




> An extract from **Pebbles of Perception**

Chapter Ten: Be Kind to Your Parents

*Be kind, for everyone you meet
is fighting a harder battle.*

- Plato

ur tendency to return favours seems to have a good degree of proportionality to it. Dinner at our place in return for dinner at our friends' house. A helping hand with a house move. A thoughtful birthday present. An eye for an eye. The proportionality of reciprocity.

But there is a slightly worrying exception. We can feel a lesser sense of proportionality towards those closest to us.

How should twenty years of caring be reciprocated?

They say a mother's work is never done and most of us have witnessed the wide reach of a mother's compassion. The discomfort of pregnancy. The pain of childbirth. Years of sleepless nights. Daily care. Endless worrying. Unconditional love.

Women seem to be better than men when it

comes to caring for their parents. My wife recounted how a friend of hers had been caring for her mother. She had been spending a huge amount of time and effort looking after her mum. It looked like a considerable inconvenience. When my wife complimented her she replied: "It is no work at all, in fact it is a *privilege* to be able to care for my mum." What a great mindset.

You don't have to wait until your mother is old before you are kind to her. There are lots of ways to show gratitude. Showing appreciation, spending time together and making small gestures of kindness are all that is required. Her first concern is that you are OK. So do her a favour, know yourself, be yourself and mind yourself. Occasionally ask for her advice and listen thoughtfully. Consider a handwritten letter. Explain in your own words why you are grateful for everything your mother has done and continues to do for you. She will treasure that.

I never got to write a letter to my mum. We had so little time together. Her name was Eileen and she died when I was thirteen.

My dad had to be the mother and father in our house. Thanks, Dad. Some kindness is coming your way.



Kindness is not just for strangers.