

Grandpa Was Having a Conversation with God

It was the 14th day of August in the year 2006, and I remember the day like it is a part of my body. I had not planned to travel to the hospital on that day, but my father received a call. That single call was the reason I was awake at 3 a.m., listening to my dad as he rushed me to get dressed. A single call changed my life forever.

A person called my father from the healthcare center to inform him that my grandfather had experienced an unusual sequence of breathing. After we reached the hospital, we were greeted with an eerie silence that led us deeper into a quiet hallway. As I walked onto the front porch of the intensive care room, I noticed the smell and saw the look on my grandfather's face. I remember the event vividly, even though it was eleven years ago. I recall hearing the nurses and doctors ask my father and my family to decide on the plans for my grandfather. At that time, I did not understand what was going on, so I watched my grandfather by his bedside.

Apparently, the doctors diagnosed him with a rare genetic condition that predisposed him to an upper respiratory disorder. By extension, the condition caused a collapse of his left lung, thus exerting a considerably high amount of pressure on the diaphragm and the liver. I could not comprehend a thing; all I saw was a strong and brave person I knew forced to become vulnerable for a moment. His skin complexion did not change, but he never opened his eyes, and as much as I was encouraging him, I was scared because he did not hear me. At some point, my father told me that he was talking to God, and that was the reason he did not open his eyes.

All the time I sat by his side, I remembered the impact he had made on my life. As I stared innocently at his huge and rough hands, a distressing sight from the doctor met my eyes. He lay face up on the bed with his head elevated at an angle of approximately 20 degrees, and he was gulping for air. Suddenly, he flinched his finger, opened his eyes, squeezed my hands, and blinked twice. I could see he was fighting the merciless illness to survive. He sighed with his violently shuddering breath, closed his eyes for the last time, and I recall my dad telling me, “Leave your grandpa to rest; he has fought boldly and toughly.” Even though the events took place more than a decade ago, I can vividly see the images in my mind, and nevertheless, the circumstance changed my life forever.

Since I was born, my grandfather had been the best friend I had ever known. He had also witnessed the life events that were relevant to my life since I was born, for instance, my first day at kindergarten. My grandfather, the best friend of my life, was fighting to survive and live another day. When the doctors called on my family to give them an update on the situation, I could tell right away that it was not good news by any chance. I was worried.

Growing up without the presence of my grandfather by my side most of the time gave me a dissociated feeling among my peers. More specifically, in middle school, I could not help but notice that the other children seemed to be playing at ease and talking to one another in the most natural conversation. I was always shy, lonely, and quiet both at home and in school; I could not bear the psychological thought of human connection. Subsequently, I could not look into the eyes of the individuals I spoke to, and the anxiety affected my school performance. As a young boy who struggled to succeed in school, the bullying and my classmates making fun of me did not help my confidence. I was a soft target for bullying, and soon depression set in. Consequently,

deep down, I knew that my grandfather would not be happy with my academic performance because he cared about my studies when his health was good.

One Tuesday, I decided I would turn around my predicaments and change my life in the process. I paid keen attention to the top performers in school and their success stories, and I remembered the words of my father: “Leave your grandpa to rest; he has fought boldly and toughly.” My mind gained control of my body, and I realized that the answer to turning around my problems and changing my life forever had been right under my nose.

In light of the above statement, my grandfather struggled and fought to survive another day to be with his family, and he taught me from a psychological perspective that one should not give up until they overcome their obstacles and barriers in life. On the same note, I made up my mind to take the world head-on and face my problems toughly and boldly to release the tension on my fractured personality. I decided to pursue my talent with passion and improve my grades as well as my general school performance. Most importantly, I decided that I would make my grandfather happy and proud of me where he was by never giving up.

The turning point I reached by relinquishing my shyness and talking to my classmates more frequently than I had before played a significant role in improving my overall confidence and personality. Then, more than ever, I participated in class programs and other class leadership positions that made me feel free with my friends and peers. Moreover, I take great pride in the things that changed my life and would give all the credit and honor to my grandfather, who helped me overcome my fears.

No matter the kind and nature of the obstacle or challenge in life, I strived to improve myself, citing the inspiration of my grandfather as the cornerstone of bravery. Indeed, I thanked my grandfather, who became my role model because of the fight he put up in his last days with his family, and I hoped that sometime in the future he would say to me, “Proud of you, kid; you fought tough and bold.” To date, I battle what life brings to the table with the primary anchor of fighting tough and never giving up.