

Wherever I Go You'll Be There

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Walking swiftly, practically running to my grandmother's room, I swung the door open. Delighted to start my performance, I said, "Are you ready?"

For her, these moments brought joy, and for me, it was the same. I was always thrilled to perform in front of my grandmother. Perhaps, without knowing it then, it was because of her bright intelligence of the arts. She introduced me to all different artists from Jerry Lee Lewis to Billy Idol. As soon as I got a new script for the upcoming school play, I knew exactly who I was going to when I got home to practice.

Not only did my grandmother influence me artistically, but she also provided me with knowledge that persists with me today. One of my most prominent memories is when I was sitting with her, my whiteboard easel sitting upright before me. She held a black expo marker in her hand. Gliding along the white surface, she began to write my name in beautiful elongated swoops. This would be my way of learning cursive handwriting, and it has stuck with me ever since.

When you are young, you do not realize the strong impact someone has on you until it is all gone. In February of 2018, my grandmother passed away from a rare form of cancer. The lifestyle I once had with her slowly diminished. I piled all of my grief and emotions into a faraway place to avoid stirring up the sadness that I had inside.

In my eleven-year-old head, I had an extremely momentous school year ahead of me. It was my last year of middle school and I wanted to achieve the best academic success I could. While handling the death of my grandmother, in addition to grueling amounts of homework and tests, I felt trapped, not able to handle

the pressure I was feeling inside. Each day, I would take it little by little, creating a headspace of happiness and pushing away the sorrow. Wanting to continue to work hard, I did just that and was successful with my actions. As time went on, I focused on remembering all the beautiful times I spent with my grandmother and the memories we made.

As I get older, there is a strange sensation when dealing with the death of my grandmother, and I can never quite put my finger on it. There will always be bad days, but I will always have good days as well. Learning that you do not need to hide in the darkness and depression. Instead, I decided to step outside of my misery and create an environment for myself that brings light into my unfavorable days. It will be okay. There are times when I wish I could ask my grandmother how her day was. Or, ask her about topics when she was a teenager, and how her life was. I was simply too young to do that when she was still alive. The impact my grandmother left on me will continue to follow me everywhere in life, and stay close to my heart. Her lessons, her voice, her lovingness, her smile, everything.

The special connections we make with each other last a lifetime. We create bonds and relationships that make us who we are today. I know that my Mimi is looking down at me smiling, guiding a pathway for me to succeed in my future endeavors. When I step onto a stage for a performance, I see her sitting in the rows of theater seats smiling at me. When I spend time outside during bright summer days, I think of the times we would run and play in the grass. Her presence will always be close to me and guide me wherever I go.