
My Unforgotten Childhood Memories With My Grandfather

Gone, but Not Forgotten

There's a special kind of relationship between a grandfather and his grandson. There's nothing quite like it. Most of my childhood is filled with memories of my grandfather. He was a great man, the best I've ever known. Around the end of my junior year of high school, he was in and out of the hospital. He had severe lung problems.

Eventually, my grandpa's condition got too severe, and he had to remain in the hospital for longer than we expected. We visited him as often as we could, though it never felt like it was enough. I recall, that weekend I was going to be extremely busy. I had my boss's party, an all-nighter Friday night, work the next day, and church on Sunday morning, followed by a fundraiser. There wasn't room for anything else. That Friday, my dad got off work early and told me that if we hurried, we might be able to head out and see grandpa. I said yes, of course, not knowing if this was going to be my last chance to see him.

When I walked into his hospital room, he looked terrible. He was extremely pale, looked malnourished, and like he could barely stay awake. I didn't really know what to say. So, I went with the usuals: sports, talking about my job, what was going on concerning my upcoming mission trip, and anything theatre related. I even made sure to talk to him about where he stood with his faith. Even though he could barely talk, my grandpa still managed to make me laugh my head off. He never let anything bring him down. Finally, it was time, and I had to go. I told him I loved him, and he said to me, "I love you too. Now get the f**k out of here."

Then I went to a party. Not much happened, I spent most of it talking to my coworker, Malina, since we were the only ones not legally allowed to drink. I tried to keep my grandpa off my mind. I wanted to avoid being a major buzzkill. My plans weren't successful, though. We were about to sing happy birthday to my boss, when my dad walked into the bar. He pulled me outside, and told me that my grandfather had some internal bleeding. They resuscitated him, but ultimately there was nothing they could do. He had passed.

I didn't skip a beat, and I immediately broke down crying. It hit me all at once. I realized I had actually seen my grandpa for the last time. I had tried to mentally prepare myself for him dying, but this wasn't something anyone could truly prepare for, especially me. This was my first time having to actually deal with death.

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I went back inside, and tried to enjoy the rest of the party, but there wasn't much I could do. I went to the all-nighter at my church and to work the next morning, so I didn't really have a chance to fully process what had happened. When I got home, I couldn't sleep, even though I had been up all night. My family felt sort of detached to me. None of us really knew what to say to each other, we were all handling it differently.

Even though I was upset, I handled the whole situation a lot better than I thought I would have. Obviously, I wasn't happy that he had died, but I still knew that we all die eventually. I knew he wasn't going to live forever. Fortunately, I had the comfort of knowing my last conversation with him was meaningful. Though it was largely small talk about the usual, it reminded me that my grandpa was always positive. He didn't let his illness get in the way of him connecting with his grandchildren. He didn't let it stop him from joking around. It didn't stop him from enjoying himself. I was comforted by the fact that my grandpa had died the same way he lived, bringing joy to his family.

However, his death was a wake-up call to me as well. I never had any problems with my grandpa, we always got along. I did, however, argue with my family all the time, and I wasn't particularly fond of a few of my cousins either. In most cases, they were petty issues, problems that I shouldn't have gotten upset over. Being the ignorant teenager that I am, I let these little arguments cloud my judgment. I had lost sight of what mattered most; my family.

I started to think about how I would feel if I had already said my last words to my mom or my dad, or even one of my cousins. I suddenly felt a huge weight on my shoulders; a weight that I assume was guilt. The whole situation gave me some perspective. Family is what matters most. Even if we can't tolerate each other at times, we should still be able to show each other the love and respect we all deserve. None of us would be comfortable with our last words to each other being words of hate.

My grandpa's death helped me realize the importance of last words. None of us are promised tomorrow, the next week, or even a month from now. What we can control, is how we treat our family and friends. Even if we're angry or upset, we can still hug each other and say, "I love you."

At times, we're going to be upset with each other, or even angry. Everyone can be petty at times. It's important to remember to make sure you're comfortable with the last thing you said to them. You never know if it's the last time you'll talk to them.

Reflection

Have your ideas about writing changed since this course began? Somewhat, but not

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significantly. I'm fairly confident in my skills as a writer, and right now I feel like it's a little too early in the year for me to have any obvious new ideas about writing. I suspect, and hope, I will learn so much more about writing as the year goes on.

Has your approach to writing changed since this course began? No. I approached both of my essays so far in the exact same fashion. I focused on getting all my ideas onto the page, no matter how bad they seemed at the time, and then I go back and do the necessary revisions. I've been doing it this way since sophomore year, and it hasn't failed me yet.

What have you learned about yourself as a writer? Speaking completely and totally honestly, nothing. I don't know what it is, but I don't feel that big a difference between this and my normal high school English classes. In fact, I like this a lot more, due to the fact that there isn't any busywork involved.

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