

Gold Bracelet

David Chen

When it comes to an object that means something special to someone, a vast majority of the world has that one item. For me it is my gold bracelet that I have worn since I was a toddler. It all started off when I was about 4 years old and one day my mother got me a silver bracelet. At that time and age, I didn't know much about jewelry, so it was just a huge bother having something worn around my wrist. When I first received it, all I could think about was how much it got in my way. I could not play toys or do physical activities without it clinging and clanging onto walls or other objects. As I grew older, my wrist started to transform, and my mother would add more silver links onto my bracelet. We would go to a jewelry shop where I sat at the front waiting for more weight to be added onto my wrist. Around the time during my 5th grade year was when I started to engage in more physical sport activities. Doing more of this made me realize how annoying it was to keep taking on and off my bracelet. I have played with it a couple of times to the point where the clasps became very loose. One day after a day spent in after school daycare, I had realized my bracelet was missing. At first, I did not find it to be too big of a deal and just shook it off and went on with the rest of the day. At the dinner table my mother realized I was not wearing it and asked what happened to it. The face color change went from normal to bright red after I told her what happened said it all. This was the very first time I have been grounded and punished in my whole childhood. At the time I thought it was absurd. I have seen classmates take off their necklace, earrings and misplace them all the time. The following weekend, my mother brought me back to the jewelry shop and got me a replacement. No reaction, she leads up with "Do not lose this ever again." I have worn my silver bracelet all the way up to my 9th grade. One afternoon she took me to the jewelry shop again which had me very confused. I asked, "Why are we here mom?" She only smiled and then proceeded to take off my silver bracelet. 30 minutes later, she put on a new gold bracelet for me. It was very shiny, and it caught the attention of my eyes. She then squatted down to tell me a story of her past.

What did this jewelry symbolize for me? Why was it such a big deal in my family? What brought upon this trend to start and be passed down in my family. It all started with my grandparents when they got their kids the same jewelry. The boys would obtain a silver bracelet, and the girls would obtain a necklace. The jewelry symbolizes the evolution of one's life as they grow older and more mature to start pathing the way to their adulthood. In modern day, most jewelry worn is a display of power and status and a sense of fashion. Talking with my parents and grandparents gave me a different understanding of it. My grandma told me how back in her days and surroundings, looking nice was not much of an importance but the significance of what you had. Despite how a gold bracelet may look, she told me how wearing one was the evolution of life bringing in good luck, hope, and wealth. She also told me how in China they believed a specific jewelry brought upon certain symbolism. Although it has evolved to good luck, hope, and wealth, a gold bracelet symbolized a keepsake of love in the Chinese culture. However, you do not just show maturity and growth just by aging. My mother is the definition of a hard worker. Ever since she finished school in China, she worked nonstop to make the best of her life. Giving birth to me and my sister made her work extra hard and I can see how it must have taken a toll on her life. My grandmother told me how much my mom does to make sure me and my sister gets the best of what we had. The necklace she got from my grandmother was a keepsake to show how much she is grown and the love my grandmother had for her.

I had no idea the value this held for not only me but my mother and my grandparents. At the time, it seemed like just a display of an item worn to make an image more positive. After talking and hearing how it has been carried through within my family, it makes me wonder about how I am going to handle this in the future. Along the lines, I will someday give my future kids the symbolism of their growth and achievements. This is also something that I have seen many other Asian descents do with their family line. The current generation of mine with their folks are very similar. Jewelry passed down for good luck, wealth, and hope for each coming generation. Usually in the Asian culture, it would be a either a jade necklace, or bracelet. Jade is very popular in terms of its material as you can see many Asians wear jade on their body. This has also been looked at as a trend from outsiders. Many non-Asians now

wear jade jewelry as a fashion statement. Wearing these types of jewelry for us is also a sense of bondage and entrapment. My generation that receives these gifts are usual from the folks that are not modern. They are very traditional and that pressures you to follow the same exact footsteps rather than either creating your own or trying something new. After talking to my grandmother about the history of the jewelry, I am very thrilled to hear about how it came to be and the hard work it has been through. As thrilled as I was to hear about the history, I do not think I will be following the exact lining details how what is to come for my kids in the future. Giving them a piece of the family history will put them in a cage which will not really allow them to be free and choose to their own will. I want my future family to decide to their own likings and live to their own best decisions. It is nice to have obtain a piece of family history and it would also be nice to pass one down to the future, but not with a bondage that will bind them from free choice. The reason for this is because of how the world functions. There are many problems in the world that we face every day such as judgement on one's sexuality. I do not know how my family would react if in a scenario I were to be gay but if I were, I would not want them to turn their heads on me and look at me in a different way. This applies to my future children as well because I would want them to feel like they can do anything in life as long as they are happy and not trapped

In conclusion, this piece of jewelry means a lot to me. It is a piece I have had for since a kid and growing up with it has made me feel like it is a part of me. Although it was given to me with what I think are certain expectations, I will not be doing the same in the future. I do want to pass down and keep this tradition alive but with a few changes. A piece that will symbolize love and security because nothing can be happier than living the way you choose to live. If you know you have company and a good support system you can achieve many things in life and be happy, and that is what I want to instill and pass along to my future generation. A lot of other cultures do the same but they material is not jewelry. I personally feel like a jewelry puts more meaning behind it only because of the time and amount it takes to make it. It shows the effort it goes through just to be yours. The world today sees jewelry mostly as a fashion statement. To me that is just a bonus behind the true meaning of love and security for the person wearing it. From my grandparents that started this tradition to my mother and

now to me and my sister. Nothing feels better than being a part of a family tradition and passing it on to the future generation to come.