

WHEN
GRANDPARENTS
GET CANCELLED, AND WHAT DO ABOUT IT...



WHAT WAS YOUR DREAM?

Grandparenting is
sacred and impactful
but often complicated
by grief or
estrangement.



Research confirms the
stabilizing influence of
grandparents.

But many carry
invisible losses when
cut off or distanced

UNDERSTANDING ESTRANGEMENT



- emotional or physical distancing
- Often rooted in:
- Trust breakdowns
- Value conflicts
- Life transitions (marriage, parenthood, aging)
- Intergenerational stressors (trauma, loss, divorce, addiction)
- Not always initiated for abuse—sometimes for perceived peace





UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL FORCES

MOVING TOWARDS CLARITY & STRATEGY



ABOUT FAIRNESS...

- Let go of fairness as the guiding principle
- Ask: What is my actual goal?
Reconnection?
Grandchild access?
Validation?
- Reframe adult children's distancing as part of developmental individuation
- Strategy over reactivity; long game thinking

STEPS TOWARDS RECONCILIATION



READ

Dr. Joshua Coleman's
Rules of Estrangement

- Letter of amends = perspective-taking, not confession

- “Steelman” the adult child’s point of view
- Look for the seed, not the weeds



OFFER THERAPY

- with their therapist as a gesture of strength and safety
- Stay at the table: the first to leave is the one who quits

LONG TERM ESTRANGEMENT

- When reconciliation doesn't happen: ambiguous loss
- Private grief with no social acknowledgment
- Join support groups; share with trusted friends
- Shift from "fixing" to "carrying"
- Grieve
- Reflect
- Reinvest in other relationships



FINAL REFLECTION

- Jacob & Esau: Reconciliation after betrayal
- David & Absalom: Heartbreak without return
- In both: the parent keeps living, building, hoping
- What kind of life will be waiting for them?
- If they don't—what kind of life do you want to build for yourself?

