

What's Your Grandparent Name?



This lovely gift arrived in the mail for us today. Our daughter-in-law included a note saying she couldn't resist buying them for us. What makes it special is that these are the grandparent names that her children call us.

Kate, my wife, came by her grandparent name as kind of a fallback position. In her family, the eldest woman has traditionally been known as "NanNan" by the younger generations. However, Kate's mother is still with us and is still called "NanNan" by her kids, grandkids, and now great-grandkids. There can obviously be only one "NanNan" to a family so it was decided that when Kate became a grandmother she would be granted the oh-so-subtly different "Nana."

My name took a bit more doing. A lot of different options were tossed around. Gramps, Grandpa, Grumpy... none of them seemed to stick. Finally my daughter-in-law asked me if I had any

nicknames growing up. "Only one," I replied, "And it didn't last long." When my sisters and I were born, my parents picked a cute baby name to coo at us. My sister Allison was called Ally-Oop after the comic strip character. My sister Bobbi was called Baba Looney after the cartoon character. And since there was apparently no animated character that inspired my parents where I was concerned, they decided to make one up. I was called, very briefly, Mickel the Pickle.

I should have never mentioned that to my daughter-in-law. The next time the grandkids visited I was greeted warmly with the shout "Papa Pickle!" As they got older, they must have reasoned that the Pickle part was pretty silly so they truncated my name to the much more appealing Papa. Papa is a name I can get used to... in fact, my heart melts every time I hear them say it.

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