

A Holiday Reminder

'Tis the season to be jolly- and sometimes frazzled, tired and cranky. The holidays are often a time when we alternately feel grateful for our blessings, annoyed with the long lines at the post office, joy at a child's smile, frustrated searching for parking spots at the mall, delighted at the surprise under the tree, and a tremendous connection with the true reasons for the season.

Because I believe that connection is the greatest gift we can give, I would like to suggest that we all make a commitment to reach out and connect with an elder this holiday season. The holidays may actually be a rather lonely time for them, and with all the hustle and bustle they can get overlooked a bit. The following poem was written by a ninety-year-old woman in a convalescent hospital and found in her room after she died. She has an important message for us all:

A Crabbit Old Woman

What do you see people, what do you see?
Are you thinking when you are looking at me
A crabbit old woman, not very wise
Uncertain of habit, with far away eyes,
When you say in a loud voice- "I do wish you'd try!"
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,
And is forever losing a stocking or shoe.

Who unresisting or not, lets you do as you will,
While bathing and feeding, the long day to fill.
Is that what you are thinking, is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, folks, you're not looking at me.
I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
As I move at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another,
A young girl of sixteen with wings on her feet,
Dreaming that now a lover she'll meet.
A bride soon at twenty- my heart gives a leap,
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.
At twenty-five I have young of my own,
Who need me to build a secure happy home.
A woman of thirty, my young now grow fast
Bound to each other with ties that should last.
At forty, my young sons are grown and are gone,
But my man is beside me to see that I don't mourn.
At fifty once more babies play around my knee,
Again we know children, my loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead,
And I look to the future, I shudder with dread.
For my young are now rearing young of their own
And I think of the years and the love I have known.
I'm an old woman and nature is cruel.
"Tis her jest to make old age look like a fool."
The body is crumbles, grace and vigor depart.
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.
But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells,
I remember the joys, I remember the pain,

And I'm loving and living life over again.
I think of the years all too few- gone too fast,
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.
So open your eyes, people, open and see
Not a crabbit old woman, look closer- see me!

Author Unknown

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