

A Walk with

BY MADELINE JURAN

(Based on a true story)



Look up the following scriptures: Psalm 71:9; John 13:34; D&C 52:40. Circle the one you think fits the story best.

Did you ever have to take care of a grown-up? I've done it many times. Every Saturday my sister and I take turns going to my grandmother's house. Grandma has dementia, which



Taking a walk with Grandma sounds like a good idea.



It sure does. Let's go.



Grandma



means she forgets a lot. Because her condition has been getting worse, she can't be left alone. A few years ago, she was taking me to the store. Now I take her. But I don't mind. I love Grandma, and we still have a lot of fun together.

Today was my turn to be with Grandma. She shuffled into the living room. "How do I look?" she asked. "You didn't have to help me get dressed today."

Grandma's red jacket didn't really match her bright pink blouse and brown pants, but I was happy she had been able to dress herself. "You always look good to me, Grandma."

Grandma smiled. "So, where are we walking today?"

"The shoe store. Mom said you need new walking shoes."

"Oh," she said. "Can we go to the doughnut store too?"

"Sure," I said, smiling. Going to the doughnut store was the one thing Grandma never forgot to do.

Half an hour later, Grandma sat patiently as the shoe salesman helped her try on her new shoes. When the salesman went to find a different size, Grandma whispered, "You know, Noreen, I think these shoes are ugly."

"You've never complained about them before, Grandma."

"Well, they're not as pretty as those," she insisted, pointing to a pair of high-heeled shoes on display.

"We are supposed to buy walking shoes," I reminded her. "You can't wear



high heels to go walking.”

Grandma lowered her eyebrows and scrunched her nose, but she didn't say anything else.

When the salesman returned, Grandma tried on the shoes, stood up, and walked around. “Ah,” she sighed. “My feet feel wonderful in these shoes.”

“So you like them?” I asked.

“Of course,” she said. “Don't I always like these shoes?”

Sometimes Grandma contradicts herself. But it doesn't upset me. I know she can't help it.

After the salesman boxed up the new shoes, he walked to the cash register. I opened my wallet to find the money Mom had given me. “I'll go pay now, Grandma. I'll be right back,” I said.

The salesman was very busy, and I had to wait several minutes before I could pay. When I walked back to Grandma's seat, she was gone. Her old shoes were still lying on the floor. I quickly scanned the store, but I couldn't see her. I started feeling very nervous. “Has anyone seen my grandmother?” I yelled.

“A woman with a red jacket walked out the door a few minutes ago,” someone said.

I darted out the door. I hoped I'd find Grandma looking at the pretty shoes in the store window, but she wasn't there. Just then I saw Grandma walking toward me.

“Grandma!” I cried. “Why didn't you wait for me? I was so worried!”

“I'm sorry, Noreen. You know, I did the silliest thing! Please don't be angry, dear.”

“I'm not angry,” I said. “I was just scared.” I sat down on a nearby bench.

Grandma looked off in the distance. “After I got outside, I realized I didn't have any shoes on,” she



explained.

“I'm just glad I found you,” I said.

We went back inside for her shoes. As we walked home, I noticed Grandma's shoulders were slumped and her head was down. “What's wrong?” I asked.

“Everything! I hate all this forgetting business,” she said. “But I just can't help it.”

“You're doing all right,” I said. “Everybody forgets now and then.”

“Not like this! Forgetting my shoes, forgetting this, forgetting that!”

“You could be doing much worse, you know. For instance, what do you always put on first, your blouse or your jacket?”

Grandma glanced at me with her bright eyes twinkling. “You're being silly.”

“No, I'm not! Can you imagine if you put your blouse on top of your jacket?”

“Then I'd really be in bad shape, I guess,” Grandma said as she gave my arm a playful nudge.

“Would you like to go for a walk in the park today?” I asked.

“Sure, but can we go to the doughnut store too?”

“Of course.” I held her hand to cross the street. “Don't we always?”

Like I said, I don't mind taking care of Grandma. Sometimes it can get a little interesting. But most of the time, we just enjoy each other's company. ●

“We encourage families to give their elderly parents and grandparents the love, care, and attention they deserve.”²

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994)

