

Lessons From My Granddaughter

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Jim's mom, Helen, is one of my dearest friends and we became fast friends immediately upon meeting each other. She was very young when she met and married Jim's dad who was several years older than her and who swept her off her feet. They were married for 25 years, only because she wanted to maintain a stable home for her two offspring. Sadly she learned a few years into her marriage (when she was a little older and wiser) that her "charming" husband was a jealous, controlling man who defined the word "chauvinistic". Fortunately, Helen was the parent who had the most influence over her children but Jim, though he adored her, learned some of his dad's traits just the same.

When Jim and I first started having children, I was the parent who stayed home with them and periodically in moments of heated discussion, he would throw out some of his father's attitude "I earn the money, I work harder, I make the decisions". In later years I went on to form my own cleaning company and became a partial contributor to the total household income, however I always felt guilty for not contributing more. When Jim died, by the occasional unthinking person, I was reminded that Jim did "all" the work; it was because of him that we lived in a nice house etc.

Last night I babysat Monet overnight so that her mom might get a good night's sleep. We (Monet and I) were awake until 12:30 AM from her 11:00 PM feeding and again at 2:30 AM to 3:20 AM and 5:30 AM until 6:30 AM. At that time Karley came over to get her and I went back to sleep until 10:00 this morning. It was during those awake moments when I realized that I earned 2/3 of every nickel Jim ever brought home and I absolved myself of any previous guilt for not being a bigger bread winner. Overnight I have come to know just how undervalued I have felt all these years and now I realize the importance of my role as a mother. Thanks, Monet! It just goes to show that no one is too young to be a teacher and we are never too old to learn valuable lessons!