

# Grandparent's Worst Nightmare

*Joan Metzger*

This morning I woke up in a cold sweat. My heart pounded, and I gasped for breath. Like Pac-Man, I was being chased, not by a ghost, but by a computer geek.

“Your ‘grandmother board’ is obsolete,” he jeered. “It needs to be replaced.”

“No! No!” I yelled. “I’ll get upgrades, more memory, a smaller chip. I’ll go digital. Whatever it takes! Just don’t put me in the closet with the floppies, eight-tracks, and that old black-and-white TV.”

I worry about becoming obsolete. No grandparent wants to be replaced by Game Boys, MP3’s, and PlayStations. Sometimes I get the feeling my grandson would rather spend time in his “turn-it-on and turn-it-up” world than with me.

During my morning meditation, a godly power surge zapped me with Psalm 127:3: “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

Hmmm. Maybe God is using my nightmare to give me a reality check. He could be saying, “Stop worrying about being replaced by gadgets. Enjoy the gift I’ve given to you.”

I decided it was time to stop the useless fretting. After all, God gave me qualities that today’s techno-gizmos will never have. For instance, I’m durable. I can’t think of any other 60 year old technology that is still fully operational, with its original chassis, parts, and wiring. Oh, it may take a while to recharge the batteries after heavy use, but at least they don’t have to be replaced. Also, I’m not expected to operate at breakneck speed. My grandson’s just glad I’m charged up and ready to go.

Technology is here to stay; however, we need not be intimidated by it. Sadly, our grandchild’s world is full of nanoseconds, megahertz, and gigahertz. But is that what they want from us? God has given grandparents the ability to offer the younger generation things the techno-gizmo world cannot – a haven where they can slow down and chill out. We can provide them with an environment where they need not be faster, smarter, bigger, better. Rather, they can be just what God wants them to be – kids.

To ensure system compatibility, grandparents need to plug in, turn on, and crank up the woofers. It’s time to get back to the basics.

**Begin by showing your grandkids that they are loved, cherished, and important.** Let them know God and you accept them just as they are. Show them respect, and insist on respect from them as well.

**Encourage kids** to talk about anything and everything: God, church, school, friends, values, their concerns. When they speak, make eye contact. Be truly interested. Don’t offer advice unless it’s requested. And skip the “when I was a kid” speech. You know the one: “I walked

three miles to school... no shoes... six inches of snow.” Remember, it’s better to listen than to speak.

Get with the program by **making your home a “no gadget zone.”** When the grandkids come over, all the electronic equipment gets parked at the door. Anything that uses batteries, monitors, joysticks, or the Internet is strictly off limits.

**Slow down** – no megahertz speed permitted. Create an environment where kids can escape their hurry-up world and get re-energized. Give them one-on-one quality time. Read “kid friendly” Bible stories. Play board and card games that are fun, challenging, and educational.

**Turn on the kids’ creativity** by making crafts, cooking, and baking. Public libraries and bookstores have cookbooks and craft books geared specially for kids. Bible-related craft books are also available.

**Exercise together** by going for walks or riding bikes. Play catch, throw Frisbees, and have water balloon fights. Join you community recreation center or YMCA. Walk to the nearest schoolyard to shoot basketballs, play tennis, and enjoy the playground equipment.

**Read to them.** Books give grandparents and kids many things to talk about. Most libraries have children’s books on CDs and audiotapes. Videos and DVDs are also available at many locations. If you can’t find your favorite Christian material, request it.

**Share your history** as well as that of you ancestors. Talk to your grandkids about life before remotes, microwaves, and GameBoys – when an apply wasn’t just an... Apple.

Wouldn’t it be nice if grandparents could be the “techno gizmos” of the future? In this day of upload, download, and overload, if grandparents play their games right, they’ll never be replaced by technology.

Remember, I-pod plus YOU-pod equals WE-pods.

Ah-h-h-h! Isn’t technology wonderful!

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