

Gurus vs grannies:

Over a third of grandmothers believe parenting books have eroded a modern mother's instinct

A new survey carried out by Grannynet, the social networking site for grandmothers, has revealed that many of its audience believe that parenting books are to blame for new mums ignoring their motherly instinct. They also consider themselves as grandparents, to be best placed to give parenting advice to their children, with one respondent commenting; "I think that we need to make mothers feel more confident".

The majority (62%) didn't read a parenting book when they were expecting or when their children were growing up. Instead they listened to the advice of their mother or mother-in-laws (64%), their own motherly instinct (46%), a health visitor (37%) or other mothers or friends (28%).

Of the 38% that did refer to a parenting book when younger, the most popular titles were from doctors; for example Dr Spock or Dr Miriam Stoppard OBE or from retailers such as M&S and Mothercare.

So how does this compare to our grandmothers' children? What parenting resources do today's parents use? As well as books by authors such as Gina Ford and Tracey Hogg (47%), websites (50%), forums and blogs (41%) are now widely used, such as Netmums and Emma's Diary. However, only 16% of grandmothers surveyed said that they consider such guides as 'very helpful' to today's parents and 22% felt they are 'of no help' and 'can actually be quite harmful', with comments including "too many offering different advice" and "some are very good at making mothers feel guilty".

Grannynet's founder Verity Gill said of the findings "We have been seeing more and more grandmothers talking about their concerns on the Grannynet forum about the effect parenting books were having on their children. They feel that new Mums are getting very confused and hung up on advice issued by the overwhelming amount of parenting books out there, not to mention the aggression they face on some parenting forums. We think it is important for mothers to be encouraged to discover their inner instincts - something that parenting books can overlook."

As one grandmother said of parents faced with one of the many modern parenting manuals; "everything has to be done as the book says and sometimes a mother does know best!".

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For further information please contact Charlotte Lloyd Owen on charlotte@grannynet.co.uk or 07956 227877.

Notes to editors:

Grannynet was founded in 2006 by Verity Gill when her life was turned upside down by the arrival of her baby daughter. As she looked for help and guidance from her own mother, she realised what an important part a grandmother plays in the life of their grandchild.

Starting with a forum for grandparents to exchange stories and compare notes on their grandchildren, Grannynet quickly developed to provide the articles, blogs and product reviews which today supports a network of grandmothers all over the UK.

“All grandparents need support and I can’t think of a better way of finding that support than by logging on to Grannynet.” **Dr Miriam Stoppard OBE**

Statistical information:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from Grannynet’s Parenting Books survey, conducted in March 2013. Total sample size was 131 grandmothers.