

THE ELDERLY ARE SOURCES OF WISDOM



In Kambwiri village lived the elderly and their families. All was good for the village when rains were falling as desired.

But one year the rains fell only once and there was hunger. The chiefs sat down to discuss the problem. Many came to agree that it was the elderly who had stopped the rains. It was because of what people had done to their environment. As a result of the meeting they made a law which meant all the elderly were chased from the village. They were told that they were witches.

One man however did not expel his parents who were old. He just hid them in a cave. Every day he was giving them food. He loved his parents so much.

One day, the chief, his wife with their baby went to the garden. Suddenly the baby fell asleep. She slept under a tree.

After a while the baby woke up crying. When the mother went to see what had happened, she found that there was a snake in the mouth of the baby. There was no one to assist them. The chief cried for help but no one in the whole community could help. All except the man that hid his parents in a cave. He rushed to the cave to ask for wisdom. There he was told to kill a mouse and tie a rope to it. After that he was told to put the mouse close to the baby's mouth slowly pulling the mouse if the snake starts to move. So he went and caught a mouse and did as advised.

All the people were amazed to see that the idea was successful and the baby was rescued. The chief asked him where he got the wisdom. The man could not hide the truth any longer.

The chief felt very sorry for being so harsh to the elderly who were so important in the society. He ordered the elderly to come back to their homes.

Moral of the story:

- In a Malawian setting, if one lives to 80 to more years people think that he or she is a wizard or witch. Average life expectancy is 37 years.
- Everyone in the has his own importance. In this story we see the elderly and their wisdom.
- This story is used to show how wisdom changes the way people think about others.
- Who do you think acted bravely in the story?
- Are there similarities and differences in this story in your own country?

