

## To know all sides of people

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A. Taipale. *To know all sides of people*. *Gerontechnology* 2014;13(1):61-62; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.1.004.00 The granddaughter's view on the accomplishments of her grandmother.

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To me the name Vappu Taipale doesn't come attached to a list of her accomplishments, (probably because I never get lectured about them). Instead it comes attached to another name; grandma. A grandma whose husband told me that her greatest accomplishments were raising four children who would later raise at least seven grandchildren for her. One of those seven little people happens to be me.

It is not often I get to see her, but neither is it seldom. She travels so much everybody has given up on knowing her locations throughout the year (she can't keep track of them either) and we are constantly not in Finland where she lives when she is not traveling. However she is one of the first possible babysitters my mom calls when she is in need. Occasionally she also has to travel to Sweden and we meet. In fact the fact that we moved a country away did not have a great effect on how much we see her as traveling is not a problem.

My mom told me that when she becomes a grandma (which according to her she better become) I must remind her to be more like my grandma who can easily make plans (the babysitting plans mentioned above) without being overstressed about their organization. It is not a lot my grandma stresses about, because "everything is going to organize itself with time." (I'm not sure whether that came out right, I am not great at translating Finnish sayings)

As a grandma, my grandma believes in the common grandma belief; that it is her job to spoil all of her grandchildren. We get chocolate for a snack after we come home from school, she boils us milk for our hot chocolates in the morning, and most of all; her rules are less strict than our parents and they're way easier to stretch.

My grandma happens to be very social, but not quite as social as my grandpa. I remember her making small talk with every single taxi driver that ever drove us, and there wasn't a train we rode in which there wasn't a person who some-

how knew her. She seriously has a lot of friends. According to her she and grandpa take a trusting attitude to life; none of those taxi drivers are potential robbers that will steal all their money. (That is if my grandparents have any money, according to my dad, their son, a reliable source, especially grandpa can't keep money without giving it to different charities.). What I've heard, their great faith in humanity has not gotten them into deep troubles (none of the taxi drivers actually stole their money), maybe their attitude would have been modified if that would have happened. It seems to me that my grandparent's world has no great evils, no person they have met is completely evil; there are just intellectuals and people who need a little more help understanding the world. They offered to take me to North Korea while promising to not to take me to any place scary (so no place is completely evil either, or scary).



My dad told me that a man who is not a liberal at a young age has no heart. To me it seems like my grandparents kept their liberal hearts to a very old age instead of turning into bitter conservative seniors. Hopefully they are going to stay that way, because a not giving, not believing in change, is very unlike them. If these people who truly believe in humanity grow sour with time, then humanity mustn't be very great. Then my dad told me that a man who is not conservative when he is old has no brain, but we don't need to talk about that. He also says that the world is actually a pretty good place, but if we don't find the little

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faults in it and start to mess around them, then some of the faults will enlarge and the world will turn into a pretty bad place. I guess that is what my grandparents do, they find the little faults (although to them these faults may be huge) and begin to do something that according to them will straighten the fault. Even with these faults my grandmother seems to believe that the world is actually quite a great place, at least for us.

My grandma is very positive, as I might have portrayed in the text above. My grandma is not overemotional, instead her emotions are quite behaved. Sad is something that doesn't fit her, always cheerful as she is, even at funerals. Serious is as close as to sad as I have seen her. She has never been mad for long, in fact I don't think she has ever been really mad at us. If something small didn't go her way she lets it be, instead of fussing all over it. She is somewhat less of a dreamer than grandpa. At least she has a slightly harder time making friends with mental hospital

patients and prisoners when she is not with him. According to certain family members she is the one stopping my grandpa from doing something senseless (like giving away *all* their money), although my grandpa isn't very senseless either.

So in all I have no idea what she has done during her work life, what she's doing now and what's she's going to do, that also means that she is not the type to brag about her accomplishments (at least to her grandchildren). Maybe that sentence above is not completely true, maybe I have very faint ideas, and I have asked her, but there are so many things. To know all sides of people, and some people have a lot of sides, edges and shapes, tends to be impossible. However I do have an idea of what type of a person my grandmother is from the perspective of a grandchild. I happened to agree to try to put pieces of that idea into words (that hopefully formed sensible sentences), which is totally unfair because it's summer holiday. Now that I said that I'll stop writing.

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