

Good Morning!

Before I get started I would like to take a minute to publicly thank my Aunt Lisa and Uncle Steve for their commitment to providing the care required for both my grandparents in the twilight years of their lives. The sacrifices you made both personally and professionally allowed for an easy transition into their next life and for that I am forever grateful.

It also provided some insight into my future as I currently am living in the same town as both my mom and dad..... if you would be interested in a nice 4 bedroom two bath historic east side home see me after the service I will be listing my house for sale as soon as arrived back to Athens and moving to the Bahamas.....I am only kidding.....kind of.....

About a month ago I got a call from my mom while she was visiting grandpa Jack.....

Mom "Hi Jack" –that's me

Jack: "Hi Mom"

Mom: "I think your grandfather is really starting to fail. You should come see him right away if you want to have any meaningful time with him, I just don't think he won't be with us much longer."

Jack: "Mom.....you have been telling me that since I was 12 are you sure I need to come up?"

Mom: "Yes"

That is a true story....both how the call happened and that since I was 12 every time we saw them it was surely the last time we were ever going to see them. When I younger it was always... "we need to go see them".....once I could drive it was always "you need to go see them."

In hindsight I am not one bit sorry.....it was time with them I will never get back. Thank you to my mom for always encouraging me to spend my time where I couldn't see the importance as a young man.

The conclusion of the story isn't quite that simple.....after I got off the phone with mom I called my Aunt Lisa, which I did often, to verify the seriousness of the situation.

Lisa and I are close in age and she's is definitely the sister I never had and while I love my mom.....my aunt and I think in very similar ways, which is much different than my mom.

So like so many times before I called Lisa on the phone and unlike so many times before she confirmed what my mom had shared....

....."If you can get time, I would come."

After a quick review of his schedule it was clear I was going to have to infringe on one of his social events to make it work. Lisa said that he met with friends on Friday mornings at Athena's and it would be a nice surprise to meet him there. Less than a week later I found myself headed out of town at the break of dawn to surprise my unknowing grandpa Jack for breakfast with his friends.

3.5 hours later, upon arrival I found grandpa and a half dozen of his friends sharing stories at a booth and just sitting down to eat.....my mom always says timing is everything and in this case it was perfect.

He was certainly surprised.....and of course delighted....he turned to his friends "guys....this is my grandson jack.....he has a great name.....can you guess where he got it?" smiled and laughed.

For the next two hours he went on and on telling all the stories about us....I had heard them all before but because they placed the focus on us so it was always ok.

And looking back that was my aha moment..... that was what made him such a fantastic person and the best grandparent one could ever ask. He had this keen ability to make everyone in the room feel special but in particular me.

It was less than a month later and I got a text message from my Aunt Lisa.....I don't remember what it said specifically, but I knew that grandpa's health had taken a turn for the worse. Shortly after the text exchange mom called was looking for any insight into the turn of events and I told her I thought Lisa could use the help....mom left town that night and called after she arrived.

"It was good advice Jack.....I need to be here."

By the end of that weekend he was gone.

I did manage another day trip to visit towards the very end and there was an hour or so late one afternoon that we, as a family, got to spend sitting together.....telling stories and laughing and while grandpa wasn't actively participating I know it was comforting for him to have us all together sharing stories of his life.... one last time.

I am sure you can all relate to those special times in life when you close your eyes you can almost transport back into that exact moment in time..... Experiences that you can remember like it was yesterday.....I have many of those kinds of experiences so many of them during my childhood happened in Avon Lake, Ohio.

I don't have enough time to share them all but have picked 5 of my favorites to share with you today and tied back the life lesson I gained from those experiences.

For as long as I can remember Grandpa's morning routine was always the same.....get up and throw on that paper thin blue robe.....exercises...then breakfast raisin bran cereal.... a dash of sugar, coffee, some toast or fruit and the morning paper. After breakfast it was shower and shave.....and off to whatever the day's agenda entailed. I have sat with him so many times I can clearly....without fail remember every detail of his routine.....

## Life lesson #1

.....routine leads to stability. His routine provided consistency, it was reliable and are now things that I now value in my life....routine, stability and consistency provide me with the comfort I need for success.

Fishing was always part of my time with grandpa.....we fished for walleye & perch and have been deep sea fishing countless times together. More often times than not we did well but would be considered average by most standards. However there was one day when I was still quite young where the stars aligned and grandpa and I along with a couple others hit the walleye run just right and we reeled them in as fast as we could get the lines back in the water. And what I remember most was how grandpa was quick to assist but did little fishing himself.....he laughed and chuckled nearly all day as the rest of us wore ourselves out one of my most epic days of fishing ever.

## Life lesson #2

.....position others for success and your success will be great too.....that day on the water Im not sure if he put a line in the water for himself all day, but if you asked him... he would say it was one of his best days on the water ever.

So many of our vacations growing up were tied to family.....trips to the Outer Banks in NC, overnights in Amish country, long weekends in Sandusky, or holidays on Kelly's Island.....being together was clearly important to him and my grandmother. So many of my most distinct memories come from trips we all took together and even though we didn't always see eye to eye the good times far outweigh the bad. I can still feel the sand in my feet and Kitty Hawk dunes, the excitement in the air watching the charter boats coming back to Oregon Inlet, the smell of the ocean early in the early morning breeze, singing together at restaurants as we waited for our food and so many more. Those memories will last a lifetime.

### Life lesson #3

family time is time well spent. Despite our differences, conflict or time constraints you always looked forward to our family excursions.....and so did I.

Tucked in the basement of 159 duff drive was one of grandpa's greatest escapes.....I collection of woodworking tools that any aspiring craftsman would be proud to own. He and I spent countless hours in that woodshop working on any one of a dozen or so projects he had going at that time. I can so clearly remember the old tattered bluejean apron that he wore while working and the magic that happened as he methodically turned pieces of random wood into his latest masterpiece. Each of the machines he used in that basement had a unique sound when he fired it up and still to this day some of the sound bring my right back to that basement when I hear them.

To be totally honest i just liked spending time with him.....outside of using the drill press or running up and down the stairs to play with the laundry chute I never really took to the art of woodworking. But i gained invaluable experience in watching him patiently work and the struggle it took to eventually reach a satisfactory end product.

### Life Lesson #4

Anything worth having doesnt come easy.....patience and planned progress will win the day. I dont always practice this as well as I should but I believe I do it better than most. Some of his projects would last for months maybe even years but that never seemed to deter him.....I would ask him why it was taking so long, often times months went by between visits, and he would shrug his shoulders and tell me some things just take time. He was right.....most things just take time.

The memory I leave you with is today without a doubt my most treasured.....As a kid and later as an adult my excitement always peaked once we hit the train tracks on the south side of Avon Lake. Just a few minutes left and I always knew that upon arrival both of my grandparents would be there to greet me. I'd burst through the door at 159 and there they would sit.....as anxious to see me as I was to see them and for the next few days their attention was solely focused on me.

The same could be said for our departures .....we'd say our goodbyes and they would stand behind the storm door window and wave until we turned the corner onto Redwood. I can still see them both as I stand here today, etched in my memories forever.

#### Life lesson #5

The gift of time. I cannot ever remember a trip, vacation or historic event in my life where he wasn't present....always present....always proud. As a grandson I had the good fortune of visiting upon occasion and when I did.....without fail he was there. I couldn't appreciate it at the time, I had no clue what it took to put your adult life on hold for 2,3 or 4 days.....but as an adult now I have grown to understand the sacrifices that must be made to put life on hold if even only for a day.

I could go on.....for hours.....maybe days. There's not enough time to talk about his commitment to fellowship, marriage or civic duty.....his humor, salesmanship or faith. He was just a special man, special to me, special to you, special to so many.

Even in his passing he was still watching out for me...shaping me into the person I have become today. He knew I would be asked to give this testimony and I would speculate he knew that I would find comfort in the process of remembering all the good times we shared and I did.

Grandpa.....It is my hope that today I have made you proud one last time.....I love you now and for always.....thanks for the memories.

Jack