

NAME

Connecting the Generations Audio.mp3

DATE

May 17, 2021

DURATION

22m 53s

4 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

Speaker3

Speaker4

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Speaker1

Message from Wellspring's congregation. Good morning, Wellspring's. It's so good to be with all of you. One of the things I enjoy about being in my 50s is the perspective I have on technological advancement. For instance, back in the early 70s, I remember the thrill of being able to play video games on our television set. For the first time, we had joysticks that were connected to the TV with wires. And my three siblings and I would play Pong for hours, Pong was a game where the only job was to take this bar of light up one side of the screen. And hit a ball of light to the other side of the screen where your opponent controlled the other bar of light, high tech stuff, we were so amazed at this technology. And then a few years later, really sophisticated games like Space Invaders and Pacman came out. At the time, there were a lot of adult warning about the dangers of video games, everything from how it would ruin our eyesight to Space Invaders, to the fear that we were turning into a generation of mindless, ill tempered adolescents. It turns out that the technological age was upon us and video games were essential tools for learning how to use and interact with computers and other devices, the tendency for older Americans to freak out over new technology is nothing new.

[00:02:00] Speaker1

We often hear about older generations complaining about the youth of the day, their music, the way they dress, their dependence on technology. Apparently, when writing was invented, the ancients worried that it would spell the end of memory. These stories remind me of the need for communication and connection among the generations, how do we bridge those gaps that often seem to be so wide? That's why I was drawn to our current message series, Heirloom Connections, we invited members of the congregation from different generations to get to know each other through sharing videos. Everyone knew before they started that Reverend Lee, Reverend Ken and I would be watching their videos in order to incorporate some of what they had to say into our messages in this series. I had the privilege of watching videos between Glenn, who is five years old, and her video pen pals, Pete and Kathleen, who are seventy seven and seventy five.

[00:03:21] Speaker2

So when you were watching your video, and I believe we here's what's going on, on the other end of this camera. Hi, Glenn. I just want to let you see how I am Kathleen and Kathleen's mom and also a goofball attend all of these wonderful presentations.

[00:03:48] Speaker1

I was struck by two things as I watched the videos. First, how different things were. In the 1940s, compared to what it's like to be a five year old today,

[00:04:02] Speaker2

When I was five, I didn't have a color TV. Now, what's really interesting, though, is we didn't have any TV. You see the TV that I'm going to show you right here as a modern TV, the one that we've got in our house. Now, let me turn the camera around so you can see. And that's just the standard flat screen color TV. I say I like to go back and look at the photographs of what we had. So in 1943, until and when I was born, until the time when I was eight years old, we didn't even have a TV in the house. And none of my friends had TVs. They just weren't all that common. But when we did get a TV in 1952, this is what it looked like. And it was a real interesting one. My mother is very proud of it because it took her a long time to be able to afford it. But it had a TV screen over here and the knob to turn it on and off and change the volume was here and the knob to change the channels and get it in focus was over here. And at the time we had four TV stations that were on four channels that you could look at.

[00:05:42] Speaker2

And there were the networks, NBC, ABC and CBS. And then since we lived in Gary, Indiana, which was fairly close to Chicago, we had radio, TV station WGAN TV out of Chicago. And the interesting thing was that they didn't broadcast all day and all night like they do now. They broadcast starting in the morning about six o'clock, and the news would come on and then there would be some programs through the course of the day, around noon. Most of the programs were for kids who we really like that, that our gang comedies and Laurel and Hardy and a lot of the old time shows, because they didn't have a lot of live broadcasting at that point. And then we could watch and listen to the radio and the radio was this console over here? And before we had TV, most of what we did was we listened to the radio and this particular console that my mother had bought, we had a phonograph here and it would play 78 rpm vinyl records. So that was what we had during during my time growing up

[00:07:07] Speaker1

At five years old, Pete didn't even have a television set. Since then, we've gone from black and white TVs to color TVs to watching shows on our computers and even our phones. Did you know there's a Netflix watch? Yeah, since twenty fifteen, apparently. But now what's this, the beginning is video of Gwen with audio from Pete and Kathleen, but you'll get to hear Gwen two.

[00:07:37] Speaker2

Back in 1958, when I took a train trip out to California with my mother, I noticed on the train platforms get closer and closer. We got to California the more and more hula hoops. I saw those kids swinging them around and everything. And I had never seen them before. They hadn't been on the East Coast or even in the Midwest where I grew up. So I got home. I try to hula hoop and it never did anything for me but fall down around my ankles, climbing

[00:08:10] Speaker1

A tree house like

[00:08:14] Speaker3

We call them a slide. You climb up to the top and sit down or go backwards or stand up or do whatever, shoot down. Yeah, we had those in I didn't have one at the house but but at school we had them and then I had a swing set and that was at the house and also at school using them I loved.

[00:08:38] Speaker4

I set it up

[00:08:41]

Recently and guess what? I get really tired, I get more tired.

[00:08:47] Speaker4

And how did you get better at pumping? I practiced wow. That's why I made a song about trying. Again, you may not be able to do it this time. It's like it's. But maybe you'll be able to try again. No kidding. I don't think anyone could do it to anyone can do something. As soon as they look at things, they can do a.

[00:09:23] Speaker1

Some of Gwen's favorite things to do are things that Pete and Kathleen were also doing during their childhoods. There are enormous benefits of children growing up close to the grandparents. Children have a way of keeping us young as we age. And studies show that exposure to older, perhaps slower or less mobile people help teach children empathy. I often hear about how in the United States we have our priorities mixed up, that other cultures, collectivist cultures like those often found, for example, in Asia or Latin America are better because they sacrifice individual goals for the good of the group. Families and collectivist cultures are often portrayed as caring for and respecting their elders in ways we do not. Whereas in individualistic cultures like the United States, there's a perception. That focus on personal goals is often pursued at the expense of older family members, this idea that individual autonomy is somehow a negative has always bothered me. Maybe it comes from my own story. When I was 17, I could not wait to graduate from high school and get out of town. I particularly wanted to get away from my dad. My dad loved me fiercely and I loved him, too. But he was very protective. I applied to six different colleges, one Albright College was a 15 minute drive from my parents house. I don't even remember why I applied there. There was no way I was living. At home and going to college. I taught Albright and loved it. Still no way I was going there, then the financial aid package came in and it was very generous. So my mom and I talked about it and agreed that what made the most sense was for me to go to Albright, but to live on campus.

[00:11:48] Speaker1

My dad did not like that idea. In fact, he told me that if I agreed to live at home, he would buy me a car. When I dug in my heels and rejected his offer, he was smart enough to cut his losses and the decision was made. It was the right decision for me. I needed to separate from my parents in order to come into who I was as a person to figure out what I believed in, what I valued, and that didn't happen in four years of college. But college set me on that path. And I'm not the only one study showed that individualism promotes equality. Sadly, it's often the women and minorities in collectivist cultures who are doing most of the sacrificing. Still, prioritizing autonomy and self-determination does not mean that we have to turn our backs on the older generations. When my daughters were seven and five, I took them to the nursing home, where to visit my grandmother, their great grandmother, or as they like to call her, great grandmother. We had been doing this semi regularly and on this particular visit when we arrived, when great grandma was finishing up a meal in the dining hall. The kids ran up to her and both gave her great big hugs with that, several other diners reached out their arms because they wanted hugs to. OK, so let me pause here for a public service announcement. It is important to teach children and adults that we are each in charge of our own bodies. Just listen to our video penpals.

[00:13:58] Speaker3

They had to teach me to ask because otherwise if I was just thinking I wanted to give a hug, I just want to grab people, but that's not right. And I'm taught to ask and that's right. And so my favorite person to give a hug to is how you say Grampy and all my grandchildren and the rest of my family and everybody at the church who is going to be OK with hugs. How about a hug? And I wait. You say open arms, then I give them a hug. I like that

[00:14:29] Speaker2

Other people cause I like a lot, but I'm a little hesitant to give out hugs unless they ask me first, in which case I'm pretty willing guy.

[00:14:42] Speaker4

It makes me happy and I give hugs. It makes me even happier than I get hugs. That's why I often like to give hugs. And who do you like to give hugs to? Mommy and daddy and sometimes my classmates.

[00:15:04] Speaker1

Mm hmm. And what have we learned to do when we want to give someone a hug?

[00:15:09] Speaker4

Acts like no. And how do you ask? Do you want a hug?

[00:15:15] Speaker1

All right, cool as it happens. My daughters love to hugs and happily went around the room hugging the nursing home residents. I was so struck by that scene. I imagine that many of these older men and women probably didn't get many hugs and were overjoyed to receive them from my bubbly, willing little girls. I'm not sure if my daughters understood then that they were doing something important, but I like to think they did. It certainly made an impression on me. I remember when my kids were even younger around the year 2000, when we were living in New Hampshire, their preschool was moving across town. The board of directors of the school was talking about the possibility of moving into a building that also housed a retirement home. It was the first time I had heard of the concept of colocalizing the care of our oldest and youngest members of society. But actually, this idea has been around for a while. I found a story about a man in Japan who combined a nursery school with a home for the aged in 1976. It's so special when children get to spend time with their grandparents and great grandparents. And that's not always possible. The older members of our families may not be around anymore, or the call of autonomy and following our own passions may lead us to live far away from them. But that doesn't mean that our children have to be cut off from older generations or that older generations have to be cut off from children.

[00:17:14] Speaker1

Co-locating childcare and nursing care is just one example of fostering those connections. It can take some thought and planning, but there are lots of ways to get the generations together. We have the opportunity to do more of this at Wellspring's with people of all ages. It can be a challenge to strike a balance between meeting the spiritual needs of adults. And keeping kids engaged. You can see the signs of the good work already being done to find that balance, though. From kids dancing in the aisles when our band plays to all ages game nights to incorporating the youth spirit yell into our online services. This very message series and the video pen pals that resulted from it are part of a conscious effort to connect people in different generations. I think we can do more. The kids in our congregation have so much life and energy to share with the adults, and the older kids could definitely teach most of us adults a thing or two about today's rapidly changing technology. Are older members have so much wisdom and life experience to share? I would argue that we can only go so far in meeting the spiritual needs of adults without engaging our children. Children are not separate from our spiritual needs.

[00:19:01] Speaker1

We recently updated our DNA. The things we as a congregation believe in and commit to. Part of our DNA states, our vision is that Wellspring's is called to make the world whole wholeness doesn't mean perfection to us, but it does mean healing what's broken, weaving together what's torn apart. And true to our Universalist Unitarian Universalist tradition, not leaving anyone behind. I'm going to read that one more time. Our vision is that Wellspring's is called to make the world whole. Wholeness doesn't mean perfection to us. But it does mean healing what's broken, weaving together what's torn apart and true to our Unitarian Universalist tradition, not leaving anyone behind. Yep, that sounds like us. The work of making the world whole is never ending. Every day we older members are passing the torch to others. The young people in our congregation literally are our future. We need to continue to reach out to one another. Adults can volunteer with youth spirit not just to keep the kids occupied, not just to teach them, but to learn from them. To connect with them. To honor them as the ones who will carry the work we do on into the future. The ones who will continue to make the world whole. I don't have all the answers, but we owe it to ourselves to try. This is an original song by one encouraging us to just try.

[00:21:16] Speaker4

Yeah, don't you want to try if you can do it, try again? Did you see maybe I don't know, but it was just what you might succeed, just try. it might be your first time. just try . And again, and again. Try, yeah, yeah, yeah, it'll be fine if

[00:22:05]

You don't get it the first time, it doesn't mean you can't get it. Any time

[00:22:13] Speaker1

On and on that note, I'll say amen. We pray with me. Spirit of love, that is the ultimate connection among and between us. Be with us as we learn to be with each other. Amen, and may you live in blessing. If you enjoy this message and would like to support the mission of Wellspring's, go to our Web site. WellspringUU.org That's Wellspring's the letters UU dot ORG

END OF TRANSCRIPT



Automated transcription by Sonix
www.sonix.ai