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Divorce: What to Expect –
What You Can Do

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Cyberspace Grandparenting Eases Divorce

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When her ex-daughter-in-law moved, Jessica knew she would be the grand loser. Living on a fixed income, there was no way she would be able to afford the airfare to visit her grandchildren. After the divorce, her relationship with the children's mother was strained. Now that their mother had remarried, the ex-law was running the show.

There were other complications. Jessica's son was in a committed relationship. When the children came to see her son on Christmas and Easter, grandma had to be content with sharing her grandkids with his girlfriend's relatives.

Remarriages and competition for visitation are only two of the issues grandparents face when their son or daughter gets divorced. For many grandparents, it's feeling cut off even if the custodial parent lives in the same town.

It's important to reach out to your grandchildren who will need lots of support at each stage of the marital split.

How comforting to know that in the age of technology you are only keystrokes away. With social-networking sites, grandparents can drop in on their grandchildren without having to call first. Instant messaging and texting can communicate support. Even if the message is a one-liner and you don't get an instant response, you are keeping the communication open.

Try Skyping. On Sunday mornings Bruce and Helen sit in front of their computer or walk around with a cell phone gabbing to the grandkids. Despite the three-hour time difference, they've found a mutually convenient time to visit. Watching the older grandson ride his new bike and the younger one shoot hoops is pretty cool, they say.

Some grandparents have their own websites where they post stories, scan photos, and share jokes. They're not techies. They got their computer-savvy grandchild to set it up.

Sure, technology does not replace a hug. But if rebuilding a relationship with grandchildren is your goal, it's largely up to you. Know that:

- Grandparents can be stabilizers.
- Grandparents can provide relief from stress.
- Grandparents can provide security when the bottom falls out.
- Grandparents can provide a sense of belonging.

So forget "the way it used to be" mentality. In my book "[Your Child's Divorce: What to Expect ... What You Can Do](#)," I tell grandparents, "Anticipate change, know your role at each stage of the divorce, and maintain boundaries. If you can do all these things, you'll be way ahead."

Grandchildren are a gift. A privilege, not a given. Supplement love with cyber smiles :).