

THE LEAST WE CAN DO for our kids & grandkids

When it comes to mothers and grandmothers, my kids and grandkids have got one of the best. She can cook up a full family feast at a moment's notice, and do it faster than a speeding bullet. She can iron a week's worth of everything in the time it takes me to press a shirt-collar. And she can be halfway round the supermarket before I've figured out which way the trundler's supposed to go.

MY WIFE IS BETTER THAN ME at feeding kids, bathing kids, dressing kids, and changing kids' nappies. It's her they cry for in the middle of the night ... her they run to on their stumpy little legs ... her name they learn to say long before they say mine. She's a champion mum and grandma, and deserves a gold medal in almost every event!

But there's one category in which I hold the record. When it comes to putting kids to sleep, I'm quite simply a legend. Within our growing family, I am the undisputed King of Snooze. And when all else has failed, when everyone else has tried unsuccessfully to send a small person off to dreamland, they turn to me.

It happened just the other day, with my second-to-youngest grandson, a five-month-old bundle-of-fun. And what his mother couldn't do and his grandmother couldn't do – no matter how hard they tried – I finally DID! I picked him up ... I cuddled him close ... I rocked him and whispered sweet nothings in his little ear ... and in no time at all he stopped wriggling and squirming, and fell sound asleep. "Aahh, yes," I crowed, "I haven't lost my touch!" But as the little guy lay there in my arms, he looked so peaceful



and perfect and vulnerable that it kinda shook me up ...

I found myself wondering about this sad, mad world he was growing up in, a world that's not always kind to kids. I wondered how he would cope – who he would meet – what he would find – if he'd be safe – who would protect him – and whether he'd continue to grow up free and whole and happy.

I thought about our ever-extending family. Yes, we're all there for him. Yes, he's loved to bits. And yes, his home – and ours – will always feel GOOD! No doubt about that ... But what about his WIDER world, the nastier bits, the stuff

we can't control? There's so much hurt and hate and ugliness out there waiting to rob kids of their potential.

Right now, he's only five months old. But what when he's 5 years ... 15 years ... 25 years ...? What then?

And that's when I thought about GRAPEVINE – fighting for families, sticking up for kids, equipping parents, building stronger relationships, healing broken hearts, and working non-stop to help make New Zealand a healthier place for little boys and girls to grow up in.

WHAT A CHALLENGE! So many dysfunctional homes, so many struggling mums & dads, so many couples in deep yoghurt, so many kids at-risk. We didn't really know what we were taking on, back in 1981, when the first Grapevine hit the streets. And there are still times, today, when the problems seem too big.

But then I looked again at my sleeping grandson, his eyes closed, his chubby hand closed tight around mine, and I reminded myself: *"We're making a difference, we really are!"*

TWO EXCITING THINGS HAVE HAPPENED THIS MONTH. **Firstly**, the latest edition of Grapevine was delivered "with love" to 155,000 homes around New Zealand. And the feedback is already telling us that our cover story/interview – **'WIRED: HOW COME WE'RE ALL SO DIFFERENT?'** – plus the more sobering feature – **'A BOY, A BOAT, & THE BLACK DOG'** – are making a positive impact in many of those homes.

Secondly, we've just added a hugely valuable **LIBRARY** section to our website. Want to check it out? Go to www.grapevine.org.nz and click on 'LIBRARY'. Over the past 25 years Grapevine has published countless features and interviews on 101 different topics – and this extensive, growing resource is now **FREELY** available (online) to our friends and readers. You can search year-by-year for that one particular article you wanted and can't find – or you can search under the following main categories:

ABUSE	INSPIRATIONAL	SEX
BIRTH	MARRIAGE	SONS/BOYS
DIVORCE	MEN/DADS	SUICIDE
DRUGS & ALCOHOL	MENTAL ILLNESS	TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION	PARENTING	TEENS
FAMILY	PERSONALITIES	WOMEN/MOTHERS
GRIEF	RELATIONSHIPS	
HEALTH	SENIORS	

Grapevine is still the hardest, stretchingest, demandingest project that any of us have been involved in. But is it worth the effort? **ABSOLUTELY!** And I can't imagine doing any less for our kids and grandkids – can you? Let's

face it: if we want to improve the quality of family life in this country, Grapevine's the **LEAST** we can do ...

So I make no apology for again inviting you to help us and encourage us with your support. We needed you **LAST** month ... we need you **THIS** month ... and we'll need you again **NEXT** month. Quite frankly, we rely on you – and without your assistance, almost everything we're doing would grind to a sudden halt.

- ◆ **Are you happily married?** Please partner with us financially as we put more relationship tools in the hands of couples just-in-love ... and couples whose love has grown cold.
- ◆ **Are you a parent?** Please join us in our efforts to equip other parents, by sending your April donation now.
- ◆ **Are you a grandparent?** Please invest in your grandkids' future, by writing out your cheque now.
- ◆ **Do you dream the Grapevine dream: to give every family a LIFT?** Please respond generously and help us spread Grapevine's message of fun, hope and wholeness into every corner of Godzone.

On our own, none of us can make much impact. But (as we've proven through 25 rewarding years) **TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE!**

Thanks so much (on behalf of everyone here at Grapevine) ...




PS: You'll find **TWO COUPONS** with this newsletter: one is a standard coupon (for you to enclose with your donation) – the other is your annual **RECEIPT** (which you should keep for tax-rebate purposes).

A WISH-LIST FOR MY GRANDSON ... by Paul Harvey

Paul Harvey is an American radio broadcaster for the ABC network. At the age of 88 he still broadcasts several times each week to a listening audience of 22 million people. "We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse," he said. "For my grandchildren, I'd like better!"

I'd like you to know about hand-me-down clothes and homemade ice cream and leftover meat-loaf sandwiches. I really would.

- I hope you learn humility by being humiliated, and that you learn honesty by being cheated.
- I hope you learn to make your own bed and mow the lawn and wash the car. And I really hope nobody gives you a brand new car when you are sixteen.
- It will be good if at least one time you can see puppies born and your old dog put to sleep.
- I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in.
- I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother. And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room. But when he wants to crawl under the covers with you because he's scared, I hope you let him.
- When you want to see a movie and your little brother wants to tag along, I hope you'll let him.

- I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends, and that you live in a town where you can do it safely.
- On rainy days when you have to catch a ride, I hope you don't ask your driver to drop you two streets away so you won't be seen riding with someone as uncool as your Mum.
- I hope you learn to dig in the dirt and read books. And when you learn to use computers, I hope you also learn to add and subtract in your head.
- I hope you get teased by your friends when you have your first crush on a girl, and when you talk back to your mother that you learn what soap tastes like.
- May you skin your knee climbing a mountain, burn your hand on a stove and stick your tongue on a frozen flagpole.
- I don't care if you try a beer once, but I hope you don't like it. And if a friend offers you dope or a joint, I hope you realize he is not your friend.
- I sure hope you make time to sit on a porch with your Grandpa and go fishing with your Uncle.
- These things I wish for you – tough times and disappointment, hard work and happiness. To me, it's the only way to appreciate life.
- Written with a pen. Sealed with a kiss. I'm here for you. And if I die before you do, I'll go to heaven and wait for you.



CLICK HERE to make a donation