

Just Like Her

The person who I want to become feels like a little bit of a stretch at this point, but it took her 78 years to get to where she is today, so I've got some time. Time I'm going to need, because I have to figure out how to keep plants alive, maintain a thriving social life, graduate with my BSN and then pass the NCLEX, collect hundreds of recipes on index cards, continue working out, and learn how to make quilts. No pressure!

A lot of people inspire me. The fact that most of them are fictional is irrelevant, because the person I'm talking about here is very real. She's supported every decision I've ever made, even the stupid ones, like trying to run potato peels down the drain. If I make mistakes, she'll help me fix them. She's brought me to playgrounds, museums, and even other countries. She always hosts tea parties when I ask, and I chose my major in part because of her. I call her Sweetie, a name that couldn't fit her better if it tried. I want to be like my grandmother when I grow up, and my desire to walk in her footsteps has influenced so many of the decisions I've made.

I'm currently attending college, studying nursing and music. Both of these pathways have been influenced by wanting to be like her, wanting to make her proud. For as long as I can remember she's been taking me to symphonies to witness classical music, funding my violin lessons, and attending every recital and concert she could make it to. Even when I sounded like a dying cat. Even when there were better things to be doing on a Tuesday evening. I truly love playing the violin and being a part of ensembles. I feel incredibly proud of myself every time the last note of a show rings through the air. And then I always look for her smile in the audience, because I know she feels pride too. The career I decided on was because she did it first, and showed me how to do it right. I remember visiting her at the hospital, getting to play with the

bubbles she kept around for her patients. She worked in cardiac rehabilitation, which is mostly people who have gone through heart attacks learning to live again. The strength it takes to do that is remarkable, and I know my Sweetie helped countless people along their pathways. While I may want to do something with more adrenaline, I will always treat my patients the way she treated hers: with respect, and compassion, and a desire to bring joy to even the toughest situations.

Sweetie's influence on my large life choices is irrefutable, but she influences the everyday decisions I make as well. She's the best home cook I know, routinely serving meals that rival even some of the best restaurants I've been to. In fact, in over 50 years of marriage, my grandfather only ever complained about one meal: soybean casserole. And even she admits it wasn't her greatest work! She's been having me help in the kitchen ever since I could be trusted there, and I've learned so much from her. As I've gotten older I've begun to cook on my own more and more, and get to experiment with the techniques she's taught me. I doubt I'll ever be as good as her, but she's helped me build an excellent foundation.

Of course, Sweetie is not the only inspiration in my family, and I wish that I could talk about my parents and grandfather as much as I am getting to talk about her. I am very lucky to have a family that has always supported my dreams, and I hope that the choices I make in life are making them proud. I might tell myself that the decisions I make are for myself, and what makes me happy or proud, but I know that I'm always looking for the faces of my family in the crowd. I want to be like Sweetie for myself, but also for her. I hope that as I continue to grow, she sees herself and realizes just how wonderful she really is.