



Series 1. Episode 16  
Turning *Little Stones* show notes  
Family Matters (3) Listen to Gillian's  
experience as an Active Granny to two  
young grandchildren.

Episode 16  
Family Matters (3):  
**Active Granny**  
with Gillian Hobbs

This podcast is the third in a series called 'Family Matters'. We'll drop into the series regularly to hear our guests share their experiences of family.

In this episode, Gillian reflects on her experiences as an Active Granny who lives near enough to be able to offer childcare to her daughter's two young children. We are mindful that each family is unique and works differently and invite you to listen as she shares her thoughts, reflections and stories. Our hope is that there will be something to takeaway that is relevant for every family, because... **Family matters!**

### Thinking ahead

Long before, grandchildren were even expected, Gillian had listened and watched other grandparent carers. She realised (without judgement – every family is different!) that some grandparent carers end up doing more childcare than they may want to. These grandparents may find that they need to discipline more than they would wish. Others may find the role physically exhausting.

And so, Gillian wisely considered and openly talked about what she thought would work for her, should she be in this position - if and when grandchildren ever came along!

Gillian's honest approach helped the whole family work out childcare options and arrangements *before* they were needed. The greatest benefit of this approach is that she looks forward to the days she has with her grandchildren. It's not too much. Her delight is clear to see!

### Aligning parenting styles

Gillian actively respects the parenting style her daughter, Clare has chosen. With Clare's guidance, she has read a little and watched a few videos and regularly checks in with Clare, so that they can be consistent in their childcare approach. They talk about things!

She compares the wealth of parenting advice and resources which are available to parents now with the limited resources when her own young children were little. Gillian actively chooses to be interested and, where she can, she practises what she learns.

### Positive language & praise

One example, positive language, was 'difficult to get my head around' to start with. Now Gillian can see that when we phrase things positively, the results can be far more effective.

She also tracks how 'praise' has also evolved over the generations. She used to simply say, "well done!" or "That's lovely". Now Gillian is learning to notice and point out something specific when praising her grandchildren.

### We're not perfect!

Gillian tells us about an incident that her daughter Clare recalls when she was little when in Gillian's words, she she had been a 'less than perfect' parent. Afterwards Gillian had



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apologised to her young daughter. Wonderfully, Clare's memory was not of the incident but the impact of the apology!

The power of apology cannot be underestimated. This story was not of the 'less than perfect parenting' (whatever the event), but of an adult modelling 'sorry' to their child.

### Reflections on social differences

#### *Work and day care*

Thirty years ago, there were fewer households where both parents worked and correspondingly, there were fewer full day care provisions available. The reverse is true today.

It is understandable for grandparents to question their children's decisions on returning to work and nursery childcare for their young grandchildren. Gillian is honest about her own feelings when her granddaughter was due to start at nursery. However, she chose not to speak out these feelings. Now she can see what a positive experience nursery is for three-year-old Amelie, who loves her nursery and thrives there.

#### *Technology*

Technological change has brought many benefits to families, keeping relationships alive such as through video calls... "children are really good with them".

### Ice cream & Sprinkles!

Clare is a health professional and cares about her children's diet. The first time Gillian offered Amelie ice cream with sprinkles, she loved it so much that Gillian was concerned that Clare wouldn't want this to be a regular 'thing' at Granny's.

Clare's response is equally respectful. She is happy for her children to enjoy different treats at Granny's!

### Final thoughts....

- Things go smoothly if grandparent and parent communicate well and respect one another.
- Plan ahead.
- 'Systems theory', when related to family life, focusses on the need for positive relationships, respect and good communications.

*Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through*

*Turning Little Stones*

***Delving a little Deeper***

*See website for details.*