

## Reflection Essay

### Gram

It's October 17 2009, I'm sitting at work and it's a regular day when I get a call from my Dad. I had no idea what was to come in his next few words he said, "We just got done with Grandma's appointment and she has cancer, you need to call everyone and have them all meet at Gram & Papa's house." I got off the phone and immediately lost it. I started calling some of the family members telling them the news. I rushed to my Grandparent's house and I was the first one there. I walked around looking at all the pictures, and memories our family had made over the years. I just kept thinking that this couldn't be, Gram couldn't have cancer and if she did it had to be minor. There were still weddings she needed to attend, and great grandchildren she needed to experience. So many memories were running through my mind of times of me and Gram, all of our adventures and great talks we had. This woman was my rock she couldn't have cancer, she couldn't die. Within the hour the rest of the family members showed up at the house. Then what I believe was the worst moment of my life my Gram walked in and told us she had stage 4 colo-rectal cancer and that she wasn't going to fight it. I was in absolute shock. The woman who was the strongest person I've ever known was just going to give up, not even try.

The next week was terrible I quit one of my jobs because I decided I needed to spend as much time with her as I could. I would go to work then go straight to Gram's house stay there tell she would go to bed, go home go to sleep then do it all again the next day. At the end of that week the family all got together and pretty much told her she had no choice, she had to fight because she never let us give up on anything so we wouldn't let her either. So she started chemo and was terribly sick. She couldn't eat or drink and was going downhill fast. The chemo was not working. The last option was a clinical trial chemo. She got started on this and was progressing.

She was going in for checkups and magically the tumors were decreasing. She still wasn't feeling great but it was getting better. They knew this chemo was working but her body would build up tolerance so they'd modify it every few weeks.

Since we all knew that this was probably our last chance to go on a trip as a family, with everyone, we decided we'd go to San Diego. I remember sitting on the beach with Gram and asking her every question I could think of, what was her favorite color? what was her favorite song?, what's her favorite childhood memory? I wanted to try to get as many stories from her as I could. I asked her advice on marriage, children and life in general. My favorite thing she said was when I asked her advice on marriage she told me, "It's iffy at best". I knew my Grandma was my favorite person in the world but in this moment I realized how much this woman actually meant to me and how I never wanted her not to be there. I also realized that her time was coming soon and there wasn't anything anyone could really do about it.

8 months later she went in for her cat scan to see how everything was going and that's when they told her the chemo was no longer working. She decided she wasn't going to try anything new anymore and she was just going to live out her life and what happened would happen. She went and saw both of her sister's and spent a week with them. She went on a road trip with my Grandpa and Uncle, and then she came home.

The next 3 weeks I spent every waking moment with her. She was such a strong woman and never wanted to let any of us know the pain she was truly in. Every time anyone would walk in they'd ask, "How ya doing Gram", she's always without fail would respond with, "Oh.... Pretty good" with a smile.

May 5 2011, she passed away. 3 weeks is all it took. She seemed so well then 3 weeks after she stopped the chemo she was gone. I spent every day and evening there with my Grandma

and even in her hardest moments she was the strong woman that one day I hope to amount to even half of. She touched everyone's life who every met her. I wish that she could be here for the day I get married or that my future children could meet her but at least I know that I can go on to teach them everything that she ever taught me. She is my role model and was my best friend. I know she is and always will be with me every day in every decision I make. I'm very sad that she's no longer here but I know she will live on through our memories.