

GRAND SKILLS FROM GRANDPARENTS



Whenever we think of our grandparents, we immediately get an image of smiles and hugs. Rarely do we think of the numerous talents they have that we can learn and preserve. In this article, we try to talk about some of the many cool things we ought to learn from these beloved elders. We also reminisce how amazing the time we spent – as kids – with them was, because that's the only way to get it right.

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IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST

The number of times you have gone to a boutique and gasped inwardly at the price tag on those lovely crocheted, hand-stitched kameez is probably uncountable. While you might not find a way to fatten up your wallet anytime soon, what you can do is spend some time with your grandmother, trying to learn the art of knitting and sewing from the expert herself. You may or may not have seen them work with a



BREWING AWAY WITH POTS AND PANS

You can YouTube and Google all the pasta recipes in the world but good luck trying to find something to replace the aachar and bhorta you've been enjoying courtesy of your nanu and dadu. You're used to seeing them in jars in the kitchen, never sparing a thought as to how they were made.

Spend some time with your grandmothers in the kitchen, and learn the secret blend of spices that has kept your tongue salivating for as long as you can remember. It'll be a lot of work but you'll learn to appreciate the effort that goes into making each condiment. Soon, you might even be able to

Instagram a photo of a jar of pickles, and proudly caption it as something you made yourself. Double taps from us.

ONCE UPON A TIME

Storytelling is an art. Remember the story of panta buri? We all heard that when we were kids and laughed so hard when the thief got what he deserved. Now, look at us, we can barely run a three-minute conversation with a person face-to-face. Not only stories really, our grandparents could articulate everyday incidents so well and say those with so many changing expressions that their faces were like live emojis. We have lost the art of storytelling and wonder what we will read out to our children. Maybe

we will talk to them about not-so-funny memes and stories about grammar Nazis on the internet.

TREASURE CHEST FOR GIVEAWAYS

No, I am not talking about free cookies or contour kit giveaways on Instagram. Our grandparents have these little or big neat treasure chests that are full of things so precious and if you have been a good kid, chances are that your grandparents will leave behind their legacy for you. One of us found photo albums, the first love letter nana gave to nanu, grandfather's bottle of favourite attar, grandmother's muslin saree and pearl brooch, pitha recipes and tons of other goodies in one of those



treasure chests. Preservation is necessary to survival and inheritance, and all we have are some backups of our selfies in the clouds.

REMEMBERING IT RIGHT

Our grandparents have supercomputer-level memories, we are sure. They remember the names and birthdays of so many of their grandchildren. One of us here uses two SIM cards and her grandmother remembers both the numbers, and of course makes it a point to call every now and then. Grandparents are also smart and witty at using mnemonics to remember things, like the sequential colours of a rainbow in Bengali, or the complicated relationship among centimetre, metre and hectares that helped one of us pass her math exams. Ever wondered how they also remember all these wonderful and fun riddles? We bet if you learned a few you wouldn't go unnoticed at social gatherings. They make up for the best afternoon pastimes.

DIY INDOOR GAMING

The world of ludo and bagaduli were introduced to a lot of us by our grandparents, but apart from being a whiz at throwing sixes across the board, they also happen to be quite crafty at making toys out of raw material – the original DIY-ers, if you will. Cars were made from cigarette packs, TVs were made to appear with the magic of some glue and pieces of paper scrolled around toothpicks, and best of all were the dolls. Beautiful dolls

fashioned out of spare pieces of fabric and cotton balls were better than any Barbie anywhere. Knowing how to make these toys would be an incredible skill to have in a time when screens and devices are all the rage among kids who might not have the childhood that we

have had.

There is something so simple yet so graceful about vintage fashion. Our grandparents had the time of their lives watching the on-screen chemistry of Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen, and looking back at their black and white photographs, we can see how much they idolised this on-screen pair. Messy buns that we are so into these days are really a thing of the past and it's amazing to see how seamlessly our grandmothers pulled them off.

The look was never complete without some bright flowers tucked in the buns though. Kajol (not the Bollywood actress) was used beautifully to line the eyes and it came to us as such a surprise to learn that they were often homemade. Our grandfathers were elegant in sherwani/kurta-pajama and so impressive without having to try too hard. They were also keen on watches too, including these really fancy, gold pocket watches, the functionality of which can of course be laughed off now. They were revered not only for the pur-



poses they served but also for the essence of aristocracy they carried. So, next time you want to post something as #fashiongoals or looking for some inspiration to stand out from the crowd, you know where to find gold. That's right, dusty albums are the way to go.

Every generation is blessed with a different skill set, we believe. Just like we can't pull off sewing a button on a shirt, maybe our grandparents couldn't have known at what temperature exactly gelatin sets in. We have so many resources now to document what we know that we can be optimistic that these will be around for a long, long time but the awesome skills that our grandparents have may get lost in time and it would be wonderful if we could learn only a fraction of what they know and pass it along, generation after generation. After all, grandparents are gold, full twenty-two carats.

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