

FOREWORD

Kerry Byrne PhD
Founder, The Long Distance Grandparent
thelongdistancegrandparent.com

What does it feel like to grow up with love that has to travel?

That's the powerful reality for millions of grandchildren around the world - and for the grandparents who love them from a distance.

Through my research, writing, and work helping long-distance grandparents stay connected, I've spent hundreds of hours listening to their hopes, worries, and the deep ache of loving from afar.



When Helen published her first book, *Being a Distance Grandparent*, I invited her to speak to members of my community, and I still remember the power of her words.

It was in that talk that Helen cracked open something I hadn't fully grasped: the varied emotional landscape of long-distance grandparenting. She gave language to something so many grandparents quietly carry: the mix of love and longing, the hope and heartache.

Since that day, I've admired her ability to honor the real challenges faced by families living at a distance, while also illuminating the deep bonds that can flourish across miles.

But truth be told, I've also been waiting for *this book* ever since.

Because something has long been missing from conversations about long-distance grandparenting: the voices of the distance grandchildren themselves.

And it turns out, the emotional complexity felt by long-distance grandparents as they try to connect, is felt deeply by their grandchildren too.

In *Being a Distance Grandchild*, Helen brings their voices forward with care, curiosity, and skill, gathering a wide range of stories that reflect the many ways families 'do' distance.

These pages are rich with intergenerational love stories - some tender, some complex, all profoundly human.

As I read through the stories and reflections, I found myself nodding, pausing, underlining, even tearing up. Some stories felt like they could have been my own family's; others opened my eyes to how different, and yet how universal this experience can be.

That's what makes this book so powerful: no two distance family arrangements are the same, and yet, if you live and love from a distance, you will see yourself somewhere in these pages.

My favorite line from Helen's book reads: *"I would have loved to have met some of my interviewees' grandparents and quietly whispered how deeply their grandchildren loved and respected them."*

This book is a mirror and reassurance for those who ask: *"Will all this matter?"*

Relationships built across miles are made up of small rituals, visits, phone calls, funny little packages, and fleeting conversations - moments that may seem minor in the moment but, over time, create lasting connection.

The stories of these distance grandchildren show us that relationships with grandparents shaped their sense of belonging, of being loved and rooted - beyond the borders of their towns, countries or continents.

One grandchild shared that when her grandparents left, "it was as if joy itself had walked out the door."

That kind of feeling exists only where deep love has been built.

This is also a book of hope.

Hope that what families are doing now - even when it feels uncertain or too small - is building something lasting. Whether you are a grandparent trying to stay close, a parent helping to build the bridge, or a grandchild growing up with love that travels, these connections matter. The effort may look different for each generation, but it's shared - a family story written together across time and distance.

My connection to this work is not only professional, but also deeply personal. I write this foreword not only as someone who works closely with long-distance grandparents, but also as a mother to two young long-distance grandchildren - children who have already said goodbye to three grandparents and a great-aunt they adored. Watching and coping with their grief, I found it striking - even cathartic - to see the same emotions reflected in Helen's stories of adult grandchildren, showing how love and longing for grandparents endure well into adulthood.

We are living in a unique moment in time - one where video calls, instant delivery, and messages sent at the tap of a button make connection possible in ways previous generations of families couldn't imagine. But even with all that, I think the heart of this work, and this book, will remain the same: showing up, staying connected, and trusting that love stretches across time and distance.

If you are part of a long-distance family - grandparent, parent, or grandchild - read this book, because it will provide the one message you likely need to hear most: love and family are not measured in miles. They are measured in the rituals you create, the joy you spark together and the love that quietly and consistently finds its way across the distance.



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[*Being a Distance Grandchild - a Book for ALL Generations*](#)

