

Precious Moments

By Emery J. Kohut

Our young children go through many of life's experiences, seeing them differently than we do as adults. Recently my mother passed away after a nine-year battle with Scleroderma. My children, Joshua 6 and Marissa 4, were very, very sad when their "Omi" (Oma in German for grandmother) died. They both knew their Omi was sick, but not that she might die so soon. While my mom was alive, they both spent at least 1 day a week with Omi, from 5 months old on, doing all sorts of neat things, from going on long walks (over 1 mile!) to playing games and sometimes baking cookies and cakes in the kitchen. It was a good time for both Omi and her grandchildren.

My children gave me strength during this time, as I was very close to Mom and she was instrumental in helping us with the children and their adoption. My children had quite a bit to cope with that week, as two of our pets, Mindy (our cat) and Pepper (one of our dogs), both died the same week as my mom. There were days of tears and sadness, followed by times of remembering and celebrating my mom's life. We had a memorial service and the children each selected some of their favorite pictures of Omi for the photographic collage.

One day, shortly after Mom passed, my daughter came downstairs early in the morning, looked at me, and said, "Daddy, Omi is in heaven with Mindy and Pepper. Mindy is on her lap and they are watching us." I just about fell out of my chair when she made this very profound and matter of fact statement. I could see she was sad and we sat together for a while. A few days later, Marissa asked Joshua, "How do you know Omi is in heaven?" To which my son quickly replied, "God called Omi to heaven. Her body did not work any more. She is with God." There was no doubt in his mind and love in his voice as he spoke to his sister. No one ever said anything like this to him. He came up with this answer on his own. They both sat down with me and hugged me tightly. My mother used to call Joshua an "Old Soul" and I was beginning to see what she meant. I did not

expect these words from either of my children, but to my surprise, these words and feelings came directly from them.

We often take the little things our children say or do for granted. Some times, we do not even hear them because we are too busy or are trying to get through the day or even that minute. My mom told me after Marissa came home with us to “take all the time you need to listen to your children. It is often difficult and you will not always do it, but try your hardest every day.” It is important that you listen to your children’s words and watch their actions, as they can be very subtle to very loud. My daughter and son have found wild flowers in our yard picked them and brought them to Mommy. These flowers, scruffy and shaggy, saw better days but are beautiful because they come filled with love. Love them back and listen to your children; they can teach you sometimes as much as you teach them. Look at the world through their eyes, life is too short not to re-experience a child’s innocence.

Word Count: 585