



Yearning for those who passed away

I have no pleasure in life. I wish my dead daughter was here...But I like seeing my grandchild eating delicious food. Lovely. Yes, that makes me feel relieved.

Their dead mom always said to the children, "Clear away the dishes after eating." Since they began living here with me, I have spoiled them and they don't clear the dishes now. But some of their mom's training seems to be ingrained in them. They can brush their teeth by themselves because they have made it a habit since they were little.

At the athletic meeting, the child made a speech as a conductor of the drum and fife band. I wished his/her dead mom were there to see him/her making a speech. The vice principal praised him/her. I was most impressed that he/she learned the speech by heart and spoke without looking at any written memo. He/She made every effort. He/She tells me everything that happened to him/her, such as "Today we had an athletic meeting" and "We had a school art festival today." When I say, "You did very well," he/she says, "Not so much."

I wonder what it would be like if the children (whom I took charge of) were younger. I thank their dead mother. She brought them up until a certain age and then had us take charge of them. Our child rearing is easier than hers.



Children's feelings

The child said to me, "I want to see my mother." Maybe he/she knows that the person who is in the photo is his/her mother. He/She does know it.

I was asked, "Did you tell someone that I live with my aunt, not with my mother?" I said to him/her, "When I met other parents for the first time, I just said that our family names are different because of conditions at home." He/She said, "I don't want to hide anything." Maybe he/she doesn't want to be seen to be different. So, I said, "You don't have to tell others everything, do you?" And he/she said, "All right. I won't."

My grandchild doesn't talk much. When his/her mother died, he/she cried a lot for two days, saying, "I wanted to be a good son/daughter, but my mom died before I could do anything nice for her."

We are old. So, from the beginning, our grandson said, "I need to be independent." He thinks he must live by himself. There is nothing we can do or say to him about this.

(Everything was lost in the tsunami, except for the futon used by his/her dead mother and brother/sister that was left in his/her grandparents' house.) Even if I give him/her a new futon, he/she will never part with that old one. He/She asks, "Where is it? I like it." And he/she is still using that futon. What he/she likes about it is its warmth and comfort, maybe. So, I just let him/her do as he/she wants."

Anxieties and concerns

I'm worried what will become of him/her if anything should happen to us in the future.

I am worried about the grandchild's mental development.

I can't treat the child in the same way as my own child. Honestly, I feel more confused than pleased about the future of the child.

I am anxious about how we can raise the child or how he/she will grow up to be.

Utmost efforts

Every day I make my utmost efforts, and at the end of the day, I always feel that another hard day is over. Anyway, I need to keep my physical strength until I make the child go to bed at night. I wonder how long I can keep doing this.



Resolutions

My grandchild didn't shed tears when he/she heard about his/her mother's death. Even I still cannot accept the fact (that my daughter died). He/She has not accepted the fact. When he/she reaches a rebellious age, he/she may vent his/her feelings against me if he/she cannot relieve his/her stress toward something outside. I am somehow ready for it.

We are resolved that we have to make efforts to raise and take care of the child until he/she becomes 20 years old. We must stay healthy until he/she is grown up.

As we grow older and die before the child, we have to think about how our grandchild can make a living until he/she becomes independent.

Pleasures

I am happy when I see my grandchildren happily eating meals with us.

I pack his/her lunch with leftovers and nothing special. But he/she takes it without complaining and eats up.



Pleasures

My grandson plays baseball. When he hits a home run or makes a fine play, I am so happy. When he played in a defensive position or stood on the batter's box, my heart used to beat fast. Now he looks confident and I can watch him playing with ease.

In spite of everything, the child is becoming dearer to us every day just like our own child.

Until then, I lived with my husband, just the two of us. Since the child came to live with us, most of our conversations are about the child.

When I said to the child, "When you grow up and get a job, will you take us on a trip or two?" He/She said, "Yes, I will." I was very glad to hear him/her just say so even if it may not become reality.

When my grandchild leaves home to go to school, he/she says to me, "Tell grandfather that I'm going to school." (He/She wants me to say so to his/her grandfather who is not there.) I am glad to hear that. When he/she comes home and opens the front door, he/she comes in, saying "I'm home!" He/She always asks, "What is for dinner?" He/She has a healthy appetite. He/She is energetic. That's his/her beauty.

I like seeing his/her sleeping face. When the child is awake, I sometimes think that he/she is a little hateful. But when he/she is sleeping, he/she is really cute. So I think I have to make every effort for him/her until he/she comes of age and becomes an adult.

When I said, "My back hurts" or "I have a leg pain," he/she does the dishes for me together with my own sons. I am glad.

My husband and I often say that we will feel lonely if the child leaves home to live by himself/herself. Even if we are busy with one thing or another, we are happy to wait for our grandchild to come home and say, "I'm home." Just his/her being with us makes us happy.

The happiest thing is to see the child playing or doing something cheerfully together with my own children. Also, when I see the child getting along with my husband, I also feel, "Maybe, things are going well."

When I make a meal, the child sometimes says, "Grandma, your meal is delicious." It encourages me to think, "So, I will continue to cook for him/her."

I am happy if the child and my own children get along with each other or share things together. When I am scolding one child, the other children sitting nearby also listen to me and pay attention. They don't blame only one person but they have come to act as one team.

The child gave me a letter when he/she graduated from high school. It was a reply to my previous letter. It said, "Please forgive me that I took it out on you." I was glad to know he/she realized it.

Pleasures

I was glad when I saw the child mature psychologically. He/She was telling a younger child the same thing that I told him/her reproving him/her. I knew that he/she was listening to me correctly although he/she looked as if he/she wasn't listening to me. But I just want to say to him/her, "(If you tell the other child so, you should do it first."

Wishes

I want him/her to study a little harder so that he/she can pass the entrance examination for high school.

Since he/she is a junior high school student, he/she has to behave as such. He/She must be independent when he/she goes out into the world.

When I was sitting on the sofa, he/she put a lap blanket over my knees and said, "Grandma, I will sing a lullaby for you." I want him/her to keep his/her gentle nature from now on, too."

(When my grandchild becomes a grown-up,) I want him/her to think, "I was brought up with much love" or "My grandma brought me up with a lot of affection."

My wish is about the child's future. I want him/her to go out into society in the same way as most people do and get a job he/she likes in his/her own way.

It's impossible for me to become his/her real mother, however hard I try. So I want to have the child experience various seasonal events as much as possible.

Awareness

At first, I worked overly hard to raise the child. I don't know much about the relationship between other parents at school (because I started parenting halfway through). So, I think it is important to communicate with the parents of the child's friends as often as possible.

Suddenly, I came to live with the child and became his/her foster parent. At first, I thought I had to do everything as hard as I could. Looking back, having the child at home every day came to feel like a natural state of affairs.

I think that child rearing is different from when I raised my own child. My own child grew out of diapers before I knew it. Maybe my grandchild needs to be potty-trained.

I'm not sure about parenting. I think that the child understands what I want to say to some extent. The child also tells me what he/she wants to say, such as "I hope you will make a box lunch for me today" or "I'd like to buy a box lunch at a convenience store before I go to the club activity."

First, I feel that raising a child is really hard. At the same time, it is a pleasure to see the child growing up and I feel responsible as his/her parent. Since I am related to the child by blood, I feel much affection for him/her. Raising the child keeps me busy, but it's not so tough for me. I sometimes wish this child was my own child. Such feelings form the basis of my life right now.

5. Their current feelings

Now I am raising the child in a more carefree manner than when I raised my own child.

Awareness

It is easier now than when I was raising my own child. Even if I make a mistake in parenting, it's fun for me, maybe. When I was raising my own child, I didn't feel like that.

Even though we live in the same house, I am not his/her real mother. But as we get used to our life, I sometimes feel tricked into thinking that he/she is my own child. When I think again, I realize, "Oh, he/she is not." So, I am all right with being his/her grandmother.

At first, I thought I had to become his/her mother in place of my dead sister. But it made me feel stressed. During the three months or so after I took him/her in, I gradually came to think that I didn't need to become his/her mother and felt easier.



We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all those who cooperated in this survey.

"Raising this child"

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