

Mother-in-law's voice heard: we *do* know when to bite our tongues

The UK's original online community for grandparents, Grannynet, has run a poll to discover how the much-criticised mother-in-law feels about her daughter-in-law. The survey uncovered a huge 93% describing their daughter-in-law positively.

Grannynet ran the poll in response to Netmum's poll which it ran earlier this month to find out what mums thought about their mother-in-laws. Netmums revealed that one in four despises their mother-in-law and believes she is 'controlling, interfering and bitchy'. They went on to coin various phrases for different types of mother-in-law, only one of which was favourable.

Grannynet's survey showed that the vast majority of mother-in-laws don't have problems getting on with their daughter-in-laws. Only a small group (13%) said that dealing with their daughter-in-laws was hard work; far more - in fact half (46%) of those surveyed - said that finding the energy to be a grandmother was their biggest issue. Three-quarters (76%) said that their daughter-in-laws listened to their advice either 'always' or 'sometimes'.

When asked what sort of issues cause problems, 17% said that their daughter-in-laws make character criticisms, as born out in Netmums fault-finding guide to mothers-in-laws. Other issues include those surrounding childcare, not respecting boundaries and both parties relationships with their sons/husbands.

Grannynet Founder Verity Gill comments "*We have found that there are a generation of mother-in-laws out there who are by no means 'controlling, interfering and bitchy'. Our survey tells of a more harmonious outlook. They do get on with their daughter-in-laws for whom a vast amount offer up to 9 hours a week of free childcare, hence their biggest worry is finding the energy to provide this.*

Perhaps it's the experience of age that gives these women a better focus on the overall goal - to ensure stability reigns amongst the family. We feel that mother-in-laws provide the glue, not only to the UK's economy in providing an estimate £4bn childcare contribution, but also to their own families - calming conflict not creating it."

Three quarters of those surveyed (77%) used positive words to describe their daughter-in-laws. The most popular word used was 'lovely', but they also described them as 'nice' and even as 'perfect'.

When asked what advice they had for fellow grandmothers on how to avoid conflict with their daughter-in-laws, they were united in their response; mother-in-laws should always listen and never interfere. "*Despite perceptions, we've found that these women do understand about when to bite their tongue and only to give advice when it's asked for*" says Gill.

- Ends -

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Further information

Grannynet:

Grannynet is the original online community for grandparents, particularly those who look after their grandchildren. The site holds a wealth of articles on everything from activities to recipes to access rights, all relating to being a grandparent. There is also a lively forum where grandparents can chat to others about matters that are important to them. Grannynet has recently launched its own shop where they can buy both baby basics and gorgeous gifts for grandchildren.

Grannynet was set up four years ago by Verity Gill, when she had her first child. Verity's mum instantly became a huge support for her in her new role as a parent, but they both realised that 'Granny' had no support network of her own. That is when the idea for Grannynet was born. Grannynet has 11,000 monthly visits, 7,500 unique monthly visitors and 3,000 members.

www.grannynet.co.uk

Statistical information:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are Grannynet's Daughter-in-law survey. Total sample size was 72 mother-in-laws. Participation in the survey was voluntary.