

Being a Distance Son or Daughter

A Book for ALL Generations

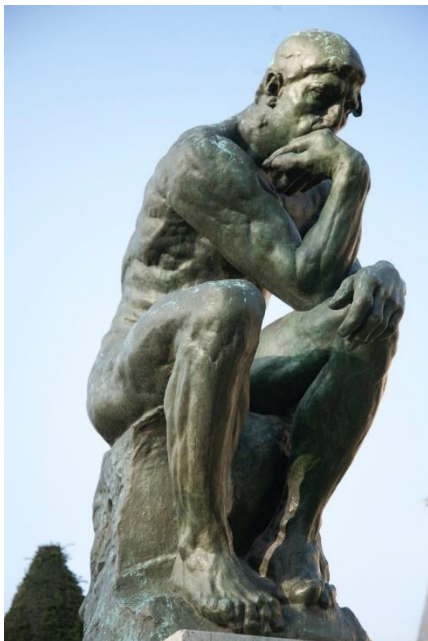
FOREWORD

By Karen L Rancourt, Ph.D

One of my greatest intellectual joys is when I come across something that sparks a “Wow! That’s eye opening and thought provoking” response. I had that reaction with *Being a Distance Grandparent*, Helen Ellis’s first book in her series about family members living abroad. Much to my delight, I experienced it again while reading the manuscript for this book, *Being a Distance Son or Daughter*.

The subtitle for both these books is *A Book for ALL Generations*, as it will be again for the forthcoming third book in the series, *Being a Distance Grandchild*. For that matter, although Helen focuses on an understanding of the relationships between out-of-country family members in unique and significant ways, I envision the series subtitle could be *A Book for ANYONE Interested in Relationships*.

As someone who has studied and written about relationships for many decades myself, I know that Helen’s academic background, research, personal experiences, insights, and a compilation of others’ anecdotes come together in powerful ways to help anyone be better at ‘moving around’ a relationship.



Here is what I mean about moving around a relationship. If you are standing in front of a statue, for example, Rodin’s ‘The Thinker’, and I am standing behind it, our respective views in describing what we see will be quite different: one is seeing a pensive pose; the other is seeing buttocks and a spine. It is not until both of us have viewed the statue from shared angles and perspectives that we can begin to have a full appreciation of how each of us is experiencing what viewing the statue means. In other words, have empathy for the other’s viewpoint.

The importance of having empathy in relationships cannot be overstated. As Helen writes, “The mantra of my Distance Family book series is:

With knowledge comes understanding
With understanding comes empathy
And empathy is a good thing for Distance Families.”

In this book, *Being a Distance Son or Daughter*, Helen helps the reader to appreciate and develop empathy and to learn a host of skills. In addition, she provides a practical toolkit with strategies and hands-on techniques to understand and strengthen, not only distance familial relationships, but *all* important relationships. Like I said, Wow!

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