

I Grew Up on Conversation with Generations

I grew up on Conversations with Generations.

Little sayings that I did not understand, but did their duties all the time to keep me in line.

When grandma saw us with “undesired company” she would say, **“IF YOU LIE WITH DOGS, YOU CATCH FLEE.”**

When we as kids were adventurous, and wanted to do things on our own, and we were told of the dangers, and to leave well alone; but we didn't, and the outcome was a bruised knee or a broken bone, grandma would say **“HAAD EARS PICKNEY NYAM ROCKSTONE.”**

When success was under our noses, and we were slowly becoming slaves to the professions we had chosen, grandma would pull aside and remind us, **“THE HIGHER THE MONKEY CLIMB THE MORE HIM EXPOSE.”**

I grew up on Conversations with Generations.

Be careful how you treat others because karma is true. If you digging holes, make sure you dig two. People do you wrong, leave them to time. **“TODAY FI ME, TOMORROW FI YOU”** - that's how the universe is aligned. Live your life above what people say about you, because in the end, you will be judged by your deeds too.

Yes I grew up on Conversations with Generations.

Walk through the valley of the shadow of death and keep your eyes on the prize, because at the end of the valley, there is a cloud that is silver lined. **“TEK KIN TEETH KIBBER HEART BUN”**- laugh in the midst of the storm and be of good cheer. After all, the Lord doesn't give you more than you can bear. Forgive, but don't ever forget. What doesn't kill you, keep you stronger in the end.

ODE TO GRANDMA

Yes I grew up on Conversations With Generations.

That's what makes me the woman I am today. Say what you mean what you say. Stand for what you believe no matter the cost to pay. Honesty is still the best policy, and when in doubt, pray. Be someone people can trust, let your honor be in your word. Be careful of your habits, they are behaviors well learnt. Call a spade a spade, be consistent as the northern star. Give without expecting to receive, always be proud of who you are. Love a person for who he or she is, not who you want him or her to be, speak the truth at all times, only then will you be free.

Yes, I grew up on Conversations with Generations.

I am build on a foundation anchored in strong traditions that are based on hard work, commitment and dedication.

Yes I am a product of Conversations with Generations, and the conversations have made me a strong, independent, educated woman!

ODE TO GRANDMA

Children Live What They Learn

Grandma they tell me I am selfless and that I have a big heart. They say I really care about people and I am a genuine giver. And I humbly thank them, for they have never met you.

For children live what they learn and from I can remember, I have seen you give your all. I have seen you work so hard that even when the old singer machine quit, you kept going. I have seen you give your all, and even when it is taken advantage of, you still kept giving.

Remember how you used to make uniform and even though you did not get paid the year before, you still smile, take the measurement, and write numbers in your notebook that only you could understand. And when we fussed, reminding you that you still haven't gotten last year's money, you smile and say "but the children have to go to school."

Yes, children live what they learn, and from I can remember, I see you involved in everything at church. You cook, you bake the potato pudding, you sew the choir gowns, you dust and dust and dust the church benches, and we all have to give to the rally card that you remind us about 3 months before.

And you never once kept anybody up in your heart. You never once argued with a soul. You preferred to keep quiet, and when you disagreed you would push out your mouth, and give that stare. But grandma that you did not teach me.

Instead you taught me honesty, and since my mother's genes run through my bones, my honesty is always voiced loudly. For you taught me to speak the truth and cost it what it will and most times when I do, I am greeted with abrasive and aggressive. You never do a person wrong, and in that I learned to stand up for what I believe for you always say if we stand for nothing then we would fall for anything.

See grandma, they call me strong, but they never met you, and children live what they learn, and from I can remember, I learned your strength from your faith in your God. For you mothered and fathered 6 children and had to bury two. And when tears flowed like river from our eyes at my mother's home going, you never shed a tear. You held your sister's, your best friend's hand as she drew her last breath, and when the

ODE TO GRANDMA

results said you had cancer, you laughed, touched your breast and said “but look where God put it eehhh.”

So grandma when I am showered with these compliments, I take them with the humility you taught us. For “the higher the monkey climb, the more him expose.” And a degree or two or three does not make a person. It is manners, and hard work and truth and honesty and faith in God.

So yes, children live what they learn, and grandma, thanks.

ODE TO GRANDMA

The Breast

When we were children, we would wait at the bathroom door for you so we could touch the breast and hope we could run fast enough before the broomstick presented itself. And one time my brother was not so lucky. He had an intimate connection from a swing, while we laughed. And that was our nightly routine as children.

And sometimes you and I would laugh about the breast, hanging down like slippers from your chest, and you would remind me that you had five children whose nourishment came from the breast.

And as you got older grandma, and you needed more assistance, we would still have a laugh as we lift the breast to put on a bra sewed too many times. For though you had new ones, it seems the breast had a feel for the older. And as we struggle through bouts of laughter you would ask if I wanted some , since that was not an area in which I am blessed.

Then one day you said, "Come here Cindy, feel this breast, it feels funny." And the heaviness hit me. But 89 comes with so much aches and pain, and high blood sugar and blood pressure and too many others to mention, and we had that conversation about the breast, but then your left hand started to swell and we had to do that test.

And the results threw us in a frenzy, for though we know your sunset was upon you, all we thought about was what this cancer would do. We all began to believe and feel the worst, but you just complained about the damn doctor and how they treated the breast.

And you tell the story over and over again. "The doctor say I have cancer" and you would even joke about it. "And look where Him put it." For though we were falling apart, you had your bush tea and your faith.

And for the last 3 or so years, thought you have had times when you were sure you Lord was calling you home, thought you have been hospitalized, and have suffered a stroke, though your feet at times just won't go, the doctor put the breast as the last of the four to let you go.

ODE TO GRANDMA

And your monthly check up moves to be two months, and the breast took a back burner to the pain and the ache and the blood sugar and the blood pressure and the too many tablets you complain about each day, because you have your God, your bush tea and your faith.

And I wish that those who had that breast had just an inch of your faith. For though the medication and bush tea do their part, it is your faith that keeps the breast in check. You speak with such conviction, "I leave it to my God".

And I wonder now if as children while we play with the breast, if it ever crossed our minds that such illness could infest in what gave us all such laughter. For those nights were our ways of connecting with you, of building these relationships that now keeps us strong. That breast built the bond that bind us together - forever.

ODE TO GRANDMA

Grandma, Her God and Her Bush Tea

My grandma loved her God and her bush tea.

As children we understood that power of faith, as well the importance of finishing the cup of cerasee. After all the bitterness was more enticing than the broomstick.

Summers were filled with free days and fun, and as September drew near, the “wash-out” had to be done.

Monthly cramps were met with dog blood and vervain, and just the smell of guinea hen would cure the migraine. Soursop leaf was given to assist sleep and the pressures of the mind. Rosemary was the remedy for stomach pain of any kind. Mint and ginger ease the nausea and garlic was good for everything, so it was the master.

See grandma loved her God and her bush tea

She would always say her daddy said bush was to be boiled in three. Aloe vera. That has a different type of bitter. But it good to cleanse the body and regulate blood sugar

Our coughs were met with leaf of life, .mixed with 2 other “cold bush”, asthma was cured for life.

Yes, grandma loved her God and her bush tea

And as age brought ailments, she would complain every morning about the too many pills she had to take. She would sit on that verandah and stir her bush tea over and over again with a spoon until it was cool.

Her nights were not completed until she drank her bush tea, sometime after a nap Then she would throw her head back and “belch out the gas”.

Yes, grandma loved her God and her bush tea.

When she heard that cancer had intruded her breast, she was confident prayers and her bush tea would be best.

Yes, grandma raised us with God and her bush tea.

ODE TO GRANDMA

The bush tea strengthened our characters as it flowed through our veins. It gave us wisdom to choose our own path, yet never stray from the lessons grandma taught, and the values grandma instilled.

So today, even if we no longer drink the bush tea, we still live the importance of faith, and grandma's bush tea still runs in our veins.

1

ODE TO GRANDMA

“Not too bad, it could be worse”

I can still hear the faint whisper when I asked you how you were feeling

Not too bad, it could be worse

Even as your voice faded, even as your strength was being drained, and your body must have been rocked with pain, you never found it in you to complain.

And on the day, that cold Wednesday when my world stopped. 12:48. When my heart and soul was ripped from the core of my being, when you could hold on no longer, not even for the love you gave me, I know as you were welcomed into heaven by your sister and your child, with tears running down your eyes you said:

“Not too bad, it could be worse.”

And I cannot get the image of your lifeless shell lying in that coffin out of my head. You would have fussed with about the hat, would have said “Is who going to wear that?” You would have said something so witty that we would all laugh...

You would have told me to sit, as I stood next to you touching you over and over again as if I expected you to say “why this damn woman no leave me alone?” But I had to take in those final moments before we lowered you in your final resting home, and even then, even as we celebrated, even in death you would have said:

“Not too bad, it could be worse”

But grandma, how can it be worse than living in this world without you? How can it be worse than not having your love, your prayers, your blessings, your blessings, your truth? How can it be worse than not hearing your voice every day on the other end of the line? How can it be worse, than not knowing that even with time, missing you will not become easier?

Yet I know what you would say to me even now, as you have said over and over again, and I am still baffled at your faith that never failed, even as you buried your child, you find the strength to smile:

ODE TO GRANDMA

“Not too bad, it could be worse.”