

Developing a Closer  
and More  
Meaningful  
Relationship with  
Grandparents

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Or Any Other Significant  
Older Person

**Sometimes The Distance Of An Extra  
Generation Is Just Enough To Let Everyone  
See Things A Bit Differently**



*"You're Only  
Old Once"*

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By Dr. Seuss

# Grandparents

- **What are some special things you have done with or remember about your grandparents?**
- **Is there any food you especially associate with your grandparents?**
- **How many of you have had a special relationship with either a grandparent or older friend or neighbor?**

# Grandparents

- What do you see as the role of a grandparent?
- How are grandparents of today different from grandparents of:
  - 25 years ago?
  - 50 years ago?
  - 100 years ago?

What Do You  
Have In  
Common?

# Both Are At A Crossroads In Life



- \*The elderly are into the empty nest time of life.
- \*Youth are preparing to take on the nest.
- \*Both have anxieties about the future.

# Both Are Experiencing Hormonal Changes



\*The elderly's hormones are shutting down.

\*The youths hormones are becoming more active.

# Both May Be Suffering From Loneliness and Depression



\*The elderly persons responsibilities have diminished and they may not feel needed anymore.

\*The full impact of the youth's responsibilities is yet to come and they don't have a sense of being needed yet.

# Both are Concerned About Independence



- \*The elderly from their children.
- \*The youth from their parents.

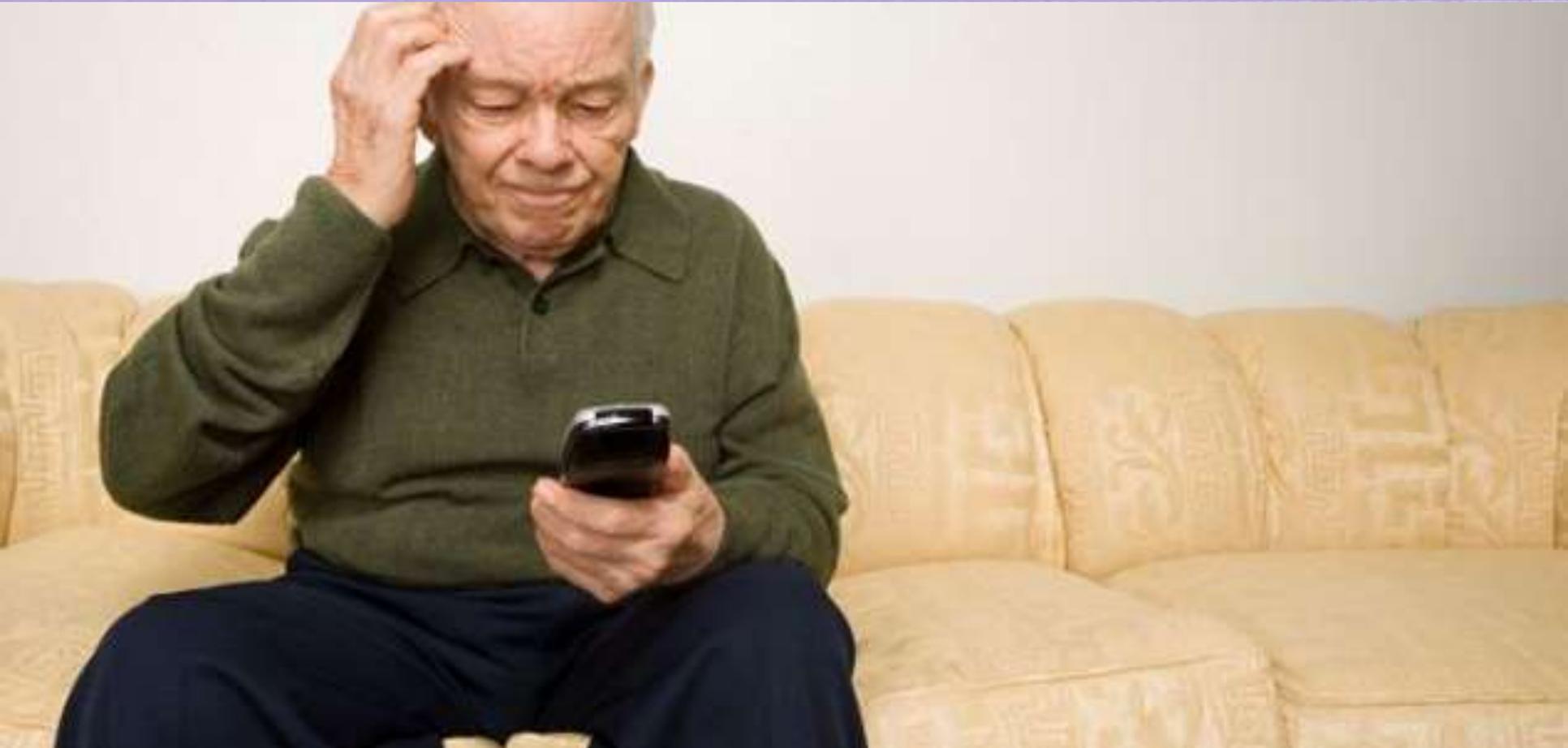
# Both Are Preoccupied With Driving



\*The elderly to maintain driving status.

\*The youth to begin driving.

# Both May Be Victims Of Discrimination, Abuse or Criminal Activity



\*The elderly have lost their strength and ability to defend themselves.

\*The youth haven't learned how to defend themselves yet.

# Both Don't Have Much Money



- \*The elderly often live on social security or fixed incomes.
- \*The youth must depend on their parents for spending money.

# Both Face Disapproval Of Any Marriage Plans



- \*The elderly from their children.
- \*The youth from their parents.

# Benefits of a Teen/Elderly Relationship

# Provides An Opportunity For Both To Learn A New Skill

Many older adults have skills or talents that would be interesting for teens. Perhaps teens could learn to weave, crochet, fish, bake, or even take care of animals. In return, teens could teach older adults about the latest technology.



# Gives Both A Sense Of Purpose

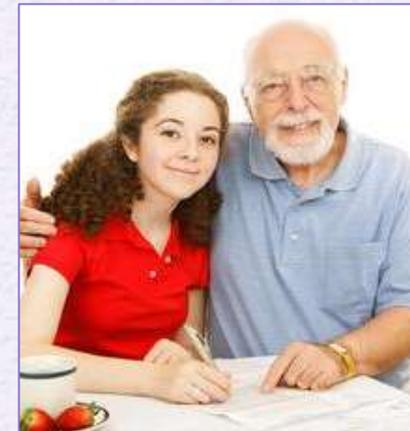
Spending time together and participating in mutual activities can give both teens and older adults a sense of purpose. Some examples include:

- Pen Pals, Letter Writing
- Read to each other
- Gardening
- Telling jokes



# Alleviates Fears They May Have Of One Another

Get to know each other. Teens need to know that there are real heroes in the world — not basketball players or drug dealers, but real heroes. The elderly need to realize that behind the saggy pants and blue hair, there are also real people, and they don't need to be afraid.



# Helps Teens Understand And Later Accept Their Own Aging

“Elderly people are not only the link to your past, but they are who you will be one day -- the link to your future.” Relationships with a past generation can give teens a deeper understanding and even make them more comfortable with their own aging and eventually with their own mortality.

# Reduces Isolation/Depression

Older people can provide a sense of stability that everything is going to be OK. With time, with confidence, one can move through difficult situations. A teen can look at an older person and see that, in fact, their life is "OK."



And teens bring vibrancy to old friends. The benefit is mutual. Older people who were losing hope about their lives have it rekindled by youthful relationships.

# Fills A Void For Teens Without Grandparents

Many teens feel that their own parents are often judgmental, their friends are not always trustworthy, their teachers are too busy, and many do not have grandparents to listen to them. No one seems to have the interest or the time and older people have nothing but time.



# Overcomes Social Barriers

Many advertisements promote youth and seem to suggest that growing older is a negative thing: something to fear or feel bad about. At the same time, people are living longer than they ever have. The increasing number of older adults, along with societal messages that aging is bad, may lead to negative thoughts or feelings about older adults.

# Helps Keep Family Stories And History Alive

- Swap stories
- Make a family Tree
- Scrap booking
- Share ethnic customs



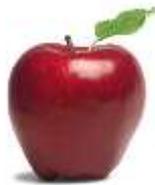
- Ask Questions      Example: What can/could you buy with 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents when you were my age? What can you buy now?

# Welcome to the Elderly Simulation

The following activities are meant to simulate life as an elderly adult. Follow the directions and have fun!

# Memory Loss

- Study the following slide and remember as many of the items as you can.
- Ready... ..set... ..GO!



# Memory Loss

- Let's check your answers... (37 items total)

Tennis Ball



Shoe Laces



Super Glue



Screwdriver



Stapler



Tissues



Lotion



Butterfinger



Apple



Oreo Cookie



Keys



Scissors



Chapstick



Sticky Notes



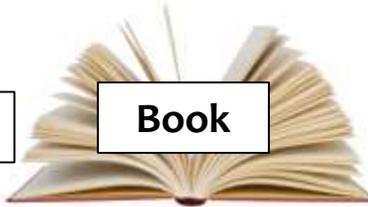
Pen



Flyswatter



Book



Thread



Paint Brush



Spoon



Tide Pen



Orange Soda



Ruler



Boot/Shoe



Watch



Hand Sanitizer



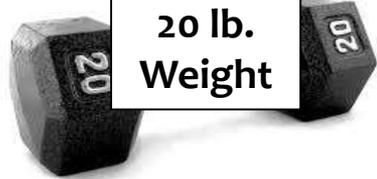
iPod



Hat



20 lb. Weight



Eraser



Earrings



Camera



Glasses



Money



Kitten



Basketball



# Arthritis and Vision Loss

- Using the masking tape found on your table, tape your fingers together in the following manner:
- Pinky and ring fingers together.
- Middle and index fingers together.
- Do not tape your thumb.
- Get a pair of special glasses from your teacher.
- Put them on your eyes AFTER the teacher tells you to.

# Arthritis and Vision Loss

- You will be given a paper with questions. Do not write on it.
- You will be given another paper to write the answer to the questions. Number this paper from 1-10.
- Read each question **silently** and write your answer.
- When you are done, remove the tape from your fingers and put it in the garbage can.
- Return your glasses to your teacher.
- Good Luck!

# Loss of Independence

- Get in groups of two.
- Get 1 blind fold per group.
- Choose who will be “elderly” and who will be the “helper”.
- Blindfold the “elderly” student.
- The “helper” will **carefully** guide the “elderly” through the maze. Do not touch the “elderly” person. Guide them through with voice commands only.
- Switch roles.
- Put the blindfold back when you have both gone through the maze.
- Good Luck!

# Loss of Hearing

- Get into groups of 5 or 6.
- Get 1 cotton ball.
- Break it in half.
- Put one half in one ear and one half in the other ear. Do **not** shove it into your ear canal!
- Choose a student to be “Simon”.
- Simon needs to speak very softly.
- Play Simon Says.
- Switch who is “Simon” when you finish a round.
- Good Luck!

# How Was This Experience?

- What was your overall experience?
- Did you get frustrated at any time?
- What was the hardest activity?
- How did you feel when you couldn't see, hear or taste?
- How did you feel being dependent on your friend?

# Summary

- You experienced a little of what elderly adults face every minute of everyday. Be more patient with them and help when you can.
- Get to know your grandparents a little better. You may be surprised how much you have in common.