or are ambiguous, so the reader has to check some of the sources.	Sources are cited for some specific parts of the contribution, but no references are supplied for information and ideas that are clearly not the author's, so the reader has no idea of the validity and authority of the information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant references</li> </ul>	Information, concepts and opinions are supported with references to published literature, especially primary (original) sources of information, rather than review articles or textbooks. This allows the reader to independently review the cited sources. More than one reference is cited to support key points, which adds strength and authority to the argument.	One or a few references are used to support the text. Thus the contribution is supported but this may be an idiosyncratic source. Some general references to textbooks are made that could have been replaced by primary references which are more thorough and authoritative.	Information comes from Web sites or other sources that have no recognized authority, so the validity or strength of the source is unknown.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citation style</li> </ul>	References cited appropriately in the text, and the correct format is used in the text when citing information, so the reader clearly knows which information is attributable to which source.	Minor lapses in citation format do not prevent the reader from finding the sources in the reference list at the end of the contribution.	Citation format incorrect or poorly placed in the text, so citations distract from reading.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bibliographic information</li> </ul>	The reference list contains complete bibliographic information (author's name(s), publication date, title, source, date web page accessed), so a reader can easily find the references for their own research.	Bibliographic information largely complete, but some information missing so the reader may have difficulty finding some references. Most sources can still be easily checked.	Not all references are listed, information in the reference list is incorrect, or important information is missing from the reference list, so the reader is unable to find the same sources of

	The authority of sources can be evaluated by checking them.		information and the authority of sources is almost entirely unknown.
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**Tutor Comments:**

The work is very well presented and orderly arranged. Alongwith the ideas presented have been developed in a smooth flow. A point to be considered is the importance and exclusive nature of each section based on demands and avoid going wrong with the minute specifications.

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