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The Gift of a Grandmother

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- ▶ *The Gift of a Grandmother* is a personal reflection that represents the valuable, though not always apparent lessons we learn from our family members. I wrote this not only as a tribute to my grandmother, but to honor the experiences that I have shared with her and how they have shaped me into the person that I am today.

GABRIELA ALONSO IS A THIRD YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT. IN HER FREE TIME, SHE ENJOYS SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS, WITH HER FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND EXPLORING NEW CREATIVE OUTLETS.

The Gift of a Grandmother

In the short chapter of her life that I shared with her, my grandmother taught me many things. The most influential being to love fiercely, there is no greater gift than to give and never be afraid to speak on how you feel.

My grandmother was full of valuable lessons. I learned that cutting people off in the school pick up line, won't help you get to where you're going; the discussion you have with the school principal and disgruntled parents may cost you time. I quickly learned that having patience gives us more peace and being a few minutes late to your next appointment is never really that big of a deal. In the years that my grandmother picked me up from school, I also learned that no matter how charming and charismatic you are, you won't always be able to talk your way out of a traffic violation- and that's okay, we'll laugh about it later.

My grandmother taught me that there were many healthy ways to express yourself. She loved to paint, sing, make jewelry and shop for new home décor. Flowers, tropical landscapes and her Cuban culture were her biggest inspirations. The best part of her creative outlets were her willingness to part with her designs. Her original paintings and handmade necklaces always made for the best birthday gifts.

My grandmother, my family's matriarch and our home away from home. If you ever needed information spread quickly to the rest of the family, she was the most effective way to get your message sent. She taught me the value of being a good listener, but also knowing when to speak your truth and standing strong on your beliefs. She never wavered in being authentically true to herself.

While my grandmother taught her family many different things, she taught us all to love life, to be a hopeless romantic and to always make time for family. Her legacy lives on in me, her family and friends that she leaves behind. May we continue to keep her spirit, her zest for life and her love for others alive.

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