

# Narrative essay

[Life, Relationships](#)



It is Saturday, September 17, 2011 at 1: 00 am.

I am watching a movie in the basement with Matt. My sister is fast asleep in her bed. My mom is looking over her mother, sleeping by her side. My dad is watching another show on The History Channel. The phone rings.

My heart stops. Who could be calling at this time of night? What is wrong? Are Grandpap and Meemaw okay? Should I get the phone? Do I want to know? Moments later my father answers the phone. I wonder who called. I need to find out. I hesitantly go up the creaking staircase trying to reassure myself that my worst nightmare is not coming true. I must be overreacting. Obviously everyone is fine. There is nothing to worry about.

As I reach the top of the steps, I take a deep breath and hope for the best. I go through the door. My eyes are frantically searching for my dad. I find him in his room. I ask him, “ What happened? Who called? ” A tear is streaming down his face as he slowly states, “ Grandpap died. ” While in a sweet, strong embrace, my father and I begin to weep tears of sorrow. The hole in my heart at the time inflicts sharp pains of grief and emptiness that will never be filled. I knew this day would come eventually but there can never be enough tears shed or heartache endured to properly prepare yourself for the loss of a loved one.

I had been watching my Grandfather, Elmer Harland Upole, die for a very long time. He became sick about four years ago while residing at his home in Garrett County, Maryland. My Grandmother, Nellie Upole, single-handedly took care of Elmer for all of the time that they remained at their home. His sickness started as simply aging and the many effects that accompany it.

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Elmer was then diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease along with Pulmonary Fibrosis. Both of these diseases are debilitating, life-altering, and in most cases lead to death. Death was now something new to consider as a part of everyday life. When first coping with the illnesses at hand many of the symptoms were easy to overlook, but there were some effects of them that were a constant reminder of what was occurring inside of my Grandpap.

The ability to remember is something that almost everyone takes for granted until one watches a loved one struggle to recall their name, reminisce in old family stories, or even have the ability to recognize what it is they ate for lunch. When I visited with Grandpap I always talked to him. Though the conversations were not the most in-depth conversations that I had in my life they helped show me who my Grandpap really was and I can easily say that I enjoyed these talks more than any other at the time.

This was because I would cherish every single word that came out of his mouth. I knew that every “ I love you”; “ I am proud of you” or even just a kiss goodbye possibly could be his last. Death was now a black cloud looming over my family waiting at any moment to rain. The last days of Grandpap’s life were undeniably the toughest to endure. I would visit the house as often as I possibly could. Every second that I wasn’t by his side I felt guilty and almost neglectful, knowing where I needed to be.

All of my family was made aware that the waiting game would not last much longer. The sense of urgency was in the air. Crying became an everyday ritual after visiting with Grandpap.

It was very challenging to watch the downfall of such a great man, who I loved so dearly. But, the hardest part was comprehending that I could lose him at any moment. His life was now comparable to that of a ticking time bomb.

At any moment its effects can and will alter all that is around it forever. Though it was extremely tough to watch my Grandpap in his final hours I will never regret a single second that I spent by his side. I learned a great deal by watching the great love my grandparents share. My Grandma did everything in her power to enable my Grandpap to fulfill his wish. He had hoped to die in his home. This wish was granted by a higher power. God took my Grandfather to be with him while in a deep sleep in the same room as my Grandmother. Though there is no passing which would be considered “good”, this is what my Grandpap would have wanted and I am very thankful that he got his ultimate wish.

The days following the death included bonding together as a unit and supporting one another. I love my Grandma, and trying my best to help her cope with the hardship she was experiencing in losing the love of her life was by far the most challenging thing I have ever done. I look at my Grandma as a very strong woman for getting up every morning and pushing herself through the day without the man who she spent 60 years of her life with. While sitting next to her at the funeral and the viewing, she was both mentally and physically exhausted from her loss.

I knew that this was not going to be something easy for her to overcome. Today, my Grandma is without a doubt the woman who I admire the most.

She will never forget about Grandpap and is able to incorporate him as a part of her everyday life. There is not a day that goes by that Grandma doesn't mention Harland's name. She always speaks of his accomplishments, a word of advice from his mouth, or even just a fond memory.

Most importantly, I admire that though the black cloud was able to fulfill its destiny, my Grandma overcame this obstacle in the manner that Harland would have expected her to. She simply put on a rain coat and got out her umbrella as any sensible woman would do. As I held my Grandma's hand through a great deal of the procedure associated with the death, I came to a greater understanding of what life is really about. Life is all about relationships. Those who love you, will always love you.

True love never dies. And, most importantly, cherish every moment that you have with a loved one because you never know how important someone is to you until they are gone.