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### Trick-or-Treat Caught in the Halloween Trap?

By: Giusette León García / CubaSí

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I have nothing against Cubans celebrating Halloween. Not in favor either. It's neither a date that means anything to me personally. I can live without it (in fact, I did for over thirty years). However, my children say that they have known about Halloween "for as long as they can remember."

How is it possible if they didn't learn it at home, or at school? An old saying goes: children are alike their time rather than like their parents. It turns out that while in my childhood I was absolutely happy with two television channels, for children today about ten television frequencies seem little. Their levels of exposure to outside influences are much higher in the era of internet and digital technologies; the sources from which they drink are fortunately and dangerously more diverse.

It's the paradox that challenges us, also, parents. What's the right way? Ban? Filter? Explain? I don't think there's "a formula", but the "anti-formula" is clear: detach ourselves, unplug ourselves, become alien individuals, unable to "understand" and participate in what makes sense to them. Even that is also our bet: to give meaning to what our children could be cutting and pasting from other cultures, from fashion or simply from their peers.

#### **Let's Hope Witches don't Disappear on Us**

I don't see anything especially good on Halloween. Not especially bad. What I do see wrong, indeed is that a scheme brought from where the origin of that celebration is not even imported. If Halloween serves to create costumes, decorations, jokes, as a family; to spur people's imagination, if it's a pretext for joy, let's tear down the wall! If Halloween becomes a must to fit in; if it's the mere imitation of what we aren't; if the market rules, lift the wall!

Without a set date, costume parties are a tradition in Cuba. Who was not a gypsy or a pirate in the daycare center? What girl did not dress like Pilar or Lopi in elementary school on January 28<sup>th</sup>? Parties are plenty in the Cuban calendar, reasons to celebrate, family, social, patriotic. The challenge we have is not to go against the witches, but to prevent our own festivities from disappearing.

The new generations are remembered of Halloween through Facebook, Netflix and even Cubavisión with a related movie. But setting the Cuban stew and the dominoes in the neighborhood, lighting torches in January or burning the old year doll in December, we'd better take care of reminding them personally. If we don't, it's of little use to criticize them for the "foreignizing" Halloween night.

### **Fly on the Same Broom**

If there's a reason why I celebrate Halloween with my children, it's because between trick and treat, I think the second is always more fruitful. Good communication inevitably requires empathy.

According to the dictionary, it's about: «the ability to put oneself in the place of the other to feel what the other feels, without losing one's own identity. It's a communication skill (of "common") in the search for the aspects that people have in common to facilitate interaction ».

Helping children grow as critical subjects, foster values ??in them, accompany them to find their own identity and recognize where they belong, the collective identity that also defines us: customs, traditions, history, culture, that common heartbeat that we call homeland, it will always be a shorter path if we take the shortcut of complicity.

If the essences are kept, what does it matter the day the faces are painted, or what color, or under what name. It's worthwhile that we return with them on that broom, the one of their time, to seize that chance to remind them who we are and where we are going.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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