Hope and the Grandparent-Grandchild Connection

by

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ABSTRACT

While a handful of studies touch on the topic of hope and grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationship, none have made this subject the main object of inquiry. The purpose of this investigation was to explore how hope is reciprocated in extraordinary GP-GC relationships. Using a qualitative multiple case study design, three grandmother and adult granddaughter pairs were interviewed separately and were later observed engaging in a joint creative project. Nurturing, sharing and inspiring emerged as characteristics of grandmother-granddaughter relationships that were connected to hope. In addition, findings indicated that each member of the grandmother-granddaughter dyad helped the other envision a hopeful future. Grandmothers acted as hope models for their granddaughters. Reciprocally, granddaughters inspired their grandmothers to live longer by giving them hope for the future. While findings suggest that the GP-GC relationship holds potential for the intergenerational transfer of hope, future research is needed to further understand this process.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to George Levine, my grandfather and friend.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction of the Topic

Fromm (1968) described hope as “neither passive waiting nor ... unrealistic forcing of circumstance that cannot occur.... To hope means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born, and yet not to become desperate if there is no birth in our lifetime” (pp. 9-12). From this author’s perspective, taking the risk to hope actively is an essential ingredient of meaningful living (Eckardt, 1982). Jevne (1991) discussed what we can do to enhance hope in our own lives and in the work we do with others. The author suggested that one way to do this is to look for hope models, real or fictional people who have attributes that we admire. We can then model ourselves after these individuals. In my life, my grandfather, George, has been a steady hope model.

There were times when I took my Grandpa George for granted. Perhaps that is a part of being a grandchild. The phrase “you don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone” comes to mind. Of course, I always knew that my grandfather would not be around forever, but a part of me did not want to think about the reality of life without him. When a little over six years ago my grandfather’s heart gave out early one morning in the shower, I finally understood the magnitude of what he meant to me. I felt a hole in my heart, and it seemed like it would never be filled. I thought of the many special events in my life that my grandfather would not be around to share. He would not be able to walk down the aisle at my wedding or witness the birth of my first child. No longer would I hear the sound of his gentle voice or see his face light up when I walked into the room. He would never be there for me in the same way again.
Through the loss of my grandfather I have gained a new appreciation for the role that grandparents play in our lives. Our grandparents went through many of the same life experiences that we are living through, and talking to them can help ease many fears about the future. They cannot promise us the world or prevent us from suffering losses along the way. They can, however, share the wisdom gained through their own journey in life. In doing so they can help us by assuaging our fears and giving us confidence.

My heart no longer aches when I think of my grandfather. When I think of him now, memories of the moments we shared flood my senses. I see him teaching me how to play golf, trying to keep me calm as my patience wore thin. I hear the grinding sound of the juicer as he squeezed fresh oranges for me in the morning. I smell the mustiness of the old sweaters that I would borrow from him to keep me warm on cool evenings.

My grandfather was an important part of my life. When I played baseball he was my biggest fan, coming out to cheer me on whenever his health permitted. "Hit it," he would yell as the ball crossed the plate. When I chose to go back to school he was there to support me in every way he could. My grandfather came to know me by participating in my life and acting as a witness to my ups and downs.

We did not always agree. For example, one time when I was a child visiting my grandparents' winter home in Yuma, Arizona, I remember a disagreement we had about ice cream. I had filled my bowl to the top and was less than pleased when my grandfather suggested I follow a path of moderation. Another memory that stands out in my mind is a trip that my grandfather and I took over the border from Arizona into Mexico during my pre-teen years. My grandfather was bargaining with a leather craftsman in Mexicali over the price of an item he wished to purchase. I remember thinking that my grandfather was
trying to take advantage of this economically deprived storeowner and displayed my
disapproval of his behaviour. My grandfather attempted to explain to me that haggling
was an appropriate way to do business in Mexicali, but I was not easily convinced.

Whether we were enjoying each other’s company or were caught in a power
struggle, the important thing was our ability to communicate with each other. My
grandfather and I could always talk about what gave our lives meaning. We spoke about
our fears, our hopes, and our dreams. I remember having a conversation with my
grandfather about death. I shared my fear of death with him and asked him if he too was
afraid to die. He told me that as he aged his attitude towards death changed. He no longer
feared dying. He said that he had done many things in his life and that he was satisfied
with his accomplishments. He also shared that he was getting tired and that death would
offer him rest. After having that conversation with my grandfather I too felt less afraid of
death. Knowing that he had reached a level of contentment in his life gave me hope that I
too could one day get there.

My relationship with my grandfather was extraordinary in the sense that we were
very good friends. The depth of communication we shared was in part due to the strength
of this friendship. My grandfather valued friendship highly and often talked on the
subject. It was paramount to him that family not only love each other, but like each other
as well. My grandfather and I both liked and loved each other. We also trusted and
respected one another.

Though he was somewhat weary of life my grandfather lived with integrity until
the very end. He was always talking about new friends he had made or a new restaurant
he had discovered. Even on the very morning of his heart attack he had a lunch date with
a friend. To me, this ability to embrace life is a key aspect of hope. Similarly, Jevne (1994) offered a description of hope as a voice housed in the heart that "yearns to say 'yes' to life" (p. 8).

Lopez, Floyd, Ulven, and Snyder (2000) suggested that "hopeful relationships ... enhance hope" (p. 137). My grandfather embraced our relationship in the same hopeful manner he embraced life. During my early 20s, when I was busy with university, school, friends, and extracurricular activities, phoning my grandparents just to say hello was not at the top of my priority list. Knowing this, my grandfather didn't sit around waiting for me to call him. Rather, he would take the initiative and call me. He never complained about my long absences, and there was no guilt involved. He just wanted to see how my life was going or make plans to get together for lunch.

Researchers suggest that hope involves a relational component (Farran, Herth, & Popovich, 1995; Jevne, 1991). In addition, literature indicates that supportive relationships help foster a sense of hope (Carson, Soeken, & Grimm, 1988; Dufault & Martocciho, 1985; Forbes, 1994; Gaskins & Forte, 1995; Haase, Britt, Coward, Leidy, & Penn, 1992; Penrod & Morse, 1997; Raleigh, 1992; Wong-Wylie & Jevne, 1997; Yarcheski, Scoloveno, & Mahon, 1994). Moreover, it is widely recognized that hopefulness plays a positive role in the preservation and promotion of human health (Kylma & Vehvilainen-Julkunen, 1997):

There is no longer any serious question that hope is a critical factor in recovery from and adjustment to many difficult life circumstances. Hope is capable of changing lives. Having hope enables people to envision a future in which they are
potentially active participants. (R. F. Jevne, personal communication, November 20, 2003)

I embarked on this research project as a tribute to the hopefulness that my grandfather fostered within me. The experience of hope passed to me through my grandfather has led me to question how hope might be reciprocated in extraordinary grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationships. While my grandfather is no longer alive to confirm my belief, I suspect that I also contributed to my grandfather's sense of hopefulness. I carry on in this world now that he cannot, and this makes me part of his future. The GP-GC relationship may create a bond through which hope can be transmitted from one generation to the next. Investigating the hope enhancing qualities of these relationships may prove valuable in promoting the health of both grandparents and their grandchildren.

I chose a case study methodology in order to explore the phenomenon of hope within the GP-GC relationship. Case study has been described as "an opportunity to see what others have not seen, to reflect the uniqueness of our own lives, to engage the best of our interpretive powers, and to make, even by its integrity alone, an advocacy for those things we cherish” (Stake, 1995, p. 136). This research provided the opportunity for me to reflect on the unique nature of my relationship with my grandfather and to explore an area of research that is close to my heart.

I have listened to the stories of the adult grandchildren who participated in this study. These participants believed that their grandparents were extraordinary, sometimes for different reasons than those that I cite when it comes to my grandfather. Thus, within the context of this study, the term extraordinary GP-GC relationship refers to a
relationship with a grandparent that the grandchild participant identified as significant to them and exceptional in some way.

It is important to note that I believe it possible for hopefulness to be fostered in a relationship that is not considered to be extraordinary by the grandparent and/or grandchild. I will use a personal experience as an example. I barely knew my other grandfather, Jack. He died of a stroke when I was three years old. I remember going to visit him in the hospital after his first stroke. Although he found it very difficult to move, he would always painstakingly reach into his bedside drawer and emerge with some candies for my brother and me. For me, this image is a hopeful one. Though I do not consider my relationship with my Grandpa Jack to have been an extraordinary one, I believe that in his own way he transmitted a sense of hope to me.

While over 100 definitions of hope are proposed in the literature the trend in hope research is moving toward description as opposed to definition (R. F. Jevne, personal communication, November 20, 2003). Keeping with this trend, this study explored participants' personal meanings of hope. Moreover, the "key philosophical assumption ... upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by the individuals interacting in their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). In other words, in contrast to the positivist quantitative researcher, qualitative researchers are interested in the multiple constructions and interpretations that individuals have of reality (Merriam, 2002b). Throughout the present study I maintained an openness to the participants' experiences of hope as holding varied and multiple meanings. For example, when participants spoke of hope as connected to optimism, spirituality, or religion, these
alternative meanings were welcomed and acknowledged within the parameters of qualitative research.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the phenomenon of hope in the context of the GP-GC relationship. I sought to increase the general understanding of extraordinary GP-GC relationships and the role of hope within them. This purpose is reflected in the following primary and secondary research questions.

Primary research question:
How is hope reciprocated in extraordinary GP-GC relationships?

Secondary research questions:
a) What meanings do participants attach to the concept of hope?
b) What characteristics of extraordinary GP-GC relationships help foster a reciprocal sense of hope?

In this chapter I have introduced the topic, shared my personal experiences, discussed the purpose of this study, and outlined primary and secondary research questions. In Chapter 2 I will present a review of prior research found in the literature related to my topic. Subsequently, in Chapter 3 I will discuss the methods used to conduct this research. In Chapter 4 I will present the findings from within and cross-case analysis. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will interpret these findings and present what I have found meaningful during my investigation.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

While a handful of studies touch on the topic of hope and grandparent-grandchild (GP-GC) relationships, there is an absence of research that has made this subject the main object of inquiry. Consequently, in Chapter 2 I will look at the existing literature in the five areas relevant to my topic of investigation: a) the history of GP-GC research; b) the GP-GC relationship; c) grandparents and adult grandchildren; d) hope meanings and dimensions; and e) hope and relationship.

Grandparent Research: A Historical Context

The psychological study of the GP-GC relationship has gained increasing attention from researchers (Smith, 1991). Research into grandparenthood first emerged in the late 1940s and 1950s, a period marked by family upheaval as a result of World War II and the baby boom (Szinovacz, 1998). Demographic and social trends included increased urbanization and longevity as well as the emergence of the nuclear household. The research of this era focused primarily on grandparents’ function within this social context. According to Szinovacz, a prevalent theme during this time period was grandparents as rescuers in family crises.

Researchers in the 1960s paid increasing attention to issues of aging. Prior emphasis on grandparent function gave way to “a focus on the meaning and content of the [grandparent] role” (Szinovacz, 1998, p. 5). The 1970s were marked by continued interest in GP-GC relationships, with particular focus on the perceptions of grandchildren about their relationships with grandparents. Radical family developments (including teenage pregnancy, divorce and single parenthood, as well as women joining the labour
force) once again spurred interest in the supportive function of grandparents. In the 1980s changes in the social structure were compounded by issues such as drug addiction, AIDS, and cutbacks to social and welfare programs (Szinovacz). Moreover, the family was increasingly viewed as a system that extended beyond the nuclear family. This perspective likely contributed to an appreciation of intergenerational relationships such as those between grandparents and grandchildren (Wilcoxon, 1987). In addition, changing demographics, namely the longer survival rate of the elderly, led to inquiry into the relationship between adolescent grandchildren and their grandparents (Szinovacz).

Over the last decade, the topic of grandparents raising grandchildren has become increasingly prevalent in the literature (Szinovacz, 1998). Furthermore, researchers have continued to explore how grandparents can serve as support for their grandchildren following the divorce of the middle generation (Cogswell & Henry, 1995; Cooney & Smith, 1996; Schutter, Scherman, & Carroll, 1997). In contrast to problem-oriented research on grandparenting, recent research has begun to explore a sundry of new themes. One example is the emerging interest in adult grandchildren’s relationships with grandparents that follows from earlier demographic studies (Szinovacz).

**Grandparent-Grandchild Relationships**

The earliest research investigated the GP-GC relationship from the grandparent’s perspective. Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) recognized the lack of attention paid to the grandparent role in existing research. In response, they investigated three dimensions of grandparenthood including the degree of comfort in the role, the significance and meaning of the role, and styles of grandparenting. Five categories of grandparenting styles emerged from their interviews with 70 sets of middle-class grandparents: formal,
fun seeker, surrogate, reservoir of family wisdom, and distant figure. The formal
grandparent maintained an interest in the grandchild and was careful not to offer advice
to the parents. The fun seeker grandparent enjoyed a mutual relationship with the
grandchild involving shared activities directed towards having fun. The surrogate parent
referred to a grandmother who cared for her grandchildren when the mother was at work.
The reservoir of family wisdom style involved grandfathers in positions of authority
providing skills or resources. Finally, the distant figure grandparent, while benevolent,
had infrequent contact with the grandchild.

Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) researched the GP-GC relationship from the
perspective of both grandchildren and grandparents. From the grandchild’s point of view,
the roles of grandparents appeared to be multidimensional in nature. Their research was
based on over 300 in-depth personal interviews carried out over the course of several
years as well as a broad survey of children in schools and daycare centers. Findings
indicated that the roles of grandparents fell into five categories. These included the
grandparent as a) historian—a bridge to the family’s culture and the past; b) mentor—a
wise and experienced guide; c) role model—a model of older adulthood; d) wizard—a
fosterer of creativity and imagination; and e) nurturer—a supportive and stabilizing force
for the family. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) highlighted the shifting nature of these
roles as the grandchild and grandparent grow and change. The authors did not, however,
view these roles as developmental stages. Rather, they asserted that “the only
fundamental variable … is the depth of the emotional attachment between grandparent
and grandchild” (Kornhaber & Woodward, p. 178).
In contrast to other researchers’ attempts at classification and generalization, Matthews and Sprey (1985) suggested that the complexity of the GP-GC relationship cannot be easily reduced to five or six categories. They proposed that rather than reacting to the role of the grandparents, grandchildren respond to the distinctiveness of each individual grandparent. The authors found that the attachments of grandchildren were not to grandparents in general, but rather to particular grandparents within the family. Furthermore, these authors suggested that in order to gain insight into the GP-GC relationship, each relationship must be considered as unique.

Gratton and Haber (1996) discussed the most recent shift in American values: grandparents, once experienced as demanders of respect and obedience, are being seen as companions, sharing love, friendship, and affection with grandchildren. Specifically, “this emphasis on companionship has resulted in the need to more fully understand these dynamic, complex, bi-directional relationships and to study the effects of intergenerational affiliation in both the younger and older members of the dyad” (Wiscott & Koper-Frye, 2000, p. 200).

Grandparents and Adult Grandchildren

Change and development are endemic to all relationships, and so is continuity—the child who reaches up to take her grandmother’s hand as they cross the street will be different than the woman who reaches down thirty years later to again take her grandmother’s hand as they cross the street, but they will still be holding hands. (Hodgson, 1998, p. 183)

Historically, GP-GC studies have focused on the relationship between young grandchildren and their grandparents (Boon & Brussoni, 1996; Brussoni & Boon, 1998;
Dubas, 2001; Giarrusso, Feng, Silverstein, & Bengtson, 2001; Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Hodgson, 1998; Hodgson, 1992; Holladay et al., 1998; Kennedy, 1989, 1991, 1992a, 1992b; Langer, 1990; Mills, Wakeman, & Fea, 2001; Roberto, Allen, & Blieszner, 2001; Roberto & Stroes, 1992; Sanders & Trygstad, 1993; Wiscott & K opera-Frye, 2000). In contrast, recent demographic changes have spurred interest in the relationship between adult grandchildren and grandparents (Hodgson, 1992). Increasing our understanding of the nature of these relationships gains significance given the demographic reality that an increasing number of grandchildren will enter adulthood with at least one living grandparent (Hodgson, 1992; Schlesinger & Schlesinger, 2004). At the age of 20, approximately 75% of North American grandchildren still have a living grandparent (Schlesinger & Schlesinger, 2004). This increased overlap of lives creates opportunities for grandparents and grandchildren to develop and maintain adult relationships and possibly share the grandchildren's transition to marriage and parenthood (Rosenthal & Gladstone, 2000).

With decreases in fertility and increases in life expectancy, the trend is toward a more vertical family structure (Falk & Falk, 2002). This is different than in previous years, when family structures were horizontal (that is, there were high fertility rates and low life expectancy rates) and when few grandparents lived to know their grandchildren as adults. This vertical structure has created the opportunity for long-term relationships between grandparents and grandchildren. As a result, “practical support for each other and emotional relationships are significant in the lives of both groups now and will become even more important as the century progresses” (Falk & Falk, p. 40). As grandchildren mature and move into adulthood, the responsibility for building a quality
relationship between grandparents and grandchildren lies less with the middle generation than with the grandparent and grandchild (Sanders & Trygstad, 1993). This shift has created the opportunity for grandparent and grandchild generations to form direct and voluntary relationships with one another (Roberto & Stroes, 1992). There is, however, some evidence that the middle generation continues to influence the GP-GC relationship even when the grandchild is no longer living at home (Hodgson, 1992).

While Barranti (1985) suggested that the GP-GC relationship decreases in significance as grandchildren move into late adolescence and early adulthood, a body of research provides evidence that grandparents continue to play a significant role in the lives of young adult grandchildren (Brussoni & Boon, 1998; Giarrusso et al., 2001; Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Hodgson, 1992; Holladay et al., 1998; Mills et al., 2001; Sanders & Trygstad, 1993; Wiscott & Kopera-Frye, 2000). In a Canadian study, Hodgson (1992) found that the appreciation both men and women had for their grandparents increased as the grandchildren grew into adulthood.

A number of factors have been found to mediate the adult grandchild-grandparent relationship. Research by Mills et al. (2001) supported previous findings that grandchildren feel a closer bond with maternal grandparents in general, and to grandmothers on the maternal side more specifically. The relationship between adult grandchildren and paternal grandfathers was found to be the weakest of all GP-GC relationships (Mills et al). In addition, young adult granddaughters felt closer to and rated their relationship to their grandmothers as more important in contrast to grandsons (Dubas, 2001). Finally, grandsons rated themselves as closer to grandfathers as compared to granddaughters (Dubas).
Hodgson (1992) asked adult grandchildren to reflect on their relationship with the living grandparent to whom they felt the closest. Themes that emerged included physical proximity and frequency of contact, being raised by or living with a grandparent at some point, and the personal qualities of the grandparent. Findings from Boon and Brussoni's (1996) study of young adults' relationships with their closest grandparent suggested that "young adults desire mutuality of feelings in their relationships with their grandparents" (p. 453). In other words, if adult grandchildren believed that they had a special relationship with their grandparent, they desired to know that their grandparent felt the same way. It was also found that grandchildren who felt close to their grandparent came in personal contact with these grandparents more often, spoke with them more frequently on the telephone, and participated in a wider array of joint activities. In contrast to Hodgson's study, these authors found that physical proximity was unrelated to emotional closeness.

The theme of exchange has been discovered and/or explored in research on adult grandchildren and their grandparents (Harwood & Lin, 2000; Langer, 1990). Harwood and Lin examined grandparents' written accounts of communication with their college-aged grandchildren. One of the findings involved the theme of exchange. The exchange consisted primarily of grandparents offering information and advice to grandchildren. In addition, grandparents sometimes described gaining something from their grandchildren, varying from a feeling of youthfulness to computer knowledge. In another study, Langer (1990) examined the functional exchange of services (both expressive and instrumental) between adult grandchildren and their grandparents. Expressive support included phoning, visiting, sending greeting cards, letter writing, giving advice, and exchanging
gifts. Instrumental support included meal preparation, household chores, personal care, shopping, help with transportation, and help with bureaucratic red tape. Results indicated that adult grandchildren provided more expressive and instrumental support than they received.

The results of one study by Kennedy (1989) indicated that while college students felt an obligation to their grandparents, the strongest motivational factor for maintaining relationships was enjoyment of time spent with grandparents. In a second study by Kennedy (1991), the author questioned 391 young adult grandchildren about their reasons for maintaining closeness with the grandparent to whom they felt the most attached. The following reasons were given high ratings by participants: a) enjoyment of activities shared and the personality of grandparent; b) experience of support, attention, and appreciation from grandparent; and c) grandparent as a model, advisor, teacher, and source of inspiration.

*Hope Meanings and Dimensions*

They ask for definitions
The academics that is
The scholars muse
and the theologians struggle
The linguists quibble
and the philosophers argue
and all remain puzzled

The single mom
The dying patient
The person with MS who can no longer make his limbs move
They don't ask for definitions

He will tell you
The nurse says it with compassion
and her grandmother sang it with her eyes
His mother cries it with every tear
and her brother tied it to a tree
They know it in their souls
and none are puzzled


Despite researchers’ many attempts to define hope, a lack of consensus persists, and this construct remains somewhat elusive (Eliott & Olver, 2002; Wong-Wylie & Jevne, 1997). Hope has been described as a way of feeling, a way of thinking, a way of behaving, and a way of relating to oneself and one’s world (Farran et al., 1995), a process that is influenced by early relationships in life (Erikson, 1997), goal directed (Snyder, 2000), and multidimensional and process oriented (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985). Moreover, other researchers have questioned the very utility of searching for a definitive definition of hope (Eliott & Olver).

The origin of hope has also been the topic of much debate. Some located the source of hope externally while others contested that the origin of hope lies primarily within the individual (Eliott & Olver, 2002). Hope has also been viewed as a construct with both universal and individual dimensions (Nekolaichuk, Jevne, & Maguire, 1999). It is universal in that each person has had some experience of hope or hopelessness, and it is individual in that each person’s encounter with hope is uniquely his or her own.

Historically, the study of hope has been the domain of theologians, writers, and philosophers (McGee, 1984). Greek philosophers had a tendency to view hope as an evil, deducing that “since fate was unchangeable, hope was an illusion” (Menninger, 1959, p. 483). In his writings to Greek friends, St. Paul challenged Greek fatalism, advocating for hope’s rightful place alongside love. Similarly, Martin Luther viewed hope in a positive light, declaring that “everything that is done in the world is done by hope” (Menninger, p. 483).
Jevne (1991) explained that an important distinction exists between hoping and coping and suggested that those who cope but are deficient in hope have lost touch with their sense of aliveness. Conversely, individuals who hope yet cope ineffectively are lacking the tools to transform hope into action. Moreover, Jevne (1991) hypothesized that there are at least two levels of hope. The first is very specific in nature, taking the form of a goal or a desire (i.e., I hope for ...). The second type of hope is both more general and at the same time more personal than the first. The author described this second type of hope as “an intangible you can feel when you relate to someone ... a sense of the possible” (p. 151).

Similarly, Dufault and Martocchio (1985) created a model of hope incorporating two spheres, generalized and particularized. The authors based this model on findings from clinical data collected over two years from 35 elderly cancer patients. The data were then confirmed by a study of 47 terminally ill individuals aged 14 and older. Generalized hope was “broad in scope and not linked to any particular concrete or abstract object of hope” (Dufault & Martocchio, p. 380). In contrast, particularized hope was concerned with a hope object, abstract or concrete things that are hoped for by the individual. Particularized hope illuminated what a person perceives to be most important in life. Generalized hope could protect an individual against despair when particularized hopes were not achieved.

In addition to these two spheres, Dufault and Martocchio (1985) discussed six dimensions of hope: cognitive, behavioural, affective, affiliative, temporal, and contextual. The affiliative dimension was a relational component characterized by a person’s relationships with other individuals (alive or dead), God, or a higher power
and/or other living things. The temporal dimension focused on a person's experience of time (past, present, and future) as it related to hopes and hoping. While hope was directed toward the future, past and present were also involved in the hoping process (Dufault & Martocchio). Similarly, Jevne (personal communication, November 20, 2003) discussed the concept of one's hope history. Hope history can be described as the story of individuals and events that have influenced a person's understanding of hope. This understanding in turn affects the manner in which we think about our past, act in our present, and approach our future.

Farran et al. (1995) offered a description of hope that included affective, cognitive, and behavioural components:

Hope constitutes an essential experience of the human condition. It functions as a way of feeling, a way of thinking, a way of behaving, and a way of relating to oneself and one's world. Hope has the ability to be fluid in its expectations, and in the event that the desired object or outcome does not occur, hope can still be present. (p. 6)

Farran et al. (1995) reasoned that we could begin to understand the construct of hope through an understanding of what hope is not. According to these authors, wishing and optimism are two somewhat related concepts that are often confused with hope. Farran et al. argued that the three constructs differed affectively, cognitively, and behaviourally. Affectively, wishing and optimism focus almost exclusively on the positive outcome. In contrast, though the situation may be painful and difficult, the hopeful person remains open to the pain and its eventual possibilities. Cognitively, wishing and optimism are more constricted than hope in that they both refer to the most positive outcome possible.
Conversely, hope is flexible and expansive. Hope encompasses the possibility of disappointment and enables the individual to adapt to a variety of outcomes. Behaviourally, optimism and hope are more active than wishing. Those who merely wish often do little to work towards the desired outcome. Thus, from the perspective of Farran et al., wishing and optimism differ from hope both qualitatively and quantitatively. At the same time, these constructs may function as precursors to the phenomenon of hope. For example, by first learning to be optimistic, a person may begin to acknowledge the possibilities and act in an increasingly hopeful manner. Moreover, wishing and optimism may prove helpful when people encounter difficult experiences and work toward a more hopeful stance (Farran et al.).

In his cognitively oriented theory of hope, Snyder (2000) proposed that hope is comprised of two components. The first component involves a sense of agency defined as “successful, goal-related determination” (Snyder & Forsyth, 1991, p. 287). The second component, the pathway, involves the “perception of one or more strategies that can be implemented in order to achieve one’s goals” (Snyder & Forsyth, p. 289). A sense of agency propels an individual along the imagined pathway towards a goal. According to Snyder’s (2000) theory, when an individual encounters a blockage to a pathway, alternative pathways have to be sought. When an obstacle presents itself, more hopeful individuals perceive that they can use alternative routes and have the agency to act accordingly (Snyder, 2000).

From a developmental perspective, Erikson (1997) proposed that hope is a process that is influenced by early relationships in life. He suggested that the nourishment of maternal/parental relationships in infancy teaches the child to trust or mistrust. It is this
sense of trust in the world that forms the foundation upon which intrapersonal and interpersonal hope is built (Erikson). Thus, the support of others is an important factor that contributes to a sense of hopefulness (McGee, 1984). In other words, the experience of hope is one that is given and received through human relationships (Jevne, 1991). It is a relational process that “is only possible on the level of the us” (Marcel, 1962, p. 10).

The Hope Research Advisory Committee (2002a) of the Hope Foundation of Alberta conducted a population-based survey of hope and health in Alberta. The Hope Foundation of Alberta is a non-profit organization dedicated to understanding and enhancing hope in individuals, families, and institutions (for more information visit http://www.ualberta.ca/HOPE/). Participants in the survey were invited to describe how they viewed hope. They were asked to choose one of the following items that best described what hope meant to them: a) being open to possibilities; b) having a good future; c) having goals or plans; d) finding meaning in life; e) being connected to others; f) having a deep inner faith; or g) having a positive outlook.

While participants chose responses from all seven categories, the most popular answer was “having a positive outlook” (39.3%). The second and third most frequent responses were “having a deep inner faith” (16.1%) and “having goals and plans” (13.5%) respectively. These results indicated that “it might be important to understand what hope means for each person, as opposed to adopting a single definition of hope” (Hope Research Advisory Committee, 2002a, p. 7).

Eliott and Olver (2002) analyzed the words of 12 cancer patients for insight into how hope was perceived by these individuals. These authors focused on the linguistic features of hope as it occurred in the spontaneous speech of the participants. For example,
patients used the word hope as a noun or adjective (hope/s, hopeless, hopeful), and as a verb or adverb (hope/d, hoping, hopefully). Results of the study lend support to the multiplicity of hope in that patients understood the word hope in a number of different ways. Moreover, these understandings were not always in agreement with medical constructions of hope. The authors concluded that instead of attempting to delimit and measure the construct of hope, researchers should focus on specific meanings of hope for the individual patient (Eliott & Olver).

**Hope and Relationship**

Whenever I go to a hospital, I try to find the window where you can see the babies who have just been born. I don’t know which I enjoy more, looking at the newborns or soaking up the joy of the relatives viewing their offspring. This day was different, however. I walked quickly past the baby-viewing window of the Kansas City hospital and headed to my daughter’s room. There I met my granddaughter for the first time. As I held her, I wanted to give her a gift.... Not the usual stuffed animal and outfits, but something she could use for the rest of her life. She should get a lasting gift from her grandfather. It came to me that I would like to give her hope. When the other gifts have long since worn out and lost their usefulness, she would still have hope. (Snyder, 1994, pp. 1-2)

Research into hope suggests that supportive relationships can foster a sense of hope (Carson et al., 1988; Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Forbes, 1994; Gaskins & Forte, 1995; Haase et al., 1992; Penrod & Morse, 1997; Raleigh, 1992; Wong-Wylie & Jevne, 1997; Yarcheski et al., 1994). However, research has yet to be conducted on the phenomenon of hope as it relates specifically to the GP-GC relationship.
Raleigh (1992) interviewed 90 patients with chronic illnesses. He found that family, friends, and spiritual beliefs were the most common sources of support for patient hopefulness. Similarly, in a qualitative study of 12 individuals between the ages of 65 and 95, many of the participants spoke of family members, friends, and co-workers who had given them a sense of hope (Gaskins & Forte, 1995).

In another study, Wong-Wylie and Jevne (1997) investigated interactions between physicians and HIV seropositive individuals that decreased or enhanced patient hope. These researchers found that the patients’ perception of the doctor as caring, understanding, supportive, and encouraging helped to either sustain or enhance hope. Similarly, Dufault and Martocchio (1985) found that the actions of other individuals served as a source of hope in a number of different ways:

Other persons influence the continuation of hope by their affirmation, loving support, and encouragement, as well as by their willingness to listen, and to share hopes, associated thoughts and feelings. Other persons also reinforce individuals’ hopes by conveying the mutuality of the hopes, that is, they hope for the desired outcome also. (Dufault & Martocchio, p. 387)

Only four studies peripherally connect the specific topic of hope and the GP-GC relationship. The first is one by Kennedy (1992a), who researched young adults’ relationships with their closest grandparent. Interestingly, the concept of hope was imbedded in the questionnaire used in the study. Kennedy posed a number questions to the grandchildren, asking them to indicate a category of closeness that described the relationship with the chosen grandparent. Two questions pertained to the sense of being known. Participants were asked to describe: a) how well they knew their grandparent, and
b) how well they felt they were known by their grandparent. Knowing was further defined as understanding feelings, knowing hopes, and knowing activities in which the other was involved. Five main elements were found to be associated with successful GP-GC relationships. These included: a) a strong sense of closeness; b) a strong sense of being known by the grandparent; c) a strong sense of knowing the grandparent; d) a sense of the grandparent as a strong influence in grandchild’s life; and e) a sense of an authentic or independent relationship supported but not dominated by the parent (Kennedy, 1992a).

In the second study, conducted by Kalliopuska (1994), 79 retired grandparents were asked the open-ended question: “What do you get from your grandchildren?” Results indicated that the grandchildren gave grandparents inspiration, joy, love, contentment, positive life attitudes, company, closeness, hope, and faith in the future.

The third study looked at the grandfathers’ perception of their relationships with their adult grandchildren (Roberto et al., 2001). The researchers asked the grandfathers to discuss their hopes and dreams for their grandchildren. All of the grandfathers reported that they wanted their grandchildren to receive a good education, to be successful in their career, and to be happily married.

Finally, a recent study by Kaufman & Elder (2003) investigated the effect of grandparenting on age identity. The researchers surveyed 666 elderly Americans and found that those who enjoyed being grandparents felt younger, perceived old age to begin later, and hoped to live longer than those who did not enjoy grandparenting. Interestingly, hoping to live longer was only significant for grandmothers and not for grandfathers. The researchers hypothesized that this difference could be attributed to women’s deeper level of investment in their grandchildren’s future.
In the present study the phenomenon of hope in the GP-GC relationships was further investigated. The primary question was: “How is hope reciprocated in extraordinary GP-GC relationships?” Secondary questions included the following: a) “What meanings do participants attach to the concept of hope?” and b) “What characteristics of extraordinary GP-GC relationships help foster a reciprocal sense of hope?”
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Overview

In Chapter 2 I illustrated that research has yet to be conducted on hope as it relates to the GP-GC relationship. Related studies offer only surface insight into this phenomenon, indicating a need for exploration of this issue. In Chapter 3 specific areas addressed include the general approach, research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and validity.

General Approach

The general approach taken in this study was a qualitative one. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations.... At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3)

Qualitative research investigates the knowledge and practices of participants. Moreover, in contrast with quantitative approaches, “qualitative methods take the researcher’s communication with the field and its members as an explicit part of knowledge production” (Flick, 2002, p. 6). Both subjective perspectives of participants and researchers are included in the research process.
Merriam (1998) outlined five characteristics of qualitative research. The first is the interest that qualitative researchers have in understanding the meanings that people have constructed. The underlying assumption in qualitative research is that reality is constructed by individuals interacting in the world. The second characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher acts as the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data. This means that all data are mediated through the researcher. The third characteristic is that the researcher is usually involved in fieldwork. Fieldwork entails physically going out into a setting in order to observe the behaviour of participants in their natural environment. Qualitative investigators study social settings in order to “understand the meaning of participants’ lives in the participants’ own terms” (Janesick, 2000, p. 382). This differs from quantitative research, where researchers may collect data without ever coming face to face with participants. The fourth characteristic is the inductive strategy employed by the researcher. Inductive research involves building concepts, theories, or hypotheses, as opposed to testing an existing theory. The fifth and final characteristic is the richly descriptive nature of qualitative research:

Since qualitative research focuses on process, meaning, and understanding, the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about the phenomenon. (Merriam, 1998, p. 8)

In turn, this rich description aids the reader in acquiring an experiential understanding of the topic of study (Stake, 1995).
Research Design

A case study approach was selected for the purposes of this investigation. Case studies are characterized by their “intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Stake (2000) described a bounded system as a purposive and integrated structure with working parts and patterned behaviour. The case study research questions typically reflect issues of interest to the researcher (Stake, 2000). The issue in this inquiry was hope in GP-GC relationships, and it was reflected in a) the primary research question of how hope is reciprocated in extraordinary GP-GC relationships; and b) the secondary research questions of what meanings participants attach to the concept of hope and what characteristics of extraordinary GP-GC relationships help to foster a reciprocal sense of hope.

The nature of this case study was both instrumental and collective. Instrumental case studies are used when there is a general need for understanding and when the researcher believes that she may gain insight into the phenomenon by studying a particular case or cases. Conversely, the researcher selects an intrinsic case study in order to better her understanding of the particular case or cases (Stake, 2000). In an instrumental case study the case is not of primary interest. Rather, it plays a supportive role and by facilitating our understanding of the phenomenon (Stake, 2000). When an instrumental study is expanded to include more than one case it is called a collective case study (Stake, 2000). Each case study then becomes instrumental to learning about the issue or question at hand (Stake, 1995). In this study, each extraordinary GP-GC pair was
considered as a separate case and was instrumental to understanding the issue of hope within the GP-GC relationship.

Sampling

The case study approach is a unique method of investigation in that two levels of sampling are usually necessary (Merriam, 1998). The first step involves identifying the case to be studied, also known as the bounded system or unit of analysis. The case may be chosen because it is an instance of a particular issue. Within the case, there are a number of locations that could be visited, activities that could be observed, and individuals who could be interviewed. Thus, the second step involves choosing samples within the case. These cases are selected based on relevant criteria to be determined by the researcher in accordance with the research questions. This procedure is known as purposeful sampling: “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61).

A number of different strategies can be used to select information-rich cases (Patton, 1990). I chose a sampling strategy based on intensity. Intensity sampling utilizes information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton). In this study, the issue or phenomenon of interest was hope in GP-GC relationships. Extraordinary GP-GC relationships were chosen as individual cases specifically because the strength of these relationships was hypothesized to exhibit a strong instance of the issue or phenomenon.

Anderson and Arsenault (1998) stated that there are no rules about the size of the sample in qualitative research. Rather, sample size is dependent on factors such as
usefulness, credibility, and availability of time and resources. However, it is typical for a researcher to choose no more than four cases (Creswell, 1998). Patton (1990) advised identifying the lowest possible sample size “based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study” (p. 186). With this in mind, I selected three cases consisting of three GP-GC dyads. The selection criteria included the following:

a) grandchild of 20 years of age or older;
b) grandchild and grandparent both able to communicate thoughts clearly;
c) grandchild and grandparent residing in Edmonton or surrounding areas;
d) grandchild viewing her relationship with her grandparent as exceptional or extraordinary.

In order to recruit participants for this study, flyers advertising the study were posted in various locations including community bulletin boards, the University of Alberta campus, and coffee houses. In addition, a call for participants appeared in a local newspaper. Overall, 17 individuals responded. Some factors that excluded a number of these individuals included grandchildren who were too young, grandparents who lived in distant locations, and grandparents that were too ill to participate. Thus, from 17 respondents, four GP-GC pairs met the aforementioned selection criteria. One of these dyads participated in the individual interviews but was unable to participate in the observational portion of this research due to health factors. The data from this dyad were dropped from the study.

GP-GC pairs were included in the sample so that the GP-GC relationship could be investigated from the perspectives of both generations.
The analysis of grandparent-grandchild dyads represents an innovation that extends our understanding of the relationship by considering both generational perspectives. Models that consider only one-way flows of affection ignore interdependence of grandparents and adult grandchildren over the life course. (Giarrusso et al., 2001, p. 476)

Intergenerational researchers have stressed the importance of including the viewpoints of all family members in question (Giarrusso et al., 2001; Giarrusso, Stallings, & Bengtson, 1995). According to the intergenerational stake hypothesis, the older generation will evaluate their relationship with the younger generation in a more favourable light than will members of the younger generation (Giarrusso et al., 1995). This same discrepancy was found in research on grandparents’ relationships with their adult grandchildren (Bengtson, Giarrusso, Silverstein, & Wang, 2000, as cited in Giarrusso et al., 2001, p. 457). In other words, grandparents may evaluate their relationship with their adult grandchildren in a more favourable light than the adult grandchildren. To counter this phenomenon, the grandchild’s view of the GP-GC relationship as extraordinary served as the fourth selection criterion in this study.

**Instrumentation**

Three types of instrumentation were used in this investigation. The semistructured interview functioned as the primary instrument. Observation in the form of videotaping served as the second form of instrumentation. Finally, documentation (field notes, memorabilia, photographs taken by the researcher, and artwork/crafts created by the participants) acted as the third instrument.
As Stake (1995) explained, the interview is the main form of instrumentation employed in case study research. Interviewing is particularly appropriate when the researcher intends to study “people’s understandings of the meanings in their lived world” and describe “their experiences and self-understanding” (Kvale, 1996, p. 105). In other words:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe…. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective. (Patton, 1990, p. 278)

Kvale (1996) observed that “the qualitative research interview is a process in which the interviewer and interviewee co-construct knowledge: the interviewer and the subject act in relation to each other and reciprocally influence each other” (p. 35).

The semistructured interview served as the primary instrumentation in this study. The purpose of the semistructured interview is to elicit descriptions of the lifeworlds of the participants and to understand these meanings in relation to the phenomenon under investigation (Kvale, 1996). A list of 16 carefully worded questions was used (Appendix A). I developed this list of questions in consultation with Ronna Jenvne, Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta and a founding member of the Hope Foundation of Alberta. These questions were aimed at: a) illuminating the nature of the relationship
between grandparents and grandchildren; and, more specifically, b) highlighting the role that hope plays within that relationship. The order and structure of questions were flexible in that these elements sometimes changed in response to the participants' story content (Kvale, 1996).

Observation in the form of videotaping served as a second form of instrumentation. Each dyad was observed and videotaped engaging in a joint creative project. Smith (1991) suggested that observation of GP-GC interaction is a worthwhile addition to the interview, which is a more common method of research into GP-GC relationships. Collecting data by observing a phenomenon of interest in the field is commonly referred to as participant observation (Merriam, 1998). There are various reasons to include participant observation in case study research. As an outsider, the researcher may become aware of elements that have become habitual for the participants. Furthermore, observation awards the researcher the opportunity to witness the phenomenon first hand rather than relying on the accounts of participants. As an observer, the researcher uses this first hand information in conjunction with her own knowledge and expertise to interpret what she has observed (Merriam, 1998).

Finally, documentation functioned as the third method of instrumentation. Varying types of documentation can aid the researcher in discovering meanings, creating understandings, and ascertaining insights specific to the research question (Merriam, 1998). While documents such as public records, personal materials, and physical documents may be used, the investigator can also use researcher-generated documents. Researcher-generated documents are prepared by the researcher or for the researcher by participants after the study has begun. In this investigation, field notes, memorabilia from
the participants, photographs of the participants taken by this researcher, and artwork/crafts created through the shared creative activity all served as sources of documentation. Furthermore, field notes consisting of my reflections on a) my personal experience as a granddaughter, and b) both the interviews and videotaped sessions conducted for this study, were used as documentation.

Data Collection

Ethical Considerations

Written consent was obtained from participants prior to data collection (Appendix B). Participants were informed that they could choose to terminate their participation at any point in the research process without penalty. In addition, participants were given the researcher’s home phone number and encouraged to call with any questions or concerns.

Participant consent was renewed following data collection. I had originally collected the data for the Hope Foundation of Alberta. When approval was later granted by the University of Victoria for use of the data in my master’s thesis, I sent a second consent form to participants asking if they agreed to have the data used for this new purpose (Appendix C). In addition, transcribed interviews were sent to each participant with an attached letter (Appendix D). Participants were asked to read over the transcribed interview and comment on a) data that they felt uncomfortable having me include in the thesis, b) corrections regarding data content, and c) additional thoughts on hope and the relationship with their grandparent/grandchild. Five of the six participants returned the transcribed interviews with additional comments. All of the participants renewed their consent, five in writing and one by phone.
Stages of Data Collection

Data collection consisted of two stages. In the first stage, one face-to-face interview was conducted with each of the six participants. These in-depth interviews were semi-structured in nature (Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews are “guided by a list of questions … but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). The flexibility of this interviewing approach allows the researcher to respond to participant responses and emerging topics in the moment.

All interviews took place at the participants’ respective homes. These interviews were approximately one and a half hours in length and were audio taped, the method most commonly used to record interview data (Merriam, 1998). The researcher transcribed each interview verbatim. According to Merriam (1998), transcribing verbatim is an approach that provides the richest database for analysis. Moreover, verbatim transcription helps to assure the authenticity of the study (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandel, 2001). Authenticity involves “the portrayal of research that reflects the meanings and experiences that are lived and perceived by the participants” (Whittemore et al., p. 530). Following transcription, transcripts were colour coded to help identify participants during the various stages of data analysis.

During the second stage, each of the GP-GC dyads was invited to engage in a creative activity together. Rationale for the inclusion of a joint creative activity was twofold. First, the present study was an investigation into the nature of three extraordinary GP-GC relationships. Kennedy (1992b) suggested that shared “activities are the means by which grandparents and grandchildren make and maintain connections”
Thus, it was important to be able to observe the connection between the grandparent and grandchild through participant interaction. Second, the qualitative researcher must be “sensitive to the nature of human cultural, and social contexts” (Whittemore et al., 2001, p. 532). This sensitivity involves offering an opportunity for participants to benefit in some way through their involvement in the research process. As mentioned previously, shared activity fosters a sense of connection between grandchild and grandparent. In addition, activities provide a context in which the grandparent can influence the grandchild (Kennedy, 1992b). Participation in the observational component of this research study had the potential to give back to participants by enhancing the strength of the GP-GC relationship.

I was able to draw on my prior training and expertise in expressive arts therapy for this observational portion of the study. I offered suggestions about the possible nature of the activity. In addition, the participants were encouraged to contribute their own suggestions. Ultimately, the shared activity was chosen by each of the GP-GC pairs. One of the GP-GC dyads chose to work on a collage together. Yet another preferred to paint a picture. The third jointly decided to sew a pillow to match a quilted comforter that the grandmother and grandfather had previously made for the granddaughter.

The creative activity was both observed and videotaped by the researcher. The potentially intrusive nature of the videotaping was weighed against its possible benefits. Beneficial factors considered included the utility of documenting the dyads’ creative processes and any resultant products, and reviewing the videotape for subtleties in meaning that might not be captured adequately through direct observation alone. Gillham (2000) stated that “video is of special value when … researching the process of making
objects, where a static illustration cannot communicate—even with many successive illustrations—the activity of making and creating” (p. 89). The GP-GC pairs were given the choice of where the creative joint activity would take place. All of the dyads chose the grandparents’ home as the setting. These sessions were approximately one hour in length.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of two phases (Figure 1). In phase one, both within and cross-case analyses were performed. Phase two, the observational portion of the analyses, involved a review of videotaped material for each case.

Phase One: Within and Cross-Case Analysis

Within-case analysis. As proposed by Merriam (1998), I reacquainted myself with the original intention of the study before beginning to analyze the case study data. This involved reviewing the primary and secondary research questions. I then read through each transcribed interview twice. During the second reading I made comments, recorded observations, and posed questions in the margins of the transcript (Appendix E). In addition, I began jotting down notes on categories emerging from the data. These categories were named and served as an outline for a classification system into which the data could be sorted (Merriam, 1998). A number of sources can be used in naming categories including the researcher, the participants, or an external source such as literature (Merriam, 1998). I chose to use the most common method, one in which the investigator comes up with the terms that reflect what she sees in the data.
Figure 1. Data analysis flow chart.

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<th>Phase One: Within and Cross-Case Analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Within-Case Analysis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Became reacquainted with intention of study. Read through interviews twice. During second read, recorded comments, observations, questions and emerging categories in margins. Emerging categories were named and served as an outline for the classification system.</td>
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| Copies of transcribed interviews were made. Data from copies was broken down into units. Each unit was coded with a page number and color (different color for each participant). Units were cut up with scissors. |

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| Units were placed into envelopes labelled by category using the constant comparison method of data analysis. Categories were combined or further broken down into subcategories when necessary. |

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<tr>
<th>Cross-Case Analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Compared categories from phase one for differences and similarities across cases. Themes and subthemes were developed from categories and subcategories common to more than one case. Distinctive categories were used to highlight the uniqueness of a case.</td>
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<th>Phase Two: Observational Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viewed videotapes of GP-GC dyads. Made notes on physical setting/context, participant interactions and activities, subtle factors, and researcher behaviors. Used observational notes to substantiate findings from phase one.</td>
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My next step involved fleshing out the categories by searching through the data for additional units of information. I used one of the four basic classification strategies outlined by Merriam (1998) to accomplish this task. The strategy involved making a copy of the transcribed interviews, breaking the data into units, and cutting up the units with scissors. Units can be defined as "meaningful or potentially meaningful segments of data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). A unit may take the form of a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, or a sequence of paragraphs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). It is the "smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself" (Lincoln & Guba, p. 345). Each unit of data was coded with a page number so that it could be referenced with the original transcript. In addition, units were colour coded according to participant.

Units were then placed into envelopes labelled by category using the constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 1998). This strategy involved taking one unit of information and comparing with the next as I looked for patterns or regularities in the data. Stake (1995) calls such patterns correspondence:

The search for meaning often is a search for patterns, for consistency within certain conditions.... Keeping in mind that it is the case that we are trying to understand, we analyze episodes or text materials with a sense of correspondence. We are trying to understand behaviour, issues and contexts with regard to a particular case. (p. 78)

These comparisons led to categories being combined or further broken down into subcategories when necessary (Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 1998). When appropriate,
wording of the various categories was modified to better fit the units of data contained therein (Gillham).

Cross-case analysis. In a collective case study, within-case analysis is typically followed by a cross-case analysis, an analyses of categories across cases (Merriam, 1998). Thus, the categories that were discovered through the within-case analysis were compared for differences and similarities between cases. Themes were developed from categories and subcategories that were common to more than one case. In addition, distinctive categories were used to highlight the uniqueness of a case.

Phase Two: Observational Data

The second phase of analysis involved the use of collected observational data. Videotapes of each GP-GC pair engaged in a creative activity were viewed. Merriam (1998) suggested that the researcher take notes on the following during the observation phase: physical setting/context; the participants (Who is present? What are their characteristics?); interactions and activities (What is happening? How do the participants interact with one another?); conversation (What is being said? Who speaks and/or listens to whom?); subtle factors (including informal or unplanned activities, symbolic meanings, and nonverbal communication); the researcher’s cognitions and behaviour (What does the researcher say and do? How do these behaviours affect the participants? What thoughts does the researcher have regarding what is being observed?). Thus, videotape analysis involved making notes on the physical setting/context, the participants, interactions and activities, conversation, subtle factors, and my behaviors. These observational notes were then used substantiate findings from phase one of the data analysis (Merriam, 1998).
Once the data analysis was completed, I engaged in the final interpretive phase. Interpretation is a key component in all research (Stake, 1995). The case study researcher attempts to gain insight into how the participants view the world. These insights take the form of assertions or interpretations of the case meaning (Creswell, 1998). In other words, the researcher asserts what she finds meaningful as a result of her investigation.

*Validity*

*Internal Validity*

Merriam (1998) proposed a number of strategies to enhance internal validity. Three of these strategies were utilized in this study: a) clarifying researcher’s biases, b) triangulation, and c) peer examination.

The first strategy that was used involved clarifying my assumptions and theoretical orientation. Qualitative research is a very personal method of investigation in that the researcher acts as the primary data collection instrument (Merriam, 1998). As a result, in qualitative research the researcher must try to understand the phenomenon under investigation from two perspectives (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). From the etic perspective, the researcher attempts to comprehend how participants experience their world. Concurrently, the researcher needs to be aware of her emic perspective. This involves a cognizance of one’s own limited viewpoint and of the way in which that perspective may influence data collection and analysis.

Merriam (2002a) explained that in “qualitative research, the understanding of reality is really the researcher’s interpretation of participants’ interpretations of understandings of phenomenon of interest” (p. 25). The researcher must subject her actions and position in the research process to the same analytical examination as the data
collected in the field (Mason, 1996). This self-scrutiny has been called researcher's position or, more recently, reflexivity. The process of reflexivity is grounded in the belief that it is impossible for the researcher to be completely objective when generating knowledge and evidence (Mason, 1996).

Thus, as a qualitative researcher I was challenged to both analyze and state my assumptions, experiences, values, beliefs, and theoretical orientation. My experience with the topic of study has been outlined in detail in Chapter 1. Through this personal experience I have come to value the GP-GC relationship highly. I also believe that extraordinary GP-GC relationships enhance feelings of hope for both members of the dyad. My assumption is that this process of hope-expansion is reciprocal in its nature: the grandchild helps to foster a sense of hope in the grandparent, while the grandparent contributes to a sense of hope experienced by the grandchild.

My theoretical orientation comes from the relational perspective of feminist psychology (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1991; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Miller, 1986). This perspective highlights the relational aspect of human beings; we grow in relationship with others, not in isolation. Miller discussed that historically, women have been responsible for building relationships that foster development. As a result, much can be learned about growth enhancing interactions through the study of women's lives. Similarly, Belenky et al. (1997) suggested that women's ways of communicating should become a model for the promotion of human development. Belenky et al.(1991) discussed women's strengths as 'connected knowers':

Connected knowers focus on what is coming into being. They listen for hunches, revelations, and dreams even as these are being born. They find ways to document
fledgling ideas, hopes, and visions so people can see where they are trying to go.

(p.61)

Connected knowing arises from relationships built on intimacy, equality, and empathy (Belenky et al., 1997).

The second strategy used to enhance internal validity was triangulation, the process of validating information through the use of multiple sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One method of triangulation involves using multiple forms of instrumentation within the same study (Flick, 2002; Lincoln & Guba; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Within the current investigation multiple sources including interviews, observations, and documentation were used to triangulate the data.

Finally, the third strategy involved the use of peer debriefing (meeting with others not involved in the research study) to enhance the credibility of emerging categories. Flick (2002) recommended consulting with peers “in order to disclose one’s own blind spots and to discuss working hypotheses and results” (p. 229). In addition, one of my co-supervisors reviewed the results of my data analysis and changes were incorporated where needed.

External Validity

External validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized to other situations (Merriam, 1998). In qualitative research generalizability can be conceptualized as reader generalizability (Merriam, 2002a) or what Stake (1995) called naturalistic generalizations. Naturalistic generalizations are described by Stake as “conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life’s affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves”
According to this approach, it is the reader who determines "the extent to which findings from a study can be applied to their context" (Merriam, 2002a, p. 29).

Much can be learned about what is general through the careful selection of only a few cases (Stake, 1995). This is accomplished in part because the reader is already acquainted with other cases. In the context of the current study, the cases that the reader would be acquainted with are relationships between grandchildren and grandparents. It could be an extraordinary relationship that the reader has with a grandchild or a grandparent. It could also be an extraordinary relationship between another grandparent and grandchild that the reader has witnessed. The reader then adds the cases from the present study to his repertoire of experience, thereby creating a slightly different group from which naturalistic generalizations can be formed.

Moreover, the reader's experience need not necessarily be one involving an extraordinary GP-GC relationship. For example, perhaps the reader hardly knew his or her grandparents and the relationship was quite insignificant. The reader can still use this experience to compare and contrast with the vicarious experience gained through the reading of the cases in this study. The reader might ask such questions such as: What made my experience with my grandparent/grandchild similar or different from the cases in the present study? What factors accounted for these similarities or differences? What does hopefulness mean for me? What characteristics help to foster a hopeful relationship between grandparent and grandchild? What kind of relationship do I want to foster with my grandchild/grandparent?

One of the strategies that can be used to facilitate naturalistic generalizations is the use of rich description, enabling readers to compare their own experiences with those
reported in the research (Merriam, 1998). In the current study, the researcher’s narrative accounts, personal descriptions, and emphasis on the setting/context provide this rich description and facilitate the formation of naturalistic generalizations.

In this chapter I have addressed the general approach, research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and validity of the study. In Chapter 4 I will provide the reader with a closer look at each of the three GP-GC dyads selected for this investigation. In addition, I will present the findings from within and cross-case analysis.
Chapter 4: Description and Analysis

Overview

Chapter 4 is divided into two sections. In the first section the reader is offered a closer look at each of the three grandparent-grandchild dyads selected for this investigation: Della and Stephanie, Bonnie and Emmy, and Cathy and Cathy. An examination of each dyad includes a description of the case, hope meanings, and the hope project. In the second section of the chapter I explore the following characteristics of granddaughter-grandmother relationships that emerged as themes across cases: nurturing, sharing, and inspiring.

Grandmother-Granddaughter Dyads

Each grandmother-granddaughter case includes a portrayal of the grandparent-grandchild relationship from the perspectives of both parties based on participants’ individual interviews. In addition, through my own observations, I provide a description of the interview’s physical setting. The primary purpose of this description is to facilitate naturalistic generalizations or conclusions at which the readers may arrive as a result of vicarious experience resulting through their engagement with the text. Rich and detailed descriptions help to develop a deeper understanding of each case, thereby encouraging the formation of naturalistic generalizations (Stake, 1995).

Following the description of the case, findings on hope meanings gathered during individual interviews are reported. Each case concludes with data gained through observations from the hope project. After the completion of individual interviews, I met with each grandmother-granddaughter dyad and videotaped them engaging in a joint
creative project. A description of the hope project and the final creative product are provided, along with my observations made while viewing the videotaped sessions.

**Della and Stephanie**

*Case description.* Stephanie, Della’s third eldest granddaughter, turned twenty just prior to our interview. At Stephanie’s request, the interview took place in her bedroom in the basement of her parent’s home. Her room was painted a deep-sea blue, and we first discussed the calming effect of the colour. Posters of different animals covered the walls of her room. A thick blue sweater that Della had knit for Stephanie’s birthday was strewn across a comfy chair in the corner. The mood was warm, intimate, and sweet, much like Stephanie’s personality. We sat on the floor, and I asked Stephanie questions about her grandmother.

Stephanie described Della as friendly, helpful, calm, and non-judgemental. She also spoke about how loving and caring her grandmother was. Stephanie had a difficult time talking about her grandmother without also speaking of her grandfather, Jim. Both Della and her husband have been important figures in Stephanie’s life. Stephanie talked about how her relationship with her grandmother operates on a “more serious level,” while “grandpa jokes a lot.”

I interviewed Della in the cozy bungalow that she shares with her husband Jim. Pictures of their large family could be found in various locations around the living room. On the walls hung needlepoint art created by the couple. Stephanie had explained that her grandparents created a needlepoint as a present for all of the grandchildren.
Della told me how fortunate she was to have had all of her ten grandchildren, seven granddaughters and three grandsons, grow up in the same city as her. “It starts when they’re little,” Della explained.

So many young people … don’t have grandparents near them, to grow up with them. And then they meet them maybe once a year or visit them once a year. There isn’t the connection that we have with ours, because we’ve grown up with them since the day they were born…. It’s quite marvellous.

Della had a hard time singling Stephanie out as more special to her than her other grandchildren. She talked about each of her grandchildren as unique. “You can’t pick one out over the other one,” she explained. “We enjoy every one of them, and they’re all so different to do things with.”

Della taught her grandchildren the truths that she learned about life by living her wisdom. “It isn’t that your teaching them,” said Della, “it’s that you show them by example.” Della discussed how grandparents, like parents, could act as role models for their grandchildren. In Della’s words this meant “being an honest person and a friendly person,… using common sense, and being there when they [grandchildren] feel like talking or want to come over.”

Della did not get the opportunity to get to know her grandparents. “…I didn’t have any role model to follow. Perhaps that’s why I want to be a better grandparent….Not a better one- just a good grandparent” she deduced. Della did, however, have two aunts that acted as role models for her in her life:

I still have one [aunt] living at 98 years of age and she’s still with it and we have some wonderful times together…. And we can laugh together and we can cry
together. That’s what I’d hope Stephanie might do with me. If I live to be 98 that I’d still be able to tell a joke and enjoy her. Or have a good laugh over something that we did when they were young. Remembering the past. Good times we had.

For Della, self-acceptance was the most important thing that she could model for her grandchildren. “They have to love themselves first before they can love anybody else,” she explained to me. Della taught Stephanie that the key to living a happy life is being responsible for your own happiness. “Somebody doesn’t make it happy, you’re the one,” Stephanie clarified.

Della told me that she loved to watch each of her grandchildren as they grew into self-awareness. Della helped to facilitate this growth by sharing wise sayings that she clipped out of various literary sources:

When we get together I like to show them little tricks, and I’m a great one for cutting things out of the newspaper or any magazine that relates to common sense. I think it all boils down to common sense.

Della has helped her grandchildren get to know themselves by posting some of these clippings on the fridge and using them as a springboard for discussions.

_Hope meanings._ For Della, the concept of hope partly meant doing the best with what you have. Della told me a story from back in her days of teaching to illustrate this point.

I remember when I was teaching I took a deck of cards to school and dealt them out. And I gave each one [student] five or six cards, or whatever it was. And I’d say, “Turn them over on your desk. Now your life is like a deck of cards. You turn them over, and that’s one part of it. Turn another one over, and that’s another
part. And if you’ve got a good hand, it’s good for you. And if you’ve got a poor hand, well you put it together and do the best you can with it.” And that to me is kind of like hope. Hope to do the best you can with what you’ve got.

Della used a second game analogy to expand on how she viewed hope. “We play a lot of cribbage, and sometimes you’re really skunked. And the next day you could have another game, and you’d be getting all the good cards. So one day it’s up, and one day it’s down a little bit. So that to me is what hope would be too.” Stephanie discussed hope in a similar manner, describing hope as the possibility that one’s circumstance can improve. “I’ve only really heard it in terms when things aren’t going so well…. Have hope. Things will get better.”

Della also talked about hope in connection to spirituality. She discussed the farm as a place of spiritual cultivation for herself and her grandchildren.

And I think that’s where I would consider my [spirituality] from and even my grandchildren[’s]. Because we have been in the country, and it is a quiet place off by itself, and we don’t have to have people around to entertain us. We can watch the birds and the garden grow and talk about things like that.

Della told me how passing on a sense of spirituality to her grandchildren is important to her. “[If I could give any gift to my grandchildren] I think it would be a spiritual thing. Not in a religious sense but a spirituality of their own. So that they [have] something else to believe in besides themselves or people.”

*Hope project: sewing a quilt pillow.* For their joint project, Della and Stephanie chose to sew a pillow together (Figure F1). This pillow was to match the bed quilt that Della and her husband had made for Stephanie some months prior. Stephanie was helping
her grandparents with the quilt, but then became busy with school, so her grandparents finished it for her. The bed quilt was made from the plaid fabric that Stephanie had picked out, as well as from pockets cut from her old jeans. Stephanie and Della used the same fabrics for their pillow project.

Quilting has been a tradition in Della’s family. While Stephanie prepared the squares to be quilted, Della explained that she had learned to quilt from her mother, who had in turn learned the craft from her mother. This tradition had been passed down to Stephanie, who learned to sew on a portable machine on Della’s farm. Unfortunately, due to a problem with recording equipment, only the first half hour of the hour-long project session was available for my observational viewing. However, the half hour of footage and my field notes taken immediately after the session provided me with enough information to make significant observations about the dyad.

My first observation was the calm and relaxed atmosphere created as Della and Stephanie worked on their quilting project. Della and Stephanie both appeared very at ease in each other’s presence. Secondly, I observed the way that Della gently guided Stephanie through the quilt-making process. Della would make suggestions and ask Stephanie what she thought. Once Della and Stephanie had each other’s approval, the two would move ahead with their project. When Stephanie came to a challenging part of the project, Della would offer her help. She would always, however, give the project back over to Stephanie, allowing Stephanie to do most of the work (Figure F2).

When a mistake was made, Della gently pointed it out. She and Stephanie then discussed how it could be avoided next time. Della would also use humour to lighten the situation when things didn’t go as planned. This helped to create a safe learning
environment. While sewing the quilted pillow, Stephanie was telling Della a story about a recent sewing project that didn’t turn out the way that she would have liked. She was trying to make a bandana, but because she had doubled-up on the fabric and reinforced the corners the bandana turned out too stiff. She laughed at how trying to do an extra good job landed her in trouble. Stephanie’s story was an excellent example of her ability to find humour and opportunities for learning in her mistakes.

*Bonnie and Emmy*

*Case description.* I interviewed Bonnie in her spacious and elegant home. Bonnie was both composed and enthusiastic as she spoke about her relationship with Emmy, her eldest grandchild. “Emmy was our first grandchild, and I think that’s very special,” Bonnie explained. “I adore Emmy. There seems to be something very magnetic between the two of us.” Emmy agreed that being the first-born influenced the relationship that she has with her grandmother: “My grandparents took me to Disneyland when I was little, and being the eldest I think I got to do a bit more with them.... I was kind of super baby, being first-born. The miracle child!”

Bonnie discussed how proud she was of Emmy: “I’m always so proud of her in that she is bright and does very well.” Bonnie described Emmy as beautiful both inside and out. “She really does care about people,” explained Bonnie. She also spoke about their many similarities: “We both love people, we’re both very outgoing and we enjoy helping people. And we have so many interests [in common].”

I interviewed Emmy in her bright and cheery apartment. It was decorated in vibrant blues and yellows of sunflowers. Emmy sat on the couch, and I sat across from her in a big and comfy chair. Emmy spoke about how much she admired her grandma
and valued her companionship. “I’m a real daddy’s girl,” Emmy explained. “My dad’s really important to me, but I’d say that she’s about the second most influential person in my life.” Emmy explained how her grandmother has acted as a role model for her and others in her family: “My grandmother joined Delta Gamma, which is a women’s fraternity, and my Mom did, and my Aunt did. And I’m currently active in it, ... so she’s kind of set a lot of trends that we’ve all followed.”

Though they have always been close, when Emmy moved from Red Deer to Edmonton to begin her studies at the University of Alberta, the relationship between grandmother and granddaughter blossomed. Emmy explained that she would see her grandmother at least once a week and that they talked almost daily. “We’ve become really good friends,” Emmy told me. “Now that I’m in the same city as her we talk all the time.... She’s almost like my mother here.”

Emmy admired her grandmother’s ability to make people feel good about themselves: “You could be missing all your limbs or something and she would just make you feel like a wonderful person.” She described her grandmother as being very involved, giving, generous, and classy. “I know other women view her that way too [as a classy lady] and it makes me very proud,” Emmy explained. “I just hope that when I’m older I’ll be.... viewed as a classy lady.”

**Hope meanings.** Bonnie described hope as being connected to optimism: “If you are optimistic, you are filling your life with hope,” Bonnie explained. She continued:

I think hope is being optimistic about everything in life and not ever pessimistic, whether it be in your marriage, or your business, or your health. Hope is one of the most wonderful things that a person can ever have and believe in if they’re
that way inclined. And I am. I’m a very optimistic person, and therefore if I had breast cancer or something like that I certainly wouldn’t give up.

Like Bonnie, Emmy spoke about how optimism was tied into her meaning of hope. In addition, Emmy made a differentiation between generalized and specific goals:

I guess hope to me would mean ... being optimistic and being positive that there are good things to come.... Whether it’s something you’re working on or to be healthy in general for the future, specific goals. To me hope is just believing in or having faith in whatever, usually in a positive way. That’s what hope would mean to me.

While Emmy touched on the notion of faith, Bonnie talked more specifically about her belief in God as being connected to hope:

I think that there’s hope, and God is always watching over you. That’s another thing: we’ve always been very active in our churches, and all my young people [children], four of them, all take their children to United Churches wherever they’re located. So they have an understanding of hope, because you know that there is a God to look after you and ... he’s always there. And there’s a being that’s maybe not close in proximity to you, but he can be in your heart. That’s how I would describe hope.

*Hope project: making a collage.* Bonnie and Emmy decided to make a collage for their joint project (Figure G1). The making of the collage took place in the basement of Bonnie’s home. Relaxing music played in the background as Bonnie and Emmy sat across from each other, flipping through magazines and cutting out words or images that resonated with them.
Bonnie and Emmy’s process of working together felt very natural and organic; they appeared very comfortable in each other’s presence. Though they worked independently on cutting out various images, there was much interaction and discussion around what each was doing. Bonnie and Emmy reminisced and laughed as they worked, sharing stories about times spent together.

What stood out for me the most while watching Emmy and her grandmother interact was their mutual ability to respond to one another through the images that they selected for the collage. Emmy responded to Bonnie by helping her look for particular images. For example, when Bonnie spoke about wanting images of nature, Emmy found a picture of water for her, or when Bonnie talked about weddings and Emmy found a wedding magazine.

Both Bonnie and Emmy responded to each other by selecting images that reflected the other. For example, Emmy found images of flowers for the collage because Bonnie loved flowers more than anyone else she knew. Similarly, Bonnie stressed the importance of using a sunflower image, because she believed that Emmy lit up the world around her like a sunflower. Another example were the wedding images selected by Bonnie, reflecting the hope that both she and Emmy shared for Emmy’s future.

When the collage was complete, I asked Bonnie and Emmy how their collage related to hope. Emmy talked about the images of babies as symbols of hope. She also spoke about flowers as hopeful images. Bonnie entitled the collage “The World of Beauty.” She agreed with Emmy, speaking about baby images as hopeful and adding the bride and groom image as a symbol of hope. Bonnie also discussed the hopefulness of the image of three generations of women cut out in the shape of a heart (Figure G2).
Cathy and Cathy

Case description. Cathy* was named after her grandmother. Both Cathy and her grandmother expressed the belief that their shared name helps to foster a sense of connection across generations. I interviewed Cathy in a bungalow just outside of Edmonton that she shared with her husband and seven-month-old son. Cathy, a counsellor by profession, was warm and animated. She made physical contact by lightly tapping me on the shoulder, a gesture I found both interesting and unusual given the newness of our relationship. It certainly made me feel welcome and gave me the feeling that we had known each other for much longer than we actually had.

The beginning of our conversation revolved around Edward, Cathy’s grey parrot. Cathy wondered whether Edward, who roamed freely, would begin gnawing at the casual wood furniture in the dining room where the interview was to take place. While Cathy went into the kitchen to make some tea, Edward and I were left alone to become better acquainted. Though Edward left the furniture untouched, he did manage to have a peck at the recording equipment I had set up.

During the interview Cathy recalled relatively recent memories of times shared with her grandmother. One of her favourite memories was seeing her grandma’s face as her mom and dad walked her down the aisle at her wedding:

I remember walking down the aisle and seeing her…. She was right on the corner there…. I have a wedding picture where there are three of us, my mom, my dad and me, are coming down the aisle. And the photographer caught us looking. And what we’re looking at is my grandma.

* For clarity, I will refer to the grandmother as Grandmother Cathy and to the granddaughter as Cathy.
At the wedding reception Cathy had a special picture taken alone with her grandmother. "I'm a big picture fan," Cathy explained. "Photographing history is very important to me.... I always have to have one picture with grandma." As Cathy showed me this picture, she described how she saw her grandmother: "I just think that she is so beautiful. I mean, look at her. Isn't she beautiful? She's 81 years old, and she's glowing pink."

Cathy explained that participating in this study was a way to show her grandmother how much she cared:

We all communicate to people in our lives in different ways. And, in a way, this is just one more way I can communicate to her. Instead of sending her a card, I'm sending her you.... It's a way that I can say to her how special she is, that she matters.

After we were finished, Cathy drove me out to interview her grandmother, who lived in a small town outside of Edmonton. When we arrived, Grandma Cathy greeted us warmly. All three of us sat down to enjoy the lunch that Grandma Cathy had prepared. When we were satiated, Cathy left her grandmother and I alone to talk.

Our interview took place at the kitchen table, over coffee. Grandma Cathy's bungalow was cozy and full of odds and ends. The walls and tables were brimming with pictures of her family. Cathy had described her grandmother as a creative person, and the ceramics displayed on the shelves, most of which Grandma Cathy had painted, were certainly evidence of this.

"I have china painted, and I have done ceramics, and I have done porcelain and this sort of thing," explained Grandma Cathy. Grandma Cathy showed me her painted
ceramics and a picture of a beautiful porcelain doll that she had made for one of her daughters. She also showed me a number of costumes that she had made:

Cathy wanted you to see some of my costumes, and I have three of them in my den. My Mae West costume.... I made that one right from scratch. I bought the material and painted the front of it.... And of course I made a Raggedy Ann costume and ... a cowboy costume.

“I do quite a lot of things. I’ve tried lots of things. I have done a lot of things, but I’m not master of anything,” Grandma Cathy laughed.

Grandma Cathy explained that Cathy has always seemed more interested in her than her other grandchildren: “When she would come [over] she would always seem to be more interested in what we [my husband and I] were doing and what we [had] in our house.” This interest was strongly expressed through the party that Cathy threw for her grandmother’s 82nd birthday. Grandma Cathy told me about how “lovely” the party was and that Cathy had used her salad recipe. Grandma Cathy laughed as she explained her recipe: “I usually buy my potato salad and macaroni salad from Safeway. And then, when I get it home, I dress it up. And that’s what she did!”

*Hope meanings.* When I asked Grandma Cathy about what hope meant to her, she spoke about hope as wanting the best in life:

Well... you’re hoping for the best of everything that there is. You’d like to achieve the best that there is. Hope that ... you will be able to do the best that you can. And that everybody will be well and happy.

Cathy also spoke about hope as the desire for good things in life. In addition, hope involved a spiritual or religious element for Cathy:
I think of it almost as a religious kind of spiritual thing. Or warm and fuzzy. Earthy. Hope is hope. I guess I think of the future. Wanting all good things. I think of selfishness, in a way, because you’re wanting good things for yourself…. But then, you stop yourself. Hope for world peace. Hope for your family, that they have good health.

*Hope project: painting a picture.* Cathy and her grandmother decided that they would paint a picture for their joint activity (Figure H1). They chose Grandma Cathy’s house as the location. We set up for the art project in the kitchen, while Cathy’s mom watched Steven, Cathy’s seven-month-old baby, in the living room. Cathy explained that this occasion was significant, because this was the second time Grandma Cathy was seeing her great-grandson.

During the session, I observed behaviours that illustrated various efforts made by Cathy and her grandmother to connect through the art. The dyad began painting on the opposite sides of the paper. At first, they did not collaborate. For example, Grandma Cathy began by drawing the stem of a tulip in one corner of the canvas. After looking at her grandmother’s work, Cathy selected a brush and started to draw an apple tree on the other side of the paper. Cathy decided to connect her tree with her grandma’s flower by drawing some grass between the two images. Cathy continued to connect with the images that her grandmother was painting by adding a ladybug to the yellow tulip that her grandmother had painted.

Another way that this dyad connected during the art process was through mirroring each other. Sometimes they mirrored each other through the use of colour. For example, Cathy mirrored her grandmother’s yellow tulip in her pink flower with a yellow
colours. Shortly after, Grandma Cathy added a pink rose, mirroring Cathy’s use of the
colour pink. At other times, they mirrored each other through the subject of the images.
For example, the first image that Cathy painted was that of an apple tree. Later on in the
session, Grandma Cathy painted a smaller tree on the opposite side of the paper. Another
example involved the human figures that were painted by both Cathy and her
grandmother. Cathy drew figures of herself holding baby Steven in her arms and of her
grandmother, standing beside them with an outstretched arm. Cathy asked her
Grandmother to build onto the grandmother image by adding some feet. After a small
protest, Grandma Cathy added the feet. Grandma Cathy then mirrored Cathy’s human
figures by painting a picture of Cathy. This was countered by Cathy’s drawing another
figure, that of her grandmother, beside Grandma Cathy’s image of her.

Grandmother and granddaughter laughed at the fact that the image of Cathy
appeared to be leaning towards the image of Grandma Cathy. Cathy drew speech bubbles
for each figure. Inside the grandmother’s speech bubble she wrote: “Cathy, you’re falling
over.” Her Grandmother then countered by writing “I want to kiss you” in the speech
bubble connected to the figure of her granddaughter. Cathy then gave her grandmother a
kiss on the cheek. These speech bubbles were examples of how Grandma Cathy and
Cathy used humour to connect to one another.

Cathy also used humour by making funny faces and using a creeping motion as
she painted grass that would connect the images on opposite ends of the canvas. Yet
another example of Cathy’s use of humour occurred when Grandma Cathy excused
herself from the art table to look for smaller brushes. Cathy took the opportunity to add a
happy face to one of the leaves painted by her grandmother. When Grandma Cathy returned with the brushes she showed her appreciation for Cathy’s addition by laughing.

By the time they were ready to put the final touches on the painting, Cathy and her grandmother were collaborating on images and were in very close proximity to each other. For example, to finish off the painting Cathy suggested that her grandmother paint a cloud. Grandma Cathy’s cloud transitioned into the painting of a blue sky by both grandmother and granddaughter. Cathy started to draw a red border around the perimeter of the painting and was soon joined by her grandmother who finished off the border on her side of the paper. A red paint blob that resulted from this process inspired Cathy to draw some apples that had fallen off the apple tree. She also painted an apple in her grandmother’s outstretched hand. Cathy remarked that this was now an image of her grandmother offering Steven an apple.

When both Cathy and her grandmother felt that the painting was complete I asked the pair how this painting might relate to hope. Grandma Cathy spoke about the flowers, trees, and other forms of nature found in the picture and how she believed these to be hopeful images. Cathy agreed with her grandmother, stating that is was a happy picture and that the images of nature were conducive to hope. Cathy spoke to the multigenerational nature of the image and said that her introduction of her baby to Grandma Cathy was hopeful (Figure H2). Cathy also commented on the image of her and grandmother alone as a hopeful image of their longstanding relationship.
Emerging Themes

Cross-case analysis revealed three themes: nurturing, sharing, and inspiring. Nurturing included the sub-themes of accepting, comforting, and encouraging. The theme of sharing consisted of the following three sub-themes: sharing friendship, sharing time, and sharing common values and interests. Finally, the theme of inspiring included the sub-themes of hope modelling and hope for the future.

Nurturing

The theme of nurturing referred to the way in which the grandmothers promoted the development of their granddaughters. Sub-themes included accepting, comforting, and encouraging.

Accepting. This sub-theme concerned the grandmother’s ability to listen to her granddaughter without judging. Accepting also included the grandmother’s ability to honour the decisions that her granddaughter made in life.

The most important thing that Stephanie learned from her grandmother was how to listen: “I find that with a lot of my friends, they’ll listen, but then they’ll give their advice right away.... I just want [them] to listen.” One of Della’s mottos is “Don’t preach or teach, just talk and listen.”

I think that when I was a parent, and I think it happens to a lot of parents, that [I didn’t have] time to listen. You read ... about being a good parent and [taking] time. Well, we had four children, and my sisters had six each, and you just don’t have time to listen to one quietly. The time isn’t there, whereas [as] grandparents you can have some little private times.
For Della, time was one of the luxuries of being a grandparent. She shared her belief that the one-on-one time makes grandchildren feel important.

Stephanie discussed how her grandmother honoured the decisions that she makes in life. To illustrate this point Stephanie recounted an experience with a past boyfriend: “There was this guy who wasn’t treating me right and ... when she [Della] met him she was never rude.... She knew all about him, the good and the bad. She held it all back.” Stephanie explained that both her grandparents are open to bringing new people into the family. “They just like them right away,” said Stephanie. “If the kids, their grandchildren are happy, they’re happy.”

To create a contrast Stephanie described her relationship with her other set of her grandparents who live on the West Coast.

My other grandparents kind of tell you what they want, whereas the ones in Edmonton accept what you decide. I remember when I was little [they said], “You should be a doctor or a lawyer.” They pushed my dad to be a lawyer, and he was going to be a lawyer, and then he didn’t do it.... I enjoy going to see them, but I don’t like a long stay.

Della’s acceptance was most evident from a statement she made during her interview: “[Grandchildren] don’t have to please us because we love them for what they are, not what we want them to be.”

In contrast, Emmy talked about her desire to please her grandmother: “I think that if I’m doing anything to impress anyone it would be to impress her because she has been so involved in my life. You kind of want to please her and make her proud too.”
One thing that would please Bonnie is if Emmy returned to school to obtain a masters degree. Emmy explained:

…I told her the other night that ‘well, I don’t think I’d ever want to be a full time student again.’ I didn’t know what her reaction would be because I know how much she… values this education. But…. she was very understanding.

Emmy discussed that deep down she knows that her grandmother will be proud of her no matter what career path she chooses.

_Comforting._ The sub-theme comforting involved the love, care and safety that the granddaughter experienced in relationship with her grandmother.

Emmy described her grandmother as loving and caring. “She really does everything with love,” says Emmy. “She’s almost like an embodiment of love.” Emmy offered an example of how caring her grandmother can be:

At my work we have this fellow….And he’s about sixty years old. He’s retiring soon. He’s quite strange, I find, to be honest. Well, my grandma came to work and started talking to him. And I think she made him feel like a million bucks….I think she just made him feel like he was just a very important part of our foundation…. And it’s not that I asked her to do that.

Stephanie also described her grandmother as loving and caring. Stephanie remembered going to her grandmother’s house as a youngster when she was sick. Della would bring her 7Up and home-made chicken soup in hopes of nurturing her back to health. Stephanie explained that she called it the Magic House, because “if you go there for the day you’re better by the time you go home.”
Like her home in the city, Grandma Della’s place in the country has always been a safe place for Stephanie. Della and Stephanie both recounted memories of time spent at the country home. Della told me about the “air baths” that Stephanie used to take at the farm as a toddler. “That’s when Stephanie would take all of her clothes off,” Della recounted. “She was just free.” At her grandparents’ farm she could take as many air baths as she liked, running around to her heart’s delight, uninhibited by any restraints. The farm remained a special place for Stephanie as she grew into adulthood and she often accompanied her grandparents there on weekends and holidays. “[The grandchildren] have [come out to the farm] ever since they were... babies,” Della explained. “They’ve come out to the farmyard to enjoy themselves. And [Stephanie] still does when she has a day or two off. Out she comes to the country.”

Stephanie told me about an experience she once had learning relaxation techniques. The facilitator asked her to think of a safe place to which she could journey in her mind. Stephanie automatically thought of her grandparents’ farm. Della thinks of her home as a place that her grandchildren can always come to seek solace. “If their parents are cross with them, they can always come to Grandma,” she said. I ask her, “It’s like this safe place?” Della answered, “I think that’s a good way to put it, yes. And I hope that they can consider it a happy place.”

Della hoped that Stephanie and her other grandchildren knew that she and her husband were there for them if they ever needed help. Grandma Della explained it to me this practical manner: “If they get into trouble, well, get yourself out. If you need help, holler.” Similarly, Bonnie and Grandma Cathy talked about the importance of being there to help their granddaughters. Bonnie hoped that Emmy would continue to confide in her.
This included asking for help if Emmy needed to. Emmy explained how her grandmother has always been there for her:

...I know that in life, if I ever need to call on anyone, I can call on her.... A few weeks ago my car died.... The first person I called was her because I knew that she would be able to come and help me out. I know [that I can call on her] for anything, whether it's car problems or when I was going through a break-up.... I just know that I can always go to her... and she'll support me in whatever I do.

Grandma Cathy discussed her desire to be there for Cathy if she should need her help or a shoulder to cry on. “If she wants to come and tell me what’s bothering her or if I can help her I will,” said Grandma Cathy. “And she doesn’t do much of that. She’s a happy sort of girl really.”

**Encouraging.** Encouraging encompassed how the grandmother gives her granddaughter a sense of confidence about herself and her abilities.

Both Bonnie and Della actively encouraged their granddaughters to achieve their goals. Bonnie talked about encouraging her grandchildren “to strive and do the best that they can.” Similarly, Della tells all of her grandchildren “whatever you want to do, you can do it.”

Emmy talked about feeling very confident about herself when she is in the presence of her grandmother:

When I’m around her I walk a little taller. I just feel very confident about what I’m doing. Some people can make me feel a little bit insecure or uncertain.... But with her I feel very confident in who I am.
Emmy described Bonnie as a very positive and optimistic person. Through this optimism, Bonnie encourages Emmy to achieve her goals.

Stephanie also felt encouraged by her grandmother. After the completion of the individual and joint interview sessions, Stephanie wrote to me and described how she lived with her grandparents while working on her undergraduate university degree. For two years, her grandparents’ home continued to be a supportive and encouraging environment for her.

I decided to take up guitar when I lived there, and they encouraged me to play and sing.... Without their support I would never have learned as fast as I did! They were making me perform in front of friends and family ... and soon enough I went to an open mike stage. Grandpa would always sit in his chair with his drink, listening and tapping his finger, and Grandma would be in her chair knitting or reading and complementing me when I was done. Sometimes she would join in quietly with her harmony, and I would smile inside.

Stephanie’s grandparents created a supportive learning environment, one where she felt encouraged to take risks.

Sharing

The theme of sharing involved three sub-themes. The first sub-theme was concerned with friendship, the second with shared time, and the third with the interests and values that each dyad shared.

Sharing friendship. The sub-theme friendship involved how well the grandmother and the granddaughter knew each other, and the degree to which they confided in each other.
Emmy talked about using her grandmother as a confidant. Emmy described how she and her grandmother would sit and talk about men for an hour or two at night times. Emmy explained:

She's a very good friend of mine. And I know that she has a special relationship with everyone, but I think that I'm kind of her special granddaughter. And she's very special to me... I think that everyone in the family acknowledges... that from time to time.

Emmy explained that while her grandmother liked to stay involved in the lives of all of her grandchildren, she and Bonnie were the ones who had the strongest friendship:

I know she called everybody to make sure everyone's doing fine, but I know that she and I are the ones that have the long phone conversations, who go out for lunches often. I think that she works to be friends with everyone, but I know that with her and I it's almost a step further. We're great friends.

Della confirmed the special status of her relationship with Emmy. “I certainly wouldn’t say that I don’t like my other grandchildren, but I adore Emmy,” Della explained.

Della described her relationship with Stephanie as open. “She phones to tell me if she got a good mark or a poor mark. She shares her little ups and downs with me... I feel privileged that she wants to do that.” While Stephanie felt comfortable sharing her feelings with her grandmother, she hoped to strengthen the friendship aspect of their relationship. Stephanie explained that this would involve confiding more in Della: “[I’d like] to share more than I do right now. I tell Grandma stuff but I leave some stuff out.” Stephanie would like Della to be able to confide in her as well.
Like Stephanie, Cathy spoke about wanting to get to know her grandmother better. Cathy recalled not really knowing her grandfather, Grandma Cathy’s husband, when he died. “I didn’t really get to know who he was and what his hobbies were,” Cathy explained. “What made up his life? What had meaning for him?” She described her relationship with her grandma as maturing over time: “It’s more real. It’s not superficial. It’s like really truly I’m interested in this woman. Hopefully, she picks up on that. That there’s a genuineness.” Cathy hoped that she and her grandmother could “have more frank talks about things as time goes on.” She would like her grandmother to feel comfortable sharing any wishes, worries or fears. “I want to be there for my grandmother,” explained Cathy.

Grandma Cathy also expressed a desire to deepen the relationship with her granddaughter. Grandma Cathy told me about the special relationship that she had with her own grandmother: “I was born on my grandma’s 44th birthday.... I lived with my grandma for 3 months. We were very close. She was just wonderful to me.” While she described herself and Cathy as being friends, she wondered whether they might be closer if they had lived with one another. “Maybe we could be really, really, really close friends,” Grandma Cathy pondered.

For Grandma Cathy, friendship involved a mutual confiding where both parties can bring their happiness and their troubles. Della described friendship as working together to “put up with each others weaknesses and enjoy their strengths.” She discussed her belief that friendship is the basis of all relationship and talked about how she and Stephanie have learned to enjoy each other’s company through an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses that each brings to the relationship.
Sharing time. This sub-theme concerned the contact between grandmother and granddaughter. It included both the frequency of contact and the type of contact (telephone conversations, joint activities etc.).

All three dyads spoke about how living in close proximity has helped to increase the frequency of contact in the relationship. Bonnie and Emmy recalled how their relationship blossomed when Emmy moved to Edmonton. Grandma Cathy and Cathy discussed feeling more connected now that they live closer to one another. Della spoke of the bond that came from living in the same city as Stephanie and being involved in her granddaughter’s life from its very beginning.

Bonnie talked about how much closer she and Emmy became when Emmy moved to Edmonton. Emmy echoed her grandmothers’ statement and added that if she still lived in Red Deer she would not be spending as much time with Bonnie. Emmy discussed how their relationship has flourished since her move:

I see her at least once a week. For example, on Thursday night... I took her out.

It was my Christmas present to her. We went out for dinner and then went and saw ‘Shakespeare in Love [a movie].’ I was almost a little self-conscious because we were laughing and we were so loud. And people just though we were these giddy little girls...

Similarly, Grandma Cathy spoke about feeling more connected to Cathy now that she was living closer and they had more opportunities to see one another.

Grandma Della said that she felt lucky to have had all of her grandchildren grow up in the same city as her. According to her a close bond begins forming between grandparents and grandchildren when the grandchildren are young, and living in close
proximity creates the opportunity for a relationship. After the completion of this study, Stephanie moved in with her grandparents for two years. Stephanie wrote to me and told me what a wonderful experience this was. One of her hopes had been to get to know her grandparents even better, and living with them enabled her to do just that.

All three granddaughters discussed how their interest in their grandmothers has increased as they have matured. As a result, they found themselves wanting to spend more time with their grandmothers. One of the ways in which Cathy likes to connect with and learn about her grandmother is by looking through Grandma Cathy’s photo albums:

Now, at least in the last six years or so, I just love sitting there and her going over her photo albums. I really like that. I think there are people out there who would just be pretending, but I’m really interested.

Stephanie explained how the interest in her grandparents and the nature of the time that she spends with them has changed over time:

When I was little [Grandma would] teach me how to knit or crochet, and I’d make little blankets. But it was never a talking relationship. It was kind of a helping or showing you how to do stuff that was fun. But now that I’ve gotten older I want [italics added] to go visit them…. Every Monday I’ll go to their house now, just because I’ve got a spare between my labs. Or not even that, because of the spare. I’d just walk there and visit them and see how they’re doing. It’s different. It’s more like I want to know about them and what their lives are like. It’s so interesting…. My Grandma had to ride a horse to school…. What? Weren’t there any buses?… My Grandpa lived in Edmonton and he was here when the first
traffic lights came in down on Jasper Avenue. And it's weird to think of Grandpa way back then. Intriguing.

Emmy spoke about how her friendship with her grandmother had grown in the last three years:

I know that if I don't talk to her for a few days I will call her.... Especially since I've been up here [Edmonton], which has been about three years now, I talk to her at least once a week.

She explained that she called her grandmother frequently, not out of a sense of duty, but because she enjoyed speaking with her.

Sharing common values and interests. This sub-theme concerned similarities found within each grandmother-granddaughter dyad with respect to shared values and interests.

Bonnie and Emmy agreed that the strength of their relationship was bolstered by their many similarities. In Emmy’s words, “I don’t think ... we work to be friends. We happen to be very similar people, so it makes it easier.” Both Emmy and Bonnie stated that they enjoyed sitting and talking for hours over lunch or taking in a film. Emmy described how they would sit and cry in movies together. Bonnie explained that Emmy would call her about what to wear, and would come over to borrow her clothes: “I think it’s so much fun. She’ll come over, and we’ll go into the bedroom and haul out all this stuff and try it on. It’s just great.”

Another similarity between Bonnie and Emmy is that they are both very people and community oriented. As Bonnie explained, “we both love people, we’re both very outgoing, and we enjoy helping people wherever we can.” Their involvement in the Delta
Gamma women's fraternity has given Emmy and her Nana the opportunity to put these values into practice. Emmy explained that she followed in her Nana’s footsteps by becoming very active in the Delta Gamma fraternity while in university:

Even though there are more grandchildren on the scene, we just have lots in common, lots of common interests. Things that I’ve kind of just fallen into and I love, and things that I have become involved with such as Delta Gamma, my fraternity. I don’t think it’s something that you can be forced to join. Maybe you could, but you wouldn’t get involved. But for me, I just immersed myself and became totally involved in that.

A shared passion for the fraternity helped to strengthen the bond between Bonnie and Emmy. “She’s proud, because it was important to her,” Emmy explained. “I think she enjoys the fact that what was important to her is still important to me.”

Family was also highly valued by both Bonnie and Emmy. Emmy described herself as “a real family person.” Similarly, Bonnie commented on how much family means to her and Emmy. In addition, Emmy spoke about the value that marriage held for both her and Bonnie: “I know one thing she values, and I do too.... is marriage.... Maybe by the time I’m thirty I’ll get married. I’m in no rush, and she’s certainly not rushing me.”

Both Grandma Cathy and Cathy discussed the value of documenting family history. Grandma Cathy talked about the history of her grandmother that she put together for her local museum. Cathy spoke about her desire to preserve her grandmother’s stories:
I’m growing up now and [am] really just wanting to know her story. And God, does she have stories!... To be honest, I’m worried. What if it’s not ever documented? What happens when people die and all that is lost?

Cathy commented that this shared interest in documenting family history helps form a connection between her and her grandmother.

Della discussed that Stephanie has shown more of an interest in family history than her other grandchildren:

I’m writing my own story [history] at the moment, and sometimes the girls [granddaughters] like to read it and discuss it.... Stephanie is especially interested in that. And some of them are not. But maybe she [Stephanie] just wants to find out about her roots.

Like Cathy, Stephanie developed a growing interest in getting to know her grandparents and what their lives were like.

Grandma Cathy and Cathy spoke about their shared interest in ceramic art and dolls. Della talked about Stephanie’s desire to cook, knit, crochet, and “do all the things that Grandma was doing.” The sewing that Della and Stephanie engaged in for the hope project provided further evidence of a shared interest in handicrafts. Della voiced her belief that grandmothers and granddaughters had a different relationship than grandmothers and grandsons because of the handicrafts and the cooking that they shared.

Similarly, Emmy talked about how the grandmother-granddaughter relationship “is just a closer relationship” than the relationship between a granddaughter and a grandfather. After making this comment she stressed all the common interests that she shared with her grandmother as examples of why she and her grandmother were so close.
Inspiring

The third theme, inspiring, concerned the hopes that the grandmothers and granddaughters inspire in each other. The two sub-themes included hope modelling and hope for the future.

Hope modelling. This sub-theme involved the hope that the grandmothers have modelled for their granddaughters.

All three granddaughters hoped to model themselves after their grandmothers in some respect. Stephanie spoke of how she hoped to reach the level of contentment that her grandmother has reached. Emmy hoped to emulate her grandmother’s wonderful way of being with and helping others. Cathy hoped that she could stay active and be out in the world like her grandmother.

Emmy spoke about the attributes she admired in her grandmother and how she hoped to follow in her grandmother’s footsteps:

She’s someone that I admire a great deal, but I value her companionship. I just think that she’s a really neat person. A lot of things that she does, like the way she carries herself, to the life that she’s led. Some of those things are things that I would aspire to. I can say “I hope I’m like her when I’m her age.”

Emmy praised her grandmother’s “ability to be around people in a wonderful way.”

These are social skills that Emmy hoped to emulate:

I’m a very positive person. And I work to be, as often as I can, very upbeat, and positive, and supportive to those people that I’m around. I think that’s part of what makes [my grandmother] so enjoyable to be around.... And I think from that example I’ve worked to... be as positive as I can around other people and make
them happy around me... It’s something that I admire about her. She has this presence about her. And that’s just something I aspire to, sometimes consciously, sometimes subconsciously.

Like her grandmother, Emmy tried to be a breath of fresh air for the people in her life. Emmy wanted others to be left with a good taste in their mouths after talking with her.

Stephanie admired her grandmother’s sense of contentment. Witnessing her grandmother’s contentment gave her a sense of hope about achieving it herself:

I watch her and I say, “That’s how I want to be.” She’s just content. She doesn’t want anything more right now... She’s got everything she could possibly have....

If I was just content with how things were, I think I’d be a lot happier. Not like I’m sad or anything, but just feel whole. Like you don’t need anything else.

Stephanie experienced this high level of contentment when she was in her grandmother’s presence. “[I have] a peaceful and calm feeling when I’m with her,” Stephanie explained. “And my grandpa too.”

Della told me a story that illustrated the contentment that she and her husband experienced:

There are a couple of ladies at the farm. They’ve retired from farming but they still live in their farmyard, ... and they have a nephew that came to visit them.... And he’s maybe late thirties or forties, trying to go, go, go. Big machinery, big this, big that, big everything.... He visits them quite often.... And he said to them one day, “How can you be so happy sitting here with nothing?” Now, isn’t that a strange remark, ... to think that they were sitting there with nothing? Because they have each other, they have lots of family around them. And I consider
ourselves millionaires because we have enough money to live comfortably, to take trips, have good health and wonderful, wonderful family. Now that’s contentment. That’s happiness. We’ve had some downs, there’s no doubt about that. But everybody does.

Stephanie hoped to be as happy and content in a relationship as her grandparents were in theirs: “They’ve just survived that long, and they know each other inside and out…. They’re just so happy.”

Cathy admired her grandmother’s spirit and sense of adventure. Cathy explained that her grandmother taught her “to be a strong woman figure, to [have] a strong voice, and … not to stay at home with your fears.” Cathy described her grandmother as a go-getter, a trendsetter and a Renaissance woman:

I think of her as extraordinary, because I didn’t know people in their late 70s and early 80s could do the things that she does…. She has this motor home, and she takes off driving down the highway going to God knows where.

Grandma Cathy bought her motor home after her husband died. She began making trips across the country with an organization called The Good Samaritans. Her chapter had 51 motor homes. Husband and wife pairs drove 49 of those, while single women accounted for only two. At the age of 81, Grandma Cathy took nine trips over the course of the summer. “I was hardly home at all,” Grandma Cathy laughed.

Grandma Cathy’s ability to stay active and be out in the world gave Cathy a sense of hope about growing older:

I didn’t know that that’s what old age could be like. It’s very exciting. And God willing, I hope that’s what it’s going to be like for me. So it’s opened up my
views about possibilities. And to know [how] to keep going, keep involved, keep your mind open to new things.

Grandma Cathy also hoped that her granddaughter would emulate her active approach to life. “I try lots of things,” Grandma Cathy explained. “And maybe she’ll try lots of things too. I’ve never been one to back down.”

Both Emmy and Cathy spoke about wanting to volunteer like their grandmothers. “I think I can be a real people person,” said Cathy. “And so I’d like to be out there volunteering just like my Grandma does.” Like her mother and aunt, Emmy has followed her grandmother’s example by becoming active in the Delta Gamma fraternity. It was through this membership that Emmy began volunteering:

When I joined the fraternity I got very involved in volunteering. I [also] started coaching ... a little girls’ soccer team. I really got into that, and that’s kind of her. I don’t think she ever coached a soccer team, but that’s kind of her influence on me.

Emmy explained that out of all the members of her extended family, her grandmother gave the most to the community through her volunteerism. Bonnie’s capacity to give to others is something that Emmy both admired and hoped to imitate.

**Hope for the future.** This subtheme deals with the hopes that the grandmothers had for their granddaughters’ futures and how the grandmothers’ hoped to live long enough to witness this future.

All of the grandmothers spoke about their hopes for their granddaughters’ futures. Hopes were directed towards happiness, marriage, education/employment, and children.
Della spoke about wanting the best for Stephanie. For Della this included finding a husband with whom Stephanie could enjoy going through life:

I think that’s what I would hope for her as I would hope for all my grandchildren.

The same thing that happened to us. That we found each other, and we started out as friends, and we’re still friends and have a good relationship without any separations and confusion.

While Cathy is already married, Grandma Cathy expressed the same hopes for a long lasting marriage based on friendship:

I think that I had a very happy [marriage]. Don’t think that we didn’t have our problems, but we had a very happy life, Eric and I. And I hope that she will have a very happy life. Like I told you, he was my best friend. I could tell him anything. And I hoped he could tell me anything that he wanted.... If he were living today, we would have been married 64 years. And that’s a long time.

Because sometimes marriages these days aren’t lasting too long.

Like Della, Bonnie hoped that Emmy would find a male partner with whom to go through life. “My biggest hope is that she’ll find the career that she would adore and then eventually find a young man who she adores,” Bonnie explained. While Della and Grandma Cathy also spoke about their granddaughter’s career/education, Bonnie particularly emphasized the importance of this area.

Both Bonnie and Grandma Cathy talked about their hopes that their granddaughters would have children. They both said that they hoped for this because they knew that it was something that their granddaughters wanted.
In addition, all three grandmothers discussed how they hope to live long enough to see their grandchildren’s lives unfold. Della’s spoke about how she hopes to live long enough to see her grandchildren settle down:

I’d like to live long enough to see all my grandchildren married, that I would. Which would be another 20 years. Well, maybe not, maybe not. I think that would be nice to see them all well educated, and married, and making a good life for themselves. That’s a hope.

Similarly, Bonnie spoke about hoping to live long enough to see the direction that her grandchildren choose: “It’s so interesting to see how they choose what they want to do. They’re all interesting, all at different stages. They’re fascinating, and I hope we can live long enough and see them in whatever their endeavour is.”

Like Della and Bonnie, Grandma Cathy hoped to “live for a few more years to see [her] family grow up.” “I’d love to be able to see my family all happy and doing the things they want to do,” Grandma Cathy explained. She told me that her granddaughter has given her a sense of hope by inspiring her to keep living: “She makes me think that I want to live a long time.”
Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview

In Chapter 5 I present observations that I have found meaningful as a result of my investigation. The chapter begins with a summary of findings, followed by emerging understandings. Limitations, implications for counselling and future research, as well as personal reflections are then discussed.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the phenomenon of hope in the context of the GP-GC relationship. Primarily, I was interested in furthering my understanding of how hope was reciprocated in extraordinary GP-GC relationships. In addition I sought to explore a) meanings that participants attached to the concept of hope, and b) characteristics of extraordinary GP-GC relationships that helped to foster a reciprocal sense of hope.

Summary

As grandmothers and granddaughters spoke about their relationships, themes emerged with regard to the character of their connections. The three hope fostering characteristics of extraordinary GP-GC relationships that emerged included those of nurturing, sharing, and inspiring.

Nurturing. While their granddaughters had all grown into adulthood, Bonnie, Della, and Grandma Cathy discussed wanting to continue to be available to help their granddaughters. Both Stephanie and Emmy described their grandmothers as loving and caring. Emmy talked about how she knew that she could call on her grandmother for help if she needed to.
Stephanie talked about feelings of safety that she associated with her grandmother. Stephanie discussed how she used the image of her grandparents’ farm as a safe place during a meditation experience. She continued to use her grandparent’s home as a safe base as she grew into adulthood. When Stephanie read through the transcript of her interview and made additional comments, she told me that she lived with her grandparents during her last year of university. She wrote about what a wonderful experience this was for her and how supportive and encouraging her grandparents were. Like Stephanie, Emmy talked about the support and encouragement that she received from her grandmother. Emmy said that she felt very confident about herself while in her grandmother’s presence. Both Bonnie and Della discussed how they encouraged their granddaughters to achieve their goals.

Stephanie spoke about her grandmother’s ability to listen to her as another important element of their relationship. In fact, Stephanie commented that listening was the most important thing she had learned from her grandmother. In addition, Stephanie spoke at length about the non-judgemental and understanding approach her grandmother took in both their relationship and in her interactions with others. Similarly, Della talked about the unconditional love that she had for her grandchildren. Della discussed loving her grandchildren for who they were and not for what she wanted them to be.

*Sharing.* Bonnie and Emmy talked about spending a great deal of time together, both on the phone and in person. They also discussed enjoying shared activities such as going to movies or out for lunch.

Della, Stephanie, Grandma Cathy, and Cathy discussed their interest in family history. Cathy reported connecting with and learning about Grandma Cathy by looking at
old photo albums with her grandmother. Della explained that she was writing her life history and that Stephanie took a special interest in reading and listening to her stories.

Stephanie spoke about how the nature of spending time with her grandmother has changed through the years. She explained that when she was younger, most of their shared time was spent doing handicrafts together. Now that she was older, however, she and her grandmother spent more time talking about their lives.

Emmy described her grandmother as a confidant, someone with whom she felt comfortable sharing intimate details of her life. While Stephanie confided in her grandmother to a certain extent, she hoped to share more intimate details with her grandmother in the future. She also hoped that her grandmother would share more with her in return. Similarly, Cathy hoped that her grandmother would confide in her more often in the future.

**Inspiring.** Cathy felt inspired by the way her grandmother engaged with life. She admired her grandmother’s ability to be out in the world and to try new things. When Cathy read over the transcript of her interview and made additional comments, she discussed how her grandmother continued to be active and social when she moved into a retirement home. Cathy said that the retirement home staff raved about her grandmother. Like Cathy, they admired her grandmother’s spirit and zest for life.

Stephanie hoped to experience the same degree of contentment that she had witnessed in her grandmother. Della explained that the contentment she experienced was part of her spirituality. She spoke about the farm as a quiet and peaceful place where both she and her family could cultivate their spirituality. Della talked about spirituality as the
most important gift that she could pass onto her grandchildren. She wanted to give her grandchildren something to believe in other than people or material things.

Emmy most admired her grandmother’s wonderful way of being with others. She hoped to emulate her grandmother’s social skills by being a breath of fresh air to all the people she encounters. Following her grandmother’s example, Emmy strived to be as positive as possible in her outlook and in her interactions with others.

Finally, all three of the grandmothers in this study spoke about their hopes for their grandchildren. They discussed wanting the best for their granddaughters, including a good career, a husband, a good marriage, and children. They also spoke about their desire to live long enough to watch some of their hopes materialize.

Emerging Understandings

Reciprocity of Hope in Extraordinary GP-GC Relationships

The GP-GC relationships in the present study exhibited the characteristics of nurturing, sharing, and inspiring. Interestingly, these three characteristics of GP-GC relationships seem to be connected to findings in a study by Kennedy (1991). Kennedy surveyed 391 undergraduate students regarding their reasons for feeling closer to a particular grandparent. Kennedy’s findings indicated that the most popular reasons for closeness were enjoyment of activities shared, the personality of the grandparent, experience of support, attention, and appreciation from the grandparent, and grandparent as a model, advisor, teacher, and a source of inspiration. In the present study, the aforementioned characteristics provided a point of connection for each dyad, creating an opportunity for the transmission of hope.
The nurturing that the granddaughters received provided a foundation for both the relationship with their grandmothers and for the cultivation of hope. From a developmental perspective, Erikson (1997) proposed that hope is a process that is influenced by early relationships in life. Erikson suggested that the nourishment of maternal/parental relationships in infancy teaches the child to trust or mistrust. It is this sense of trust in the world that forms the foundation upon which intrapersonal and interpersonal hope is built (Erikson).

Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) stated that the role of the nurturer is the most basic one that a grandparent can play. This role is to provide love and safety, looking after the emotional and physical needs of the grandchild (Kornhaber & Woodward). One way that Della created this sense of safety is through her acceptance of Stephanie. Della discussed loving Stephanie for who she is, not for who she wants her granddaughter to be. Kornhaber and Woodward contend that parents are unable to offer this unconditional love due to the many responsibilities associated with parenthood. The authors discuss the unique role that that grandparents can play as providers of unconditional love for grandchildren. They argue that this acceptance can, in turn, make an important contribution to the sense of connectedness experienced by grandparent and grandchild in their relationship.

The sharing that took place in the GP-GC relationships in the present study also created a connection between grandparent and grandchild. Bonnie and Emmy’s relationship provides one example of how sharing can create a connection that facilitates the transmission of hope. Bonnie and Emmy were great friends and spent much time enjoying each other’s company. They shared experiences, talked to each other about their
lives, and explored similar interests. Emmy explained that it was her grandmother’s optimism that made her so enjoyable to be around. Emmy followed her grandmother’s example by incorporating this optimism into her own life. Farran et al. (1995) theorized that the construct of optimism functions as a precursor to the phenomenon of hope. In other words, if an individual learns to be optimistic, she may begin to acknowledge various possibilities and act in an increasingly hopeful manner.

Sharing allowed the granddaughters to experience their grandmothers ‘in action,’ as living examples of hope. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) suggested that grandparents served as role models by acting as “living examples of what grandchildren expect to become” (p. 173). Kornhaber and Woodward proposed that the stronger the connection between grandchild and grandparent, the more apt the grandchild to model herself after the grandparent. Moreover, these researchers discussed that a grandchild is more likely to model herself after the grandparent in question when the grandchild feels singled out as special. This special status may be assigned to the eldest grandchild or the grandchild who bears physical or temperamental similarities to the grandparent. Emmy’s experience of being singled out as the special grandchild may have influenced the extent to which her grandmother served as a role model for her.

Both Stephanie and Cathy connected with their grandmothers through listening to their grandmothers share stories from the past. Nussbaum and Cryer-Downs (1989) stated that grandparents act as a stabilizing force in the family, offering grandchildren “a sense of family heritage and security about facing the future” (p.277). Similarly, Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) discussed how grandparents give grandchildren a sense of rootedness in the past while at the same time acting as visions of what they can expect in the future.
The granddaughters in the present study were inspired by the way that their grandmothers lived their lives. Jevne (1991) wrote about hope models as real or fictional characters that have attributes we admire. The granddaughters spoke about how their grandmothers served as hope models, giving them a hopeful vision of what life may be like for them in the future. Stephanie hoped to experience the contentment that she has witnessed in her grandmother. Emmy hoped to emulate her grandmother’s wonderful way of being with and helping others. Cathy hoped to model the active and vibrant approach her grandmother took to engaging with life. In addition, Cathy talked about how her perceptions of aging expanded as a result of her relationship with her grandmother. Kornhaber and Woodward (1981) suggested that the stronger the connection between grandchild and grandparent, the more immune the grandchild becomes to social stereotypes of the elderly.

The grandmothers in the present study spoke about the many hopes they held for their granddaughter. They also spoke about hopes for themselves. One of these hopes was to live longer in order to watch their granddaughters’ lives unfold. Kaufman and Elder (2003) surveyed 666 elderly Americans and found that those who enjoyed being grandparents hoped to live longer than those who did not enjoy being a grandparent. Interestingly, hoping to live longer was only significant for grandmothers and not for grandfathers. Kaufman and Elder hypothesized that this difference could be attributed to women’s deeper level of investment in their grandchildren’s future.

Jevne (1994) discussed hope as enabling “individuals to envision a future in which they are willing to participate” (p. 8). In the present study, each member of the grandmother-granddaughter dyad shared how the other helped her to envision a hopeful
future. The grandmothers acted as hope models by giving their granddaughters a sense of
the possible. The granddaughters inspired their grandmothers to live longer by giving
them hope for the future.

*Hope Meanings*

Participants' views of hope tended to be multidimensional in nature and unique to
their experience. This finding is not unusual given the numerous definitions and
meanings that both researchers and participants have assigned to the concept of hope
(Eliott & Olver, 2002; Hope Research Advisory Committee, 2002a; Wong-Wylie &
Jevne, 1997).

Though each participant described hope somewhat differently, there seemed to be
a similarity within GP-GC pairs with regard to hope meanings. This trend was illustrated
most strongly in the case of Bonnie and Emmy. Both granddaughter and grandmother
viewed hope as being related to optimism. Della and Stephanie discussed hope as the
possibility that one's circumstances can improve. Both Grandma Cathy and Cathy talked
about hope as wanting the best for themselves and their family.

The similarity of hope meanings within GP-GC pairs is somewhat surprising
given results from a recent survey compiled by the Hope Foundation of Alberta (Hope
Research Advisory Committee, 2002b). Researchers from the Hope Research Advisory
Committee found significant differences in the how participants of different age groups
described hope. “Having goals and plans” was a frequent answer for young adults aged
18-24 (23.4%), more so than in any other age group. Participants 65 years of age or older
selected this response only 5% of the time. Individuals 65 years and over were more apt
to describe hope as “having a deep inner faith” (24.8%) than participants aged 18-24
Accounting for these results, researchers from the Hope Foundation of Alberta hypothesized that “as people age and become members of older age groups, their view of hope may shift away from goal orientation towards a deeper faith orientation” (Hope Research Advisory Committee, 2002b, p. 4). They also considered the likelihood that older participants had been raised within a more religious environment than the young adults (Hope Research Advisory Committee).

In the present study, an equal proportion of grandmothers and granddaughters spoke about hope as it relates to religion and/or spirituality. Bonnie discussed hope as being connected to her belief in God while Della spoke about hope in a spiritual, non-religious sense. With respect to the granddaughters, Emmy talked about hope in connection to ‘having faith’ while Cathy connected hope to both the religious and the spiritual. The grandmothers, however, spoke in considerable detail on the subject, unlike the granddaughters who briefly mentioned the connection to religion and/or spirituality. Research by Carson et al. (1988) indicated that both trait and state hope were positively related to spiritual well-being. In other words, participants who reported higher levels of hope tended to score higher on levels of spiritual well-being. Spiritual well-being consisted of two components, existential and religious well-being. The positive correlation between hope and existential well-being indicated that hope may be instilled in a religious and a non-religious sense.

Gender, Proximity, and Birth Order

My personal experience involved a very close relationship with my grandfather. Interestingly, the three GP-GC pairs that met the criteria for inclusion in this study were grandmothers and granddaughters. Two of the granddaughters spoke about feeling closer
to their grandmother than to their grandfather. In addition, two of the participants talked about the special bond that grandmothers and granddaughters shared.

This gender imbalance is not surprising. Research by Dubas (2001) indicated that gender is related to both the importance and closeness that young adults attribute to their relationship with grandparents. Young adult granddaughters felt closer to and rated their relationship to their grandmothers as more important than did grandsons. In contrast, grandsons felt closer to their grandfathers than did granddaughters (Dubas, 2001). Kennedy (1992a) found that grandchildren who identified their grandmother as their closest grandparent were more likely to have a closer relationship with the chosen grandparent than grandchildren who chose their grandfathers.

Canadian demographics indicate that on average, women live longer than men (Schlesinger & Schlesinger, 2004). Thus, one might consider death as a factor accounting for the absence of grandfathers in this study. However, two out of three granddaughters in this study had living grandfathers residing in Edmonton or surrounding areas. Though both of Cathy’s grandfathers had passed away, she was clear about not having had a very strong relationship with either grandfather. Emmy also said that she felt closer to her grandmother than to her grandfather. She attributed this to the many similarities that she and Bonnie shared. While feeling close to both her grandmother and grandfather, Stephanie talked about being able to communicate on a more serious level with her grandmother. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Stephanie participated in this study with her grandmother rather than her grandfather. Research by Kennedy (1992b) indicated that conversations about personal concerns are more prevalent in relationships
where the grandchild identifies their grandmother as the grandparent to whom they feel
the closest.

Thus, the voices of grandsons and grandfathers were absent from this study. Roberto et al. (2001) discussed the tendency toward gender biases in the grandparenting
literature. The authors contended that the majority of what we know about
grandparenting is filtered through the experiences of women. In their study, Roberto et al.
examined 45 grandfathers’ perceptions of their relationships with their grandchildren. In
response to a question about their hopes and dreams for their grandchildren, all
participants answered in a similar fashion. All grandfathers wanted their grandchildren to
receive a good education, have a successful career, get married, and enjoy a happy family
life. Interestingly, the hopes of these grandfathers were very similar to the grandmothers’
hopes for their granddaughters in this study. Like the grandfathers in Roberto et al.’s
study, in the present study grandmothers’ hopes were directed toward happiness,
marriage, education, employment, and children.

Proximity was mentioned by all three dyads as a factor that affected the closeness
of their relationships. Both Della and Emmy talked about how much closer they have
become since moving to the same city. Similarly, Cathy and her grandmother spoke
about feeling more connected now that they live closer to one another. Della explained
that having all of her grandchildren in Edmonton gave her the opportunity to form a
strong bond with each of them. The experiences of these participants echo research
indicating that grandchildren who live closer to their grandparents report greater
emotional closeness (Hodgson, 1992; Kennedy, 1992a).
Only one of the GP-GC dyads, Emmy and Bonnie, spoke of birth order as affecting their relationship. Emmy, the only first-born grandchild in this study, discussed being singled out as special and having the opportunity to do more things with her grandparents than the other grandchildren. Kennedy (1991) found similar results in his study of young adult grandchildren, where only grandchildren and first-born grandchildren felt singled out for special attention. A second study by Kennedy (1992a) indicated that only grandchildren and first-born grandchildren felt closer to their grandparents. Moreover, in comparison with the grandchildren from other birth order positions, these grandchildren reported feeling better known by their grandparents.

Limitations

External validity is concerned with “the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations” (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). Given that the sample in this qualitative study was small, non-random, and purposefully selected, the findings are limited in that they cannot be used to generalize in the manner common to quantitative studies. Rather, “a small sample is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (Merriam, 2002a, p. 28).

Member checks could have been used in order to enhance the internal validity of the research. While participants were asked to review the transcribed transcripts and add any additional thoughts, their thoughts on emerging categories were not requested by the researcher. Another limitation of this study involved the lack of ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the participants. In addition, with regard to gender, the voices of grandfathers and grandsons were absent from this study. Participants that met the criteria
for inclusion were all female, Caucasian, and from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds. As far as hope meanings are concerned, a number of the participants spoke on the subject briefly or had difficulty articulating their personal meaning of hope. In future studies, providing participants with a number of examples of hope meanings may facilitate the ease and depth of data collection.

**Implications for Counselling**

It is widely recognized that hopefulness plays a positive role in the preservation and promotion of human health (Kylma & Vehvilainen-Julkunen, 1997). In addition, research indicates that supportive relationships help foster a sense of hope (Carson, Soeken, & Grimm, 1988; Dufault & Martocciho, 1985; Forbes, 1994; Gaskins & Forte, 1995; Haase, Britt, Coward, Leidy, & Penn, 1992; Penrod & Morse, 1997; Raleigh, 1992; Wong-Wylie & Jevne, 1997; Yarcheski, Scoloveno, & Mahon, 1994).

Counsellors play an important role in helping clients rediscover a lost or hidden sense of hope. One way that counsellors can accomplish this is by reminding clients of the resources that they already possess in their lives and helping them build upon these resources. Hopeful connections with others can serve as a resource, supporting and encouraging clients in their growth. Findings from my research suggest that the GP-GC connection is one relationship that holds the potential to encourage intergenerational hope.

Recognizing the importance of the GP-GC relationship has a number of implications for working with families. When children are young, parents can be encouraged to recognize grandparents as a family resource. Parents can act as mediators, creating opportunities for positive GP-GC interaction. As grandchildren grow into
adulthood they can be challenged to accept more responsibility for improving the quality of the relationship with their grandparent. Both grandparent and adult grandchild can be encouraged to explore the unique opportunities that their relationship holds.

Family work that strengthens and preserves intergenerational relationships may become even more important in the event of stressful life changes. Family members coping with divorce, illness or significant loss may experience a sense of hopelessness and disconnection. Hope focused workshops aimed at maintaining intergenerational bonds may help to support families during times of stress.

When counselling clients individually, the counsellor can explore whether the grandchild has a grandparent, alive or dead, whom he admires. This grandparent can then act as a hope model for the client, inspiring him to envision possibilities when he feels bereft of hope. Similarly, when working with grandparents, counsellors can explore how grandchildren might contribute to the grandparents’ sense of hope.

Counselling elderly grandparents, or those who become ill, may present an opportunity to inquire about the relationships that they have with their grandchildren. In this study, all of the grandparents said that they hoped to live long enough to see their grandchildren’s lives unfold. Relationships with grandchildren may nourish hope in the elderly and the ill, encouraging them to overcome difficult circumstances.

When clients do not have a close relationship with their grandparents or grandchildren, counsellors can support the client in building stronger relationships where possible. One strategy for building such relationships involves the grandparent and grandchild sharing time engaging in joint activities (Hodgson, 1992; Kennedy, 1989, 1991, 1992a, 1992b). Grandparents and grandchildren who live at a distance can explore
alternative ways to share their lives including visits and communication via telephone, email, or letter. If building relationships with grandchildren is not an option, counsellor and client can examine alternative ways of nourishing the client’s sense of hope.

In addition, foster grandparenting programs may provide opportunities to increase the sense of hopefulness in both the old and young. Community agencies can create mentoring programs where older adults are paired with a children or youth in need of a role models. When matched appropriately, older adults can serve as a hope models for the younger members of the dyads. Reciprocally, children or youth can contribute to the hopefulness of older adults by providing them with opportunities to pass on their life experiences and form connections with the generation of the future.

**Implications for Future Research**

The demographic nature of the GP-GC relationship is shifting in that an increasing amount of adult grandchildren have living grandparents (Hodgson, 1992; Schlesinger & Schlesinger, 2004). At the age of 20, approximately 75% of North American grandchildren still have a living grandparent (Schlesinger & Schlesinger, 2004). Increasing our understanding of the nature of the adult grandchild-grandparent relationship gains significance in that this increased overlap of lives creates opportunities for grandparents and grandchildren to develop and maintain adult relationships (Rosenthal & Gladstone, 2000).

The adult granddaughters in the present study spoke about an increased interest in spending time with and getting to know their grandmothers as they grew into adulthood. The grandmothers discussed the pleasure that they received from watching their granddaughters’ lives unfold. Both granddaughters and grandmothers reported an
enjoyment of shared time. These findings support past research indicating that the GP-GC relationship can maintain its significance as grandchildren move into adulthood (Brussoni & Boon, 1998; Giarrusso et al., 2001; Hartshorne & Manaster, 1982; Hodgson, 1992; Holladay et al., 1998; Mills et al., 2001; Sanders & Trygstad, 1993; Wiscott & Kopera-Frye, 2000). Future research using a longitudinal approach might help us understand more about the dynamics of long-term GP-GC relationships. How might responsibility for the GP-GC relationship shift as grandchildren mature and move into adulthood? Do grandchildren switch to a more dominant role in relationship as GP health declines?

A growing area of research involves the topic of grandparents raising grandchild (Szinovacz, 1998). Grandparents may assume this caretaking responsibility due to the parent’s inability or unwillingness to care for the child (Milan & Hamm, 2003). While the experience of raising grandchildren may be rewarding for grandparents, this unexpected responsibility can present a number of challenges (Milan & Hamm). Future research may explore how hope might be connected to the experience of grandparents raising grandchildren from the perspective of both grandparent and grandchild.

Findings from this research indicate similarities between hope meanings expressed by grandmothers and granddaughters, suggesting that hope meanings may be passed down from grandparent to grandchild. Future research is needed to explore this possibility. Any number of factors may play a role in mediating this transmission. These factors might include the strength of the GP-GC relationship, the amount of time spent together, and the degree to which the grandparent voices her/his views on hope. Future research might also examine whether or not parents play mediating roles in this process.
Results from this research study suggest that hope is reciprocated in extraordinary GP-GC relationships. However, additional research is needed to gain a richer understanding of how each member of the GP-GC dyad contributes to the other’s sense of hope. In addition, findings from the present study reveal more about how the grandmother’s fostered a sense of hope in their grandchildren than the reverse. Future research with a focus on the question of how the grandchild contributes to grandparent’s sense of hope is needed. Efforts should be made to include GC-GP dyads of varied ethnicities, gender combinations, and socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, future researchers might explore whether the perceived strength of the GP-GC connection influences the degree to which grandparents and grandchildren feel more hopeful.

Closing Reflections

In talking to friends and acquaintances during the process of my research, one common element has stood out for me: grandchildren want to be close to their grandparents. Some spoke of the loss that they felt in not having a close relationship with their grandparents. Others, like the granddaughters in the present study, discussed the significant influence that their grandparents have had on their lives. I too was lucky enough to have had a special relationship with my grandfather.

As a 33-year-old woman, I feel fortunate to have two living grandmothers. Though we no longer reside in the same city, my grandmothers continue to be important figures in my life. Now, more than ever, I appreciate and value these women and the positive effect that they have had on my life. As a result, I have found myself taking a more active role in these relationships, exploring different ways of connecting with my grandmothers.
I know that my grandmothers have shared many of the hopes that I have held for myself. These hopes include completing my education and finding a partner to share my life with. The first of these hopes will be realized through finishing this thesis and obtaining my masters degree. The second hope materialized one year ago, when I met a wonderful man to whom I am now engaged. Both my Grandma Rose and I are looking forward to when she walks down the aisle at my, her eldest granddaughter's, wedding. Unfortunately, my Grandma Esther is not well enough to travel to Vancouver for the celebration. However, I know that she will be there in spirit, as will her late husband, my Grandpa George.
References


Appendix A

Interview Questions

*Questions for Grandparent:*
Tell me about your relationship with your grandchild.
Do you have other grandchildren? Is your relationship with this grandchild different than your relationship with your other grandchildren? If so, how?
What memories of times spent with your grandchild stand out the most in your mind?
How do you feel about your grandchild?
What have you learned in your life that you would like to pass on to your grandchild?
What is the greatest gift (non-monetary) that your grandchild has given you?
What does the word ‘hope’ mean to you?
Do you feel that your grandchild has given you a sense of hope? If yes, how?
What do you hope most for yourself? For your grandchild?
What do you hope for in your relationship with your grandchild?
Are you different as a grandparent than you were when raising your own child(ren)?
Did you learn anything as a parent that has helped you as a grandparent?
How has your grandchild changed you?
What would you like your grandchild to remember about you when you are gone?
What do you think that your grandchild will say hope is
What feelings do you associate with your grandchild?
What are five words that come to mind when you think of your grandchild?

*Questions for Grandchild:*
Tell me about your grandparent.
What is the most important thing that you have learned from your grandparent?
Do you have other grandparents? What makes this grandparent extraordinary?
What qualities/characteristics does your grandparent have that makes him/her so special?
How is your relationship different from all other relationships?
What memories of your grandparent stand out most in your mind?
How do you feel about your grandparent?
What do you think your grandparent would most like to pass onto you?
What is the greatest gift (non-monetary) that your grandparent has given to you?
What does the word ‘hope’ mean to you?
Do you feel that your grandparent has given you a sense of hope? If so, how?
What do you hope most for yourself? For your grandparent?
What do you hope for in your relationship with your grandparent?
What do you think your grandparent will say hope is?
What feelings do you associate with your grandparent?
What are five words that come to mind when you think of your grandparent?
Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

- I understand that the purpose of this research is to explore extraordinary grandparent-grandchild relationships.
- I understand that the researchers are interested in the role that hope plays within these relationships.
- I understand that I will be interviewed by one of the researchers.
- I understand that the researchers may request a second interview.
- I understand that these interviews will be tape-recorded.
- I understand that I will be asked to meet with my grandparent/grandchild and that we will be observed by the researcher.
- I understand that I will be asked to participate in a creative activity with my grandparent/grandchild.
- I understand that the creative activity (i.e. working with paint, clay, collage or markers) will be chosen by myself and my grandparent/grandchild.
- I understand that this observation will be videotaped.
- I understand that the researchers in this study are Dr. Ronna Jevne (University of Alberta) and Shari Levine.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time.
- I understand that I must tell one of the researchers if I choose to withdraw.
- I understand that information that comes out of this research may be published and that my exact words may be used.
- I understand that my name will not be associated with any of this information unless I say that it can be used.

I, ____________________________, understand all that I have read and agree to participate in this research.

Participant Signature ____________________________

Researcher Signature ____________________________

Date ____________________________
Appendix C

Renewal of Consent Form

In the spring of 2000 you volunteered to participate in a study entitled 'Hope and the Grandparent-Grandchild Relationship' that was being conducted by myself, Shari Levine in affiliation with the Hope Foundation of Alberta. I am currently a master’s student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Counselling Psychology.

I am writing to request your consent for use of the data collected from this original study for my master’s degree research at the University of Victoria. This would include use of the audiotaped interview, videotaped session with your grandmother/granddaughter and photographs of you and your grandmother/granddaughter. I will use this information only if both you and your granddaughter’s grandmother’s consent to this use.

Please read over the information that follows. The University of Victoria requires that I include this information in order to obtain your full consent. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached by phone at 604-987-8323 or email at sharilev@hotmail.com. I will gladly reimburse you for any long distance charges incurred.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how hope is reciprocated in grandparent-grandchild relationships. No studies exist that look at hope and the grandparent-grandchild relationship. The grandparent-grandchild relationship is a unique bond with the potential to generate hope. Each member of the dyad can help to foster a sense of hope in the other. Individuals of all ages can benefit from increased hope. Hopefulness has been linked to better health and life-satisfaction. Results from this research may shed light on how this reciprocity of hope operates. The objectives include:

- Exploring how hope is reciprocated in extraordinary GP-GC relationships
- Exploring what meanings participants attach to the concept of hope
- Exploring what characteristics of extraordinary GP-GC relationships help to foster a reciprocal sense of hope

Your participation may contribute to greater understanding of the grandparent-grandchild relationship and the role that hope plays in this relationship. In addition, it may contribute to the overall body of knowledge about grandparent-grandchild relationships, the meaning that this relationship has for grandparents and grandchildren and the role that hope may play in this relationship.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation or negative consequence. If you withdraw from the study I will destroy all collected data pertaining
to yourself and your grandmother/ grandchild. The information obtained from you and your grandmother/ grandchild will be dropped from the study.

In terms of protecting your anonymity:

- I would like to use your first name in the thesis and in future presentations/articles/ chapters/ monographs that may be published as a result of this research. Your first name and other identifying information will only be used if your consent is given.
- I would like the option of using the photographs that I have previously taken of you and your grandmother/ granddaughter. These photographs may be used to present findings at class or conference presentations, or in articles/chapters/ monographs that may be published as a result of this research. Photographs of you and your grandparent/ grandchild will only be used if your consent is given.
- Two of my classmates will be helping me to analyze portions of the transcripts. Your names will not be used in this process nor will any identifying information be given to these individuals.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected as follows:

- No one other than me has access to the collected data. The audio tapes will be destroyed after my masters defense. I will, however, keep the remaining data so I can use them to write materials for publication. No further research will be conducted using the collected data. The transcripts, videotapes and photographs will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and will be destroyed five years after the last publication.

Data from this study will be disposed of as follows:

- I will keep the transcripts, videotapes and photographs for five years after the last publication, at which time they will be destroyed. During the interim, this data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Other planned uses of this data include the following:

- The results of the study will become part of my masters thesis. My committee members and one outside member of another university will read this work. I may also write articles/chapters/monographs based on the study, and I may present the findings at conferences or in class presentations.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- The results of the study will become part of my master’s thesis. My committee members and one outside member of another university will read this work. I may also write articles/chapters/monographs based on the study, and I may present the findings at conferences or in class presentations. You will also have access to a copy of the final write-up if you choose. With your permission, I will keep your telephone number and contact you when the final report is finished.
I have included a copy of the transcript from our interview. Please look over the transcript and let me know if you have any additional thoughts on the role of hope in your relationship with your granddaughter/grandmother. Also let me know if there are any corrections or information that you are uncomfortable having included in the final thesis. I have included a self addressed, stamped envelope. Please use this envelope to return the transcript with any omissions or additions.

This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Max Uhlemann and Dr. Blythe Shepard. You may contact Dr. Uhlemann at 250-721-7827, muhleman@uvic.ca or Dr. Shepard at 250-721-7772, blythes@uvic.ca. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4362).

Please place a check mark inside the appropriate box:

I consent to having my first name used: Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent to having my photograph used: Yes ☐ No ☐

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

_________________________  ______________________  _________________
Name of Participant        Signature                 Date
Appendix D
Letter to Participants

Dear participant,

If you choose to continue your participation in this study please read over this transcript from our interview and make notes in the right margin. The notes can include any thoughts that you have on hope and your relationship with your grandmother/granddaughter. Also include any corrections or comment on information contained in the interview that you are uncomfortable having included in my final thesis. Please write as clearly as possible so that it is easy for me to understand. I have included a self addressed, stamped envelope. Please use this envelope to return the transcript with any omissions or additions. Feel free to make a photocopy of the interview to keep for yourself (or your grandmother/granddaughter) before you begin writing comments. If you do not have any concerns or comments you can return the transcript as is, accompanied by the signed consent form.

Please call me in Vancouver if you have any questions, concerns or do not wish to continue your participation in this study. Call collect @ 604-987-8323. No future requests will be made of you if you choose to sign the participant consent form or decide not to sign the form.

Thank you,

Shari Levine
Appendix E
Sample of Transcript Analysis

**Interviewer:** Is there anything else that you've learned in your life that you'd really like to pass on to Stephanie and your other grandchildren?

**Della:** Well, I tell them all that they have to love themselves first before they can love anybody else. That's something I learned a long time ago too. And some people don't learn that. They are continuously looking for something. And I think that Stephanie is quite happy with herself. And I don't need a lot of people around. Some people need to be surrounded by people all the time. I can be very happy spending days by myself because I have things to do and I like myself first. But I'm sure I was different when I was growing up too so perhaps that's something Stephanie has learned and will carry on with. That she's happy with herself and what she's going to do with her life. And that will make me happy with her. You know.

**I:** If she's happy with herself.

**D:** It just radiates to everyone else.

**I:** So to be happy with yourself first instead of trying to...

**D:** Impress other people. Or trying to make people happy who can't be happy. There are some people like that, you know. That no matter what you say or do with them or for them they're still not happy. But perhaps they're disappointed in themselves or something. But they're the only people that can get them out of it.

**I:** So trying to please yourself and in turn...

**D:** I think so. I think too often young people want to impress too many people. Or to please too many people. And I think the parents come first in that respect. Whereas with Grandparents, they don't have to please us because we love them for what they are, not what we want them to be.

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Researcher Notes:
- Della is passing on learning
- Learning involves self-acceptance and contentment.

Researcher Notes:
- Acceptance of and unconditional love for grandchildren.
Appendix F

Figure F1. Della and Stephanie with pillow.

Figure F2. Stephanie sowing pillow with Della.
Appendix G

Figure G1. Bonnie and Emmy with collage.

Figure G2. Detail of Bonnie and Emmy's collage.
Appendix H

Figure H1. Cathy and Cathy painting.

Figure H2. Detail of Cathy and Cathy's painting.