

UNITED WISDOM

The next generation’s right to use what it receives differently

Meaning and Direction

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

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@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

The next generation’s right to use what it receives differently

Epigraph

Your children are not your children.

— Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet, On Children; original English.

What this article is about

What older people pass on may remain an important part of a life even when its recipient uses it differently. A familiar recipe, way of working, conviction, or family account carries particular people’s experience. Its significance does not turn an adult recipient into the executor of a completed plan. Understanding origins, acknowledging care, and choosing an action of one’s own are different movements that can coexist. This article considers that distinction through an invented example. A “right” here means room for an independent response, not a legal conclusion about ownership, inheritance, or a contract. Actual promises, other people’s participation, and the consequences of shared activity need a particular conversation of their own. A difference between generations proves neither the new generation’s superiority nor the old one’s infallibility. The question is how received experience can remain available without appointing someone’s entire subsequent path or requiring gratitude to be proved through continual repetition of another person’s life.

I. Receiving experience is not receiving an appointed life

When someone says they are passing on what matters most to descendants, their words may carry memory, care, and hope. They know what mastering a particular activity required and do not want everything to begin again. The recipient nevertheless encounters that inheritance within another life. Even when circumstances look similar, they must still participate, understand, and choose for themselves. A predecessor’s experience can offer orientation, a question, or a useful way of acting. It does not bring the next generation’s completed agreement along with it. Distinguishing these things is especially difficult when handing something on involved considerable work and a sincere wish to help. That work deserves attention; the number of years invested does not determine every future response.

Someone can accept a notebook without accepting a duty to keep it in the same way. They can learn a craft and discover it belongs in their leisure rather than becoming their profession. Continuing, changing, and putting what was received aside for now are all possible. No option

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

becomes reasonable merely because it was chosen independently. Knowledge, suitable conditions, and willingness to answer for a particular action may be needed. Yet having to think through a choice differs from having to confirm the giver's intentions in advance. Otherwise discussion quickly becomes a loyalty test: people are allowed to decide only while reaching an already appointed conclusion. Their own response then remains merely formal.

In Gibran's literary address concerning children, belonging within a family does not mean belonging to someone else's design. This is a figurative statement, not research on upbringing or a description of every family. It can be placed beside an ordinary adult recipient's question: what became available through others, and which response is now genuinely mine? Asking does not require first devaluing the relationship. It helps name that relationship specifically, without promising to continue another person's entire life. The older person also retains their own response to what happens. One person's independence does not appoint compulsory enthusiasm to another. The possibility of disagreement belongs to both sides, while responsibility for an accepted action remains with the person acting.

II. An invented example: a family recipe notebook

Imagine an adult named Daria whose grandmother gives her a recipe notebook. This is an invented scene, not an account of an actual family. The notebook contains dish names, small explanations, and notes about what particular relatives enjoyed. Daria remembers her grandmother preparing food for a shared table and wants to preserve the entries. She nevertheless proposes a different arrangement for the next gathering: everyone can bring some food, and one familiar recipe can be made if someone wishes. Her grandmother expected something else. For her, the notebook meant continuing an annual custom in which one person assembled the whole meal beforehand. They share one object but attach different expectations to its future role.

It first helps to notice what Daria has not said. She has not declared earlier gatherings meaningless, promised to cook every year, or asked everyone else to accept her arrangements silently. She wants to discuss the new gathering with those who would participate. Preserving the entries, being grateful to her grandmother, and arranging the present meal are three separate questions. Separating them does not automatically settle the disagreement. Her grandmother may hear a rejection of closeness where Daria means a different distribution of work. Daria will need an understandable explanation, more than a short declaration of independence. An explanation can clarify her intention without becoming a request for permission for every subsequent adult decision.

There is no need to discover the one correct family arrangement in this scene. Participants may want the former meal to continue, or the shared design may change. What matters here is something else: the notebook cannot answer for everyone. Its existence cannot establish

Daria’s agreement to become the permanent host or her relatives’ agreement to a new distribution of participation. What was handed on becomes part of the conversation rather than its completed solution. The gathering may be smaller than expected, and some people may decline. That does not prove remembrance of her grandmother’s work has vanished. Remembering alone is nevertheless insufficient to make every new arrangement considerate; actual proposals, responses, and accepted conditions are needed.

III. A purpose and its familiar arrangement may differ

Disputes about continuity often begin with outward arrangements: the same dish, date, activity, or sequence of actions. Behind them there may be a particular intention—to let people meet, preserve access to knowledge, or support a shared undertaking. Learning about that intention can help before promising to reproduce every detail. Her grandmother’s notebook may hold favourite tastes, skill in organising a meal, and remembrance of people at the same time. Daria need not select one meaning forever. She can preserve the entries, sometimes use them, and arrange a gathering differently. This distinction makes what was received more discussable than a general opposition between tradition and freedom. It does not prove a changed arrangement will preserve everything important.

In Dewey’s educational argument, experience is considered through further use and reconstruction. It offers a limited philosophical orientation here: received knowledge encounters new activity rather than repetition alone. That does not mean every innovation is useful or younger people always see more clearly than older people. If Daria proposes a shared meal with participation distributed among those attending, her proposal can be discussed through actual conditions. Do people have time? Do they understand what they would accept? Does room to decline remain? The originator’s age cannot answer these questions. A new arrangement also needs clarity; calling it an “update” does not free it from careful consideration.

The word “family” can remain while the circumstances of a gathering change, or the familiar name may be found to conceal a different undertaking. Naming the change is then more honest than assuring everyone that nothing happened. Her grandmother may value precisely a particular taste or order; that is also a specific meaning and should not dissolve into a convenient formula about what matters most. Daria can hear it and still choose differently. Understanding another person’s reasons does not mean accepting them as one’s own permanent condition. Conversation becomes more substantial when both sides can name what they keep and what they relinquish. Complete continuity then ceases to be a promise that cannot be verified in advance.

IV. Understanding before agreeing or declining

Independence does not require rushing to decline. Something received may sometimes look like a burdensome demand because its meaning has not been explained. At other times explanation reveals an actual disagreement. Daria can ask which gatherings her grandmother remembers, why she made particular notes, and what she now expects. This is neither an interrogation nor a compulsory procedure for approving Daria’s choices. Questions make the subject of discussion visible. A recipient can remain uncertain about what they will do with the full collection of entries. Learning may take time, and some answers will remain unavailable. Such incompleteness differs from contempt. It also gives no guarantee that full explanation will eventually produce a wish to continue the former custom.

Learning about origins is particularly helpful when a familiar action has become so habitual that nobody discusses its necessity anymore. It may have answered conditions at a particular time, or it may carry meaning that remains now. Both possibilities deserve consideration without assigning the past the role of a mistake merely because it is old. Respect for history nevertheless does not make every former necessity a present one. Daria has a different working day, a different group of participants, and another amount of available time. These conditions can be named without competing over who had greater difficulties. They explain her present proposal; they neither measure the human worth of two generations nor cancel regard for earlier efforts.

Someone can study the notebook carefully and leave some pages without practical use. That too is a particular response to what was received, provided it is named honestly. Use need not be presented as understanding’s compulsory outcome. An adult may agree with one argument, doubt another, and leave a third undiscussed for now. Silence should not be treated as an accepted promise, nor familiarity with a reason as proof of agreement. The same caution concerns the older person: providing a detailed explanation does not secure the response they hoped to hear. Understanding makes a more precise conversation possible without eliminating different voices. In that sense it can matter even when people’s decisions remain different.

V. Received faith calls for a personal response

Not everything passed on can be described as a convenient skill or family habit. Someone's important inheritance may be faith, an understanding of duty, or a spiritual practice. Turning their words into neutral advice about feeling better would then be inaccurate. If an older person speaks about God, faithfulness, or an action's religious grounds, those meanings need to be heard specifically. The next generation encounters them through its own response: sharing a conviction, asking questions, continuing to study, or not accepting it. Independence does not require declaring all grounds identical. Nor can someone accept faith for another as they might accept a parcel. A person's living agreement differs from a formula repeated aloud.

In the selected Dhammapada passage, personal ethical action cannot be performed for someone else. This is a Buddhist religious context, not a promise that every conviction is equally true. A limited distinction matters for our question: instruction received and one's own participation do not replace one another. Someone may be surrounded by explanations and must still respond to what they themselves do. That does not establish complete withdrawal from help, belonging, or communication. Nor does it require endless discussion of convictions with relatives. Naming the limit of a present conversation and leaving a question open may sometimes be more accurate than displaying agreement for a peace that depends on an untrue answer.

An older person may sincerely hope their faith will continue, while a younger person may not know what their response will become. Neither hope nor uncertainty needs immediately to become an accusation. People can speak about their own conviction in the first person without promising on behalf of their entire subsequent life. Differences can nevertheless be significant and painful; this article promises no easy reconciliation. Preserving independence means making a truthful response possible, not guaranteeing a common view of the world. Where people continue a shared activity, its particular conditions are discussed separately. A common table does not itself establish common faith, and different convictions cannot settle every question of a possible shared life in advance.

VI. Gratitude does not replace an actual promise

Gratitude can acknowledge what became possible through someone else. It does not always contain a promise to repeat that person’s actions. Daria can be grateful for the notebook, earlier gatherings, and the opportunity to see her grandmother’s explanations. None of these forms of gratitude by itself establishes an annual duty to prepare the whole meal. If she actually promised to arrange the nearest celebration in a particular way, however, another question arises. A general reflection about the next generation’s freedom cannot remove it. What was accepted, who is relying on it, and what now changes should be clarified. Received inheritance and a person’s own agreement have different origins, even when both concern one family activity.

A promise sometimes arises unclearly in conversation. One person heard firm agreement; the other thought a possibility was being discussed. Reconstructing particular words and present conditions can help, instead of declaring one side ungrateful or the other controlling. This article determines no legal obligations: complicated contractual and property questions cannot be settled by a family example. Within ordinary communication, however, a person’s own agreement can be distinguished from an expectation someone derives from their work. The distinction guarantees no painless response. It makes what was actually said discussable without a general demand to repay assistance with an entire future life. Regard for another person does not replace accuracy or prohibit naming a difference.

Daria might say: I want to preserve your entries, but I did not undertake to reproduce the former arrangements for every gathering. If she promised to make a particular dish, she needs to speak about that dish and her present ability. Such speech need not be ceremonial or flawless. What matters is avoiding a particular refusal concealed behind beautiful acknowledgement, or acknowledgement turned into another indefinite promise. The older person can also clarify an expectation rather than treating it as an obvious consequence of handing something on. Gratitude then remains a response to good received; shared activity acquires its own limits. Each can matter without absorbing every other question between people.

VII. Shared conditions belong to neither generation alone

An independent decision concerns one’s own participation, but a shared gathering involves several responses. Daria can propose a different meal; her choice alone cannot make someone else’s time available. Relatives can agree, suggest another option, or decline to participate. Her grandmother may want to make a familiar dish herself, provided actual ability and willingness are present. Nobody needs to prove their generation right through attendance. Proposals nevertheless need to be understandable: what should be brought, who prepares the place, who is invited, and what remains undecided? Attending to these conditions does not diminish independence. It shows where one’s own action ends and another person’s response begins—a response that an assumption cannot replace.

When a change affects participation already agreed upon, telling those concerned can be appropriate. This is no universal duty to disclose every personal choice to relatives. The conversation concerns a particular shared undertaking. Daria does not need everyone’s approval for her relationship to every page of the notebook. Changing the meeting time while expecting others to guess would nevertheless decide part of the organisation for them. A boundary becomes clearer when connected to a particular consequence rather than a general demand for accountability. A personal decision can remain personal while its effect on a joint plan is named. Such notice promises no approval and appoints no compulsory agreement to the listener.

Sometimes no shared option is found. The difference can then be acknowledged and a more limited proposal made, instead of declaring a relationship finished because of one activity. Some people may meet separately, or the gathering may be postponed. These decisions also need clarity when they affect other people’s plans. Neither continuation nor refusal proves the overall quality of a family relationship. One scene cannot judge people’s entire history. Our question needs only this distinction: received experience may be used differently, but that possibility gives nobody authority over other people’s participation. An adult response remains their own precisely when it does not appropriate others’ responses as already known.

VIII. Continuity can honestly include difference

Daria can preserve the notebook and add pages of her own without presenting new decisions as her grandmother’s. Origins and current use then become distinguishable. This is no instruction on textual or property rights, only a simple example of clarity in personal witness. If the new gathering is arranged differently, it need not be described as exact fulfilment of the former custom. Familiar entries can be said to have helped begin a conversation, while present participants made the subsequent decision. In this account the past has a particular contribution and the present has particular authorship of action. The difference requires no crossing out of earlier pages and promises no identical assessment among relatives.

People sometimes want to call every new action a continuation to spare an older person disappointment. An excessively broad word can conceal an actual change, however. If Daria no longer prepares the whole meal, that can be acknowledged directly without proving everything remains the same at a deeper level. Honest difference is more respectful than an assurance contradicted by visible conditions. It leaves room to discuss what actually remains: entries, several tastes, a wish to meet, remembrance of work. The list can be incomplete without becoming false. Continuity need not encompass the entire earlier arrangement to have some significance. Its particular significance is better named than assumed to represent complete transmission of an invisible meaning.

Another risk is presenting one’s choice as liberation from every origin. Daria still knows the recipes through a particular person and remembers gatherings she did not create herself. Independence requires no denial of these circumstances. It lets her respond through an action of her own, including deciding not to use some pages now. Her relationship to what was received may change over time. Today an entry matters as remembrance; later it may serve an activity or remain unused. Such change need be neither inheritance’s success nor its defeat. It is enough to avoid attributing a present choice to the past or claiming to have created everything one was able to use.

IX. Another person’s disappointment cannot be settled by a promise

Her grandmother may be disappointed even if Daria explains everything attentively. A significant hope does not disappear through clear wording. It would be dishonest to promise that an independent conversation always strengthens relationships or removes tension. Daria can speak without ridicule, acknowledge her grandmother’s contribution, and listen to her response. She does not control how that response develops. The older woman may feel the loss of a familiar role, disagree with the new arrangement, or gradually find something valuable in it. These possibilities are no diagnosis and describe no compulsory sequence of feelings. Each person retains a voice that cannot be replaced by another’s well-constructed speech or a predetermined reconciliation script.

Someone sometimes promises continuity simply to avoid witnessing disappointment now. They gain a brief respite while leaving others with an impression of a decision they have not actually made. Later the conversation must address the promise as well as the difference. Acknowledging another person’s hope can therefore be separated from confirming all its conditions. Daria can say she understands the former meal’s importance to her grandmother without adding that she will reproduce it every year. Honesty requires no harshness. Nor does it require disclosing every internal disagreement at once. A particular present response and the limit of what is ready for discussion can be named without promising complete future certainty.

When a conversation grows too broad, returning to its subject can help. One gathering and a relationship to one notebook are being discussed now, not a final verdict on an entire family or two generations. Narrowing the subject does not make a significant hope trivial. It allows a response to what can actually be decided today. Other questions may remain open, require another time, or find no shared answer. This article does not prescribe preserving every conversation at any cost. Actual ability to participate is considered separately. Attention to boundaries avoids replacing one’s decision with an attempt to repair another’s feelings completely, or turning those feelings into a demand that every difference between people disappear.

X. What is passed on remains a possibility, not a completed result

The next generation cannot prove in advance that it will use what was received better. Daria has a proposal, not knowledge of the entire subsequent history. The gathering may unfold differently from what she expects, and some decisions may need changing. Independence includes reconsidering one's action without declaring the previous choice a final mistake or another person's arrangement an eternal answer. Reconsideration needs particular reasons: what happened, who was affected, and what is available now? Changing arrangements merely to demonstrate independence is insufficient. Received experience may become useful again, but consulting it does not mean abandoning an adult voice. Using someone else's knowledge and independently answering for a present decision can happen together.

An older person can also pass experience on without promising complete continuation. They can explain what mattered to them, which conditions helped, and what remains a hope rather than a known future. This does not diminish what they did. Instead, it lets the recipient distinguish particular witness from a wish. Her grandmother can leave entries in her own voice without rewriting them in advance to fit her granddaughter's life. Daria can add explanations of her own and preserve the older ones beside them. These actions need no compulsory complete agreement. Handing something on remains an encounter between different people, not a way to extend one life through another. Possible independent use then belongs within its meaning without guaranteeing every use succeeds.

In this reflection, the right to use what was received differently means room to give one's own truthful response. It requires neither continual refusal nor faithfulness to every former detail. Someone can continue the familiar, change the method, learn anew, or leave a particular choice undecided for now. In every case the recipient remains a person rather than confirmation of the elder's success. Their life is no final report on another's upbringing or work. They simultaneously acquire no authority over every shared condition or another person's promises. Preserving these two distinctions matters more than declaring a winner in a generational dispute. Remembrance of what was received can then be specific, participation willing, and subsequent action genuinely the action of whoever accepts it.

What this means in practice

For an ordinary conversation, the object being passed on can first be named: particular entries, a skill, an account, or a conviction. Then distinguish what remains the elder's witness, what is their hope, and what the recipient actually promised. This need not become a formal questionnaire. A few understandable words about the present action and its conditions may suffice.

If a decision concerns a shared activity, its consequences for participants can be clarified and their responses heard. A personal relationship to what was received needs no general vote; shared organisation is not created unilaterally. Limited participation, preserving part of the former arrangement, or declining a particular role are possible, with the change named without promising approval.

What was passed on need not be used immediately for it to count as noticed. Sometimes only preserving entries or asking one question is available now. Such an action guarantees no subsequent continuation. It leaves room for future understanding and one's own choice without appointing an entire life as a response of gratitude.

Key quotation

> *no one can purify another*

— Dhammapada XII.165, exact fragment; F. Max Müller translation.

Connections between traditions

1. **Handing something on does not replace a personal response.** Gibran's On Children distinguishes parental love from a child's thoughts; Dewey's Democracy and Education VI.3 connects experience with further reconstruction. The shared question asks whether recipients remain participants or merely reproduce something appointed. Boundary: Almustafa's literary speech and educational philosophy establish no common doctrine and do not prove a new arrangement necessarily better. Adult independence is considered here as an editorial ethical boundary, with no determination of ownership, inheritance, or contractual duties.

2. **Instruction and participation have different origins.** Dhammapada XII.165 assigns ethical purification to the person acting; Gibran's On Children does not identify a child with the giver's life. The shared mechanism limits deciding another's inward response for them. Boundary: Buddhist religious meaning is not a metaphor for clinical health, and the literary image confirms no moral correctness of every choice. The comparison does not remove help or communication. It distinguishes a conviction heard from actual agreement of one's own without declaring all religious grounds identical.

3. **Continuity can be discussed through particular action.** Dewey VI.3 considers subsequent use of experience; Dhammapada XII.158 directs teachers first towards their own conduct. The shared question asks to see what is done rather than intention alone. Boundary: the educational argument and Buddhist instruction measure neither a family's quality nor upbringing's efficacy. The editorial example discusses one gathering, not the recipient's entire life. An elder's explanation does not create the younger person's agreement; the younger person's independent proposal creates neither everyone else's time nor their participation.

4. **A stable giver requires no identical recipient.** Roles differ in Gibran's bow-and-arrow image in On Children; Dhammapada XII.158–159 emphasises teachers' own action. The shared question lets givers remain responsible for their example without appointing another's response as proof of success. Boundary: the religiously inflected literary image is no developmental forecast, and the historical wording about subduing others is not accepted as permission to coerce. An elder's possible disappointment is acknowledged without diagnosis or a promise to remove it through correctly chosen words.

5. **Reconstruction does not make every novelty right.** Dewey VI.3 connects reconstruction with understanding experience; Dhammapada XII.164 warns about false teaching within its own religious context. The shared limit prevents independent choice alone from being accepted as sufficient justification. Boundary: the sources establish no common criterion of truth, and Buddhist instruction is not reduced to a secular convenience test. The editorial conversation considers particular reasons and consequences while different convictions remain. A new decision can be reconsidered without declaring the past an everlasting mistake or an unconditional answer.

Primary sources

Kahlil Gibran, **The Prophet, On Children**, the complete section; original English, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, September 1923, Project Gutenberg ebook 58585. The epigraph is an exact utterance; its Russian translation is ours. Almustafa's literary voice supplies no upbringing research, forecast, or legal determination. Figurative religious grounds remain present; relinquishing care is not inferred. Source text.

John Dewey, **Democracy and Education VI.3, Education as Reconstruction**, the entire named subsection, original English, Project Gutenberg ebook 852. A bounded philosophical concept of reconstruction is used without a direct quotation. It proves neither the next generation's superiority nor every change's usefulness or a clinical outcome. Historical hierarchy is not adopted. Source text.

Dhammapada XII, verses 157–166, the complete Self chapter, F. Max Müller's translation from Pali, Sacred Books of the East, Volume X Part I, Project Gutenberg ebook 2017. This electronic version omits introduction, notes, and index. The key fragment is verse 165; its Russian translation is ours. Buddhist ethical purification supplies no medical outcome; context does not affirm every teaching's truth. The historical Self heading establishes no permanent-personality doctrine. Wording about subduing others is not taken as permission for coercion. Source text.

Tags

generations, legacy, experience, transmission, independence, choice, understanding, gratitude, promise, agreement, family, adult, recipient, elder, tradition, arrangement, meaning, faith, conviction, participation, conditions, boundary, memory, origins, Gibran, Dewey, Dhammapada, reconstruction, response, care

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.