

In-Law

10-07-2013 by Harry Zirkelbach

Children are great imitators.

They also absorb information galore in those early years, information that has nothing to do with their being taught. It is simply stored as fact maybe for a future consideration, conversation.

One early observation; other children met reflect their family. Typically in each family, the parents married, stayed together. Fodder to be stored for consideration later.

And yet another another observation made, stored; friends' parents resemble their child, in many manners and features. In fact the child is a miniature version of parent. If the parents were tall, overweight, good communicators, those tendencies nestled with the friend.

**Before the school year the child is formally and informally taught by parent, siblings. Once school is entered, the learning process continues with that group, adds the one given the name Teacher, and equally important, the others in the same same school, for in many lives, these same faces will be together in classrooms for years, the Teacher changing.
That nest from which "best friend" grows.**

**Somewhere in adolescence, the child recognizes that schooling will end, and they will enter the world for which teaching prepared them. Work.
Eventually that moment arrives.**

**Boys and girls begin dating seriously.
Again stored information becomes valuable. What is the adult child looking for in a lifetime friend, to be called spouse?**

Somehow a choice is made, then satisfactory to both, marriage follows.

Not only does each have a mate, formally announced “’til death do us part” but there is that army of relations, immediate family. And if lucky, there will be a Mother and Father-in-Laws.

On the personal side.

My Mother-in-Law was a delight. Her name helped describe her - Grace. She had been abandoned by her husband during the depression, left to care for four children, which she did by entering the work force, staying until the last child left home. She remained my wife’s Best Friend for life. And in fact, when her last child left home in 1960, she suggested we buy her house, live with us. We readily accepted.

Grace retired from work, did some traveling while caring for out family as much as we cared for her. This continued until she died in 1965, knowing she had a granddaughter bearing her name.

In those years I never had a better, wiser friend.

When Barbara and I married my parents were absent from our Denver wedding. My mother had been struck by an auto shortly before April 28 1951 and could not travel. In 1953 with two sons, we rode a train to Erie to meet my parents, introduce them to these grandsons.

This would be the first of two times that Barbara met her Mother-in-law, the other when they came to Denver in 1955. In these brief gatherings, Barbara and Jo (my mother) became life-long friends, as if they had know one another all their lives. This closeness continued and intensified in the four years they knew one another, for my mother died young, in 1957, knowing Barbara named our second daughter Jo

This brief history on two special Mother-in Laws.