



A Note from Executive Director, Vicki Hickman

In case you haven't heard, I have a newborn in the house! Westin Xavier Wolf entered the world on July 22. After my grandson Roman was born (he's now 18 months old and fully in charge of the household), I used to visit my daughter a few times a week to give her a break. But now that we're sharing a home, I've been upgraded from "visiting helper" to "live-in understudy." And let me tell you, this role comes with no intermission.

Thanks to "technological advances," it seems everything about baby care has changed since my daughter was a baby. Over the past week I've been told several times, "We don't do it that way now, Mom." Apparently, I'm a walking relic of the Baby Boom Nursery Manual. These days, even putting a baby in a crib has its own rulebook. Bottles require the precision of a surgical operation, TV time is calculated like a parking meter, and baby monitors could probably double as CIA surveillance equipment.

It got me thinking about how all these so-called "advances" have made everyday life more complicated. Take driving, for example. Back in my day, the fanciest gadget in the car was the little button on the floorboard that flipped the headlights from standard to bright. Now we've got sensors, cameras, dials, and dashboards that look like the cockpit of a 747. It's no wonder people miss their exits—by the time you figure out which button controls the windshield wipers, you're already three states away.

Or take something as simple as finding a phone number. I recently needed one and asked my husband for help. "Just Google it," he said. I didn't have my phone handy, so I asked Alexa. Her response? "Sorry, I can't help you with that." Excuse me? Back in the good old days, I just dialed 411 and a friendly human not only found the number but even offered to connect me. Now my "smart" devices can order dog food from another continent, but they can't tell me the local pizza shop's phone number?

And don't even get me started on my refrigerator. Last week the ice/water dispenser stopped working. After checking power, doors, and even consulting Dr. Google, I finally gave in and flipped through the 100-page manual. Turns out, Roman—who just discovered he can reach the fridge—had somehow engaged the "Child Lock" feature. I love how it's called a child lock when in fact it's the child who locked it.

So here I am: a grandmother living in a world where the babies are high-tech, the cars are too smart for their own good, Alexa thinks she's above me, and my refrigerator takes orders from a toddler.

But truth be told, I wouldn't trade this season of life for anything. Yes, the rules have changed, the gadgets are smarter, and I often feel like I need a user manual just to be a grandma. But every late-night feeding, every dinosaur pajama sighting, every giggle that echoes through our home reminds me how lucky I am to be right here, in the middle of the chaos. Because while the world keeps getting more complicated, the sweetest part of life remains beautifully simple: time spent with the people I hold dear.

-Vicki