

What Pap Wants My Grandkids to Know

I've said many times if I knew my grandkids were going to be as wonderful as they are, I would have had them first. That is not saying I didn't enjoy our children and I am proud of how they turned out, but let's face it, they were a test, and many times I was clueless as a parent.

One of things that comes with age is experience and with that comes a different way of looking at life. I'm writing a book entitled "Things I Want Kids to Know" and with each passing month, the list of things I want them to know are getting longer.

Number one "to know" seems to stay the same, that life is a progression of experiences that must be lived to be understood. That's one of the roles of a grandparent is to tell their grandkids stories and help them begin to have a better understanding of life's mysteries, and help the kids as they experience life to remember "oh Pap told a story or talked to me about that , and hopefully they are better prepared for life's progression of experiences.

Number two "to know" is life is a journey that can be fun; you just have to stay positive and curious each day. Life is what you make it, and life picks up speed as you get older, and there is no use spending time thinking I should have, could have, or would have. That part of life is past and you have today, the present, so enjoy the gift and be creative and have some fun as you prepare for new opportunities. Oh the places you will go and the things you will see. When I look into eyes of my grandkid's I can only imagine what their eyes will see in their lifetime.

With the world's technical knowledge doubling every two years I believe their eyes will see things we can only dream about today, such as space travel, cancer being cured, and new sources of energy.

An example of world technical knowledge is the internet. In 1984 there were zero internet devices; in 1992 1 million; and 2008 over 2 billion devices in use, and it is estimated that by 2012 there will be over 20 billion devices in use. In five years, almost 50% of all workers will be employed in industries that produce or are intensive user of information technology, and over the next decade two-thirds of the fastest-growing occupations will be in health fields and computers.

It is estimated that 50% of four year students entering high school today will take a job that does not exist today. An example of job development, when we see the top 10 jobs in 2010 we discover they did not exist in 2004.

Another thing I want my grandkids to know is they will probably have 10-14 jobs by age 40, and the average person entering the workforce today will not retire until at least 85 and their life expectancy should be in excess of 105.

The sad part is millions of students are leaving school before high school graduation and high school drop-out rates are increasing at an alarming rate. Three-fourths of state prison inmates are high school drop-outs with 59% of federal inmates not graduating from high school. Today in the United States for every 100 ninth graders, only 18 will graduate from a 4 year college and in West Virginia that drops to 15 out of 100. I know that college is not for everyone, but it is a sure thing that my grandkids and yours are going to have to work for a living and for many years.

We will continue to need machinists/machine operators, skilled trades, technicians, sales representatives, accounting and finance staff, mechanics, IT staff and production operators. The important thing is we need to talk with our kids and continue to encourage them to stay in school, stay engaged in life-long learning, and help them find out what they are good at.

I believe the best thing we can do for my grandkid's is to always have time to talk with them, share stories and information that will expand their knowledge, encourage them to always do their best, let them know how proud we are of them, and always let them know how much we love them.

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