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<< GRANDPARENTS (Continued):

Then there are the long-distance grandparents, who stay in touch with grandchildren via the Internet, telephone, and a few visits a year. Grandparents share varied cultural backgrounds and traditions with their grandchildren. There are grandparents in their 30s and grandparents in their 90s. And more than 2.4 million grandparents in the United States have grandchildren living with them, children for whom they are responsible. Grandparents come in all shapes, sizes, ages, abilities, viewpoints, lifestyles, and energy levels. Grandparenting is a stage of life that starts at age 48 for the average person and lasts the rest of their lives. And most grandparents will tell you that, despite the challenges the role often brings them, it is one of the best things that ever happened to them. The old adage, "If I knew having grandchildren would be so much fun I would have had them first!" doesn't come out of nowhere!

In the end, it really doesn't matter if you're a fiery, salsa-dancing granny, or a grandparent with a less active lifestyle. It doesn't matter if you see your grandchildren every day or once a year. It doesn't matter if you take them to Disney World or go for a walk around your backyard. What really makes the difference is how important you make each other feel. When grandparents let their grandchildren know in one way or another that they are special and deserve their full attention, grandchildren seem to pick up on that. In turn, they make the grandparents feel special, too!

Parents also play a big role in the grandparent/grandchild relationship.

Without the efforts of parents - grandparents and grandchildren don't have the opportunity to spend time together and build a connection. Whatever the relationship between the parent and the grandparents, it is usually in the best interests of the child to have a connection with grandparents ... if only to let them know that one more loving adult thinks they are important.

National Grandparents Day - a significant, but unfortunately little-known, "national holiday" - is not just a day for grandparents. It's a day for grandchildren - and for parents, too. It's a day to celebrate this unique and special intergenerational relationship. A time for grandparents to tell grandchildren how important and special they are, and for grandchildren and parents to appreciate and let them know what an important role they play. Maybe it should just be called **Grand Day** - for grandparents and grandchildren.

Here are a few tips for celebrating "Grand Day" - For Grandparents and Grandchildren:

Make them feel special. Think about what makes the grandparents and grandchildren in your family really feel special. What do they enjoy the most? It may be as simple as a phone call, watching a movie, or sharing a meal together. Or it may require a bit more planning - taking a trip to a favorite destination together. Whatever you do, make it significant to them.

Write a letter to your grandparents. Tell them how much you appreciate them. Telling them in person or on the phone is good, too, but a letter is something they can keep and go back to again and again.