

Second prize in Essay Competition organised by the Department of English and Communication

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Caring for the elderly: a hindrance or an aid to self-development

‘When grace is joined with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is an unspeakable dawn in happy old age’ Victor Hugo.

Elderly is a reference to old people who have crossed middle age. This is a reference to the characteristic of old age as an adjective. The old age is an integral part of human life. It is the evening of life. It is unavoidable, unwelcomed and problem ridden phase of life. It is interesting that everyone wants to live a long life but not to be old. It is ironical that however undesirable it is old age has to come. We are all compelled to face the pain and pleasures of life. Old age complete the life pattern. It has its own pleasures though different from the pleasures of youth.

A good deed is never lost. He who sows courtesy reaps friendship and he who plants kindness gathers love. Life is often about being taken care of. The lessons are often about nurturing, care and compassion. Many people do not want to take care of the elderly especially when they are ill as they generally have lots of emotional and physical problems required a lot of care. Giving the best possible care and understanding their changing needs should be the goal of caring for the elderly. Of course, it is not easy to take care but it is definitely hard to let someone we love slip away. Most people take care of the elderly, maybe knowing that they have to or that there just is no one else to do it. Caring for the elderly requires a lot of patient, empathy and understanding. It is kindness that makes us take care of the elderly. We learn a lot from taking care and spending time with them. We gain experience as older people have a wealth of experience. We gain wisdom and knowledge as they have a lot more than any of us. Their experience that life takes them through yields a lot of wisdom. We experience gratitude. It brings a smile on our face and most likely on theirs as well. We get to learn about morals, principles and value that we can develop on as we live on. We learn as they teach hoe to love, to care, to give, to forgive, to accept, o support and face life. We get an insight into a set of rules and regulation which we can outline for ourselves as we live.

Caregiving often leads us into a world of love we possibly didn’t know. We all need love no matter how old we are, who we’ve become, who we are with, what we do. Taking care of the elderly gives us an insight to unconditional love and help us love them in the same manner. It shows us that this kind of love does not exist anywhere else. It help us develop more compassion, empathy, courtesy and helps us build stronger and a more meaningful relationship and friendship.

The additional time that we care gives us a wonderful opportunity to create laughter and conversation with the elderly people who are lonely. We learn that elderly people can be grouchy because of worries and unwanted tension. Talking to the elderly gives them peace of

mind and sense of security. It helps them by taking away their despair, depression, loneliness and so on. We can never understand how much it means to them to have someone by their side and care for them, however their eyes speak of gratitude, love and happiness and it lifts their spirit.

Caregiving or taking care of the elderly improves our self-knowledge and our identity. It develops potential and renews our self-esteem. It rewards us in ways we cannot see however providing the basis for our self-development. It also enhances our quality of being humane as humanity also plays a crucial role in taking care of the elderly. Most people do as it is the right thing to do. Caring should not only be due to humanity however it should come from our heart. After all, we are all bound to complete the cycle of life and face the old age, we'd all want someone to care for us. Caring for the elderly has in itself a reward and pride as Tia Walker says 'To care for those who cared for us is one of the highest honour'.