

Reading Questions for August 30

These questions cover an article by Jane English called “What Do Grown Children Owe Their Parents?” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

In this article, Jane English argues that grown children don’t owe their parents anything. Rather, she thinks, the relationship between children and parents tends to be closer to that of friendship.

*Questions:*

1. In the first section, “Favors create debts” (285-6), English offers a couple of cases involving two people named Nina and Max. What are the key differences between the cases? What are English’s judgments about the cases? Do you agree?
2. At the beginning of the next section, “The duties of friendship” (286-7), English says that she thinks “friendship ought to be characterized by mutuality rather than reciprocity”. What does she mean by this? She then gives some cases to help support her view. What are these cases and how are they supposed to support it? Do you think she’s right? Why?
3. In the final section, “Parents and children” (287-8), English says that she thinks the relationship between children and their parents should be one of friendship. She offers some cases that she thinks support her view. What are these cases and how are they supposed to support it? Do you think she’s right? Why?