

The Last Word

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By Kim Hanson – 677 words

I'm getting to that age in life where I'm so very grateful to be alive. I've lost family members and friends and acquaintances who have not been extended the same privilege as I have...to still be here in my sixth decade.

Thoughts turn to...What can I leave behind? What will my legacy be? Is it possible to touch the lives of my children and grandchildren when I'm no longer living? Basically, I wonder...can I leave a piece of my heart behind?

When they were young, my children were the center of my universe; my life revolved around them in a real sense. School, their activities and sports kept me running from one place to the next in a chaotic, frenzied way, never mind that my paid job also had to fit in. Days sped by like vehicles on the highway, turning into a blur month after month. Sometimes, the only way I remember those frantic and hectic days are when I look at all the photos, and thankfully, there are tons of photos.

My solace in those days, came in the evenings when the kids were tucked safely into bed. That's when I would work on my latest quilting project, often late into the night. I felt such peace and strength and creativity as I sat stitching at my sewing machine, my fingers smoothing out the fabrics as they ran under my needle. Hours flew by, and I had to force myself to stop sewing and head to bed. I felt such joy and a sense of accomplishment when I would finish a quilt and be able to lay it atop one of my children's beds. It was my way of protecting them, wrapping them safely in my love. But, did my children feel that?

Now, I have grandchildren – the greatest gift and blessing of all. I have quilted and sewn for both of them, many times over. Now, with the luxury of time, things have changed. I no longer have to choose between sleep and stitching; I work on my quilts during daylight hours. Life's frantic pace has slowed down, and I can breathe and relax and reflect.

But one thing has not changed. I still feel such joy and a sense of accomplishment when I finish a quilt and lay it atop one of my grandchildren's beds. It's my way of protecting them, wrapping them safely in my love. But, do my grandchildren feel that?

My stash-cupboard has baskets and crates, filled to the brim with fabrics that tingle the senses; vivid, intoxicating colours of teals and pinks and reds, fabrics that are just waiting for me. The patterns and colours evoke joy and make me feel like a kid again – full of excitement, endless possibilities and wonder. But will those fabrics speak for me?

I have a lot of work to do in the upcoming years. So many quilts to make, so many stories to tell – I pray that I will get time to expand and express myself in all the ways that I wish to. Even at this age, my brain is still overflowing with concepts and plans and ideas for the future; I doubt that will change. As long as I'm able, I want to be creative. Perhaps that is part of my DNA...part of what drives me. More likely though, it's my veiled attempt at articulating love.

So again, I wonder when I'm gone, will my quilts remain? Will my family truly understand that they are, and always have been, an expression of my love for them? Will they "get" me? Of course, my secret wish is that they do understand. I'm ever hopeful that my quilts will serve as a symbol of unspoken love. I'm ever hopeful that my children and grandchildren will still snuggle under one of my quilts, late at night, and feel protected and cherished and secure. I'm ever hopeful that they will know, with each quilt I've stitched, I've left behind a teeny tiny piece of my heart.