Love for grandmother

Make a multiple generation celebration this Mother's Day

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Take the time to honour your grandmother on Mother's Day, making it a true multi-generational celebration. (Shutterstock.com)

She gave me a candy when I got in trouble for eating dishwasher detergent. She taught me English - her third language - and that I have two knees [pronounced k-neez]. She told me stories and gave me memories for new ones.

Grandma to some, Grams, Oma, Nana, Nonna, Bubby, or Grandmère to others - we all know her.

She is the grandmother.

And she is all too often taken for granted. So this Mother's Day, when you are celebrating mom, don't forget the ultimate in mothers - grandmothers.

Many countries officially celebrate them. For instance, in France, the first Sunday in March is Grandmother's Day. This is a day when all grandmothers and women over the age of 55 are honoured. There's also a Grandmother's Day in Poland and Bulgaria.

Even Canada and the United States have a National Grandparents' Day in September, but that almost seems more of an urban legend than a holiday of legends. (Honestly, it seems more people celebrate Flag Day -- and who celebrates Flag Day?)

As grandmothers have evolved, the old stereotype of a frail, grey-haired woman in glasses and a knit cardigan does not always apply. Today, many "nans" carry pictures of their grandchildren in their briefcases, or have them framed on their office desks, only to hear people say, "You're a grandma?"

But, certain things remain the same"¦

It's not just the extra candies or money that grandmothers sneak into their grandkids' hands, but it's the extraordinary influence these women have over them.

As the symbol of family and tradition, they make it possible for children to embrace their family history and their place in it. (And, of course, grandmas also make it possible for children to learn all the embarrassing childhood stories about their parents.)

Dr. Rheta Rosen is a professor emeritus at Ryerson University, with an area of interest in aging and intergenerational relationships. She notes, "Kids who grow up with grandmothers have a sense of history. Their grandmothers have lived in another era and they can feel connected to

their own history through her.

"Everybody needs roots and wings. Grandmothers can give their grandchildren roots, and if they have a broad perspective, can give them wings to do what they need to do."

I never had the chance to meet all of my grandparents, and haven't had one since I was 12. My mother's mom - my Bubby - died when I was six, but some of my most vivid childhood memories centre on her. And some of my most vivid regrets centre on her too. I wish I could have had more time with her and learned more from her.

Dr. Rosen explains that for those who no longer have a grandmother, it is still possible to bring that sense of history into the family's life.

For this reason, through my parents' memories and mine, along with pictures, keepsakes, and recipes, my grandmother lives on (as do all my grandparents).

So, in the end, my Bubby has taught me many values, without "teaching" them to me at all. And this is what grandmothers do.

Family is important. Grandmothers are the best proof of this.

And you don't have to be a celebrity or renowned artist to have a legacy; you need only be a grandmother.

Celebrate her because she is renowned in your family, and carry on her legacy.

Happy Grandmother's Day!

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