Original Comp #1

Topic: **Positive connections with older generations can enrich our lives.**

The fabric of an old shirt against my palm felt as soft and wrinkly as my

father’s face when he hit me. He looked at me, and I left. I walked across town,

the soles of my feet bare and tough in the loose sand and warm cement.

I went to see a lady whose home was heavy with the powdery smell of old

age and quite nights. I had hated this smell when my ratty prison of a highschool

sentenced all seniors to thirty hours of community service. Now it was my

refuge.

She was standing on the back porch, numbly buttering the freshly

laundered shirts of a husband who did not recognize her. Her hands were maps

of veins and age sports; roads I have not yet travelled. Stories I have not yet

heard. She stopped when she saw me, scalp tensing as she studied the cracks

in my skin from the salt of my tears. We didn’t say much.

I helped her fold the laundry, and separate wooden clothespins from

plastic ones. The air buzzed slightly with the slight scent of soapy anticipation

and freshly mown grass. The blue basket contained light spring blankets, almost

identical to the ones in which I had during childhood, enveloping myself in a

cocoon of lavender scent.

We went inside the home for a drink. The lemonade was too sour, and

the ice burned my lips. She looked at me from across the bale, with eyes like

cloudy oysters with pears of wisdom. An old Johnny Cash song was playing, but

I couldn’t tell where it was from.

“Four strong words that blow lonely, even seas that run high, all those

things that don’t’ change, come what may…”

The music swirled like socks in a dryer. An engine started somewhere in

the distance.

I could see myself in those eyes. My hands will someday become those

hands. All the ecstasies and pains I have experienced will be etched in the lines

of my face in the form of cryptic codes for teenagers to decipher. My palms were

hot and I wanted to laugh or throw up.

“But the good times are all gone, and I’m bound for wrong on…”

We were just doing laundry, after all.

The gruff voice, the vanilla flavoured cigar smoke, the laugh always

resulting in a hacking cough, these were the distinct memories of my grandfather.

Perhaps what best described him was the vanilla flavour, plain and simple,

exactly how he lived his life and interacted with everyone. I guess being born

during a time of war will harden anyone’s emotions but was a joke, a giggle or a

smile really that hard to ask for? And this was all before the cancer hit, attaching

itself to his left like a lion to its prey. No matter how strong and sturdy he may

have ached this was not a battle he was going to win via a stern look or raising of

his voice.

No matter how well I did in school or how many sports teams I captained

he never once acknowledged my accomplishments. The one true thing in which

he showed compassion for was football.

“There’s nothing like giving up your heart and soul on every play and then

to get right back up and it again” he told me once.

This was perhaps the sole reason why I tried out my junior year, making

the team and eventually winning Most Valuable Player honours. Once again I

received little recognition from him. The severity of the caner grew by the day,

and already viotile cough turned into a gut wrenching ordeal lasting minutes on

end. I developed a deep sense of pity towards him although showing anything of

the sort to his face was met with a swift “whatcha looking at kid.”

As his days dwindled down my visits to the hospital increased, many times

not even seeing him, merely to help my grandmother cope or drive other family

members. His body mass dwindled as well, strong sturdy muscles giving way to

useless fat and eventually skin and bones. He was now but a fragment of

himself.

Football, the one thing we shared, the one bond we had, was nearing the

completion of its season. Thus the Super Bowl was upon us, an event my

grandfather hadn’t missed in his lifetime. However this one, the nurses told him,

was one he would have to miss. The dingy hospital of our small town did not

provide the simple convenience of working lights let alone a television restricting

any hope of him watching the game.

This, I knew, was the last straw for my grandfather and he dwelved into

deep depression knowing his end was soon. I also knew I couldn’t let this

happen and immediately brought my laptop to his room the day of the big game

and set up it up so he could watch his beloved sport one last time. There was no

thank you or even a nod throughtout the game until the last seconds ticked away

on the game clock. As I looked over to my dying grandfather I saw a man

overcome with emotions. A small tear running down his face he croaked “I’m so

proud of you.” And that’s all I ever needed.

Original Comp #2

Positive connections with older generations allows people to enrich their lives in ways nothing else can. Positive connections can allow people to avoid

certain hardships as well as make better decisions. Elderly people can offer

advice and insight that is more useful than that found anywhere else.

Firstly, Talking to someone of an older generation will quickly reveal some

excellent advice that can be very easily applied to your own life. Only a person

who has experienced hardships first hand will be able to offer the kind of advice

which may one day save you from bankruptcy or save you from making a terrible

mistake which may cost you your life. A wise man once told me, “Don’t marry

until you have enough money and a house to live in.” Those are words which

rang true and may one day save me from a world of trouble. Only a person with

experience can offer this kind of advice.

Secondly, Listening to the stories of past accomplishments of elderly

people can trigger you to strive to be the best you can be. My grandfather was

an immigrant from Denmark. He moved to Canada in his early twenties and

started a business. He soon got married and had a family and in my opinion had

made it. I strive to one day accomplish such feats in my own life. Elderly

generations can offer some of the greatest inspiration in our lives.

In conclusion, There is great wisdom behind that weathered and wrinkled

face. It is just waiting to be tapped into and this can only be accomplished

through positive connections. So make sure to speak with the older generations

and let them offer you advice and stories of the past. It will better your life or

maybe even one day save your life.