

The North Fulton Marriage Newsletter

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Not That Different

I have two people in my life, who I love dearly, that are nearly 92 years apart in age. My daughter, who just turned two, and my grandmother who is nearing the age of 94. The enormity of it all sometimes hits me in a rush. Last night I dropped by the nursing home and was able to feed my grandmother dinner. Ten minutes later I came home and was able to put my daughter in her crib for the night. This is a humbling life experience that I never anticipated. What a blessing. Though my grandmother is not in great physical shape, her memory is still intact, which has allowed her to develop a relationship with my daughter. This is also a wonderful blessing.

Though 92 years separate them, the reality is my daughter and grandmother are not that different. They are both beautiful, engaging, nurturing, loving, willful, stubborn, funny, and they both have huge personalities. They look a lot alike too, both have dark hair and pale complexions. Recently I observed an occupational therapist work with my grandmother at the nursing home. Toward the end of the session she had my grandmother practice putting puzzle pieces in place. The puzzle was just like the many puzzles my daughter has around our house. My grandmother, 92 years down the road, is relearning some of the same fine motor skills that my daughter is developing now. Not that different. My daughter is learning how to feed herself, and she has become quite good at it. She is a bottomless pit! But, she still wears a bib and we still have to help her through meals as she learns the process. My grandmother's ability to feed herself has deteriorated over the last several weeks, she now wears an adult bib at dinner and typically has to have help with the process. Not that different. Virtually every night I get to give my daughter a bath, which is so much fun. She really enjoys it. My grandmother can no longer bathe herself, so the nursing assistants are now responsible for giving her a bath. She does not enjoy it. But again, not that different. Though my grandmother's skin has aged and is discolored, I often look at her and think that she was once someone's child, with smooth young skin and no blemishes. What an overwhelming feeling. I think about my daughter and how I want to protect, guide and nurture her, always. I then wonder if my grandmother's parents, who knew her as an infant, would be happy with how we are taking care of her now. I believe they would. My grandmother is blessed to have three children and a grandchild that look after her. One of her sons, my uncle, has been her primary caregiver over the last several years. Watching him take care of her is much like watching a loving parent look after their child. He is both dedicated and selfless. I believe that when we care for those that we love like he does, we really are doing God's work here on earth.

So how does all this relate to marriage? I think the lesson here is to remember that your spouse was once someone's child and they still deserve to be treated like their parents would want them to be treated. It reminds me of the old saying that if you want to know what kind of husband a man will be, look at how he treats his mother. Makes sense. If we love our spouses and give them the respect, dignity and honor that their parents would want for them, then we may find that our marriage will flourish. Your spouse may have grown taller but they still remain someone's child and in many ways...not that different. To my daughter and to my grandmother, my God bless you and keep you, this day and always. Amen.

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