

IN THE MIDDLE: Coping with the Death of a Loved One

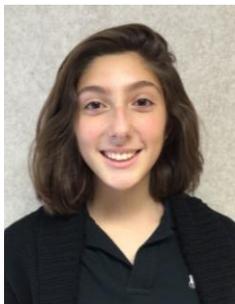
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People have told me all my life that people can die and I never truly understood the concept.

When my friends would tell me how their grandparents had passed away, I comforted them and felt sorry, but I did not think of the side effects their families faced once a loved one was gone. I never personally experienced this type of pain, so I thought I couldn't help them because sympathy was not as powerful as empathy.

Recently, my own grandmother passed, and it swept through like a whirlwind. There was no preparation, just thin air and loss. Losing her was extremely



difficult because I always thought death took you all at once, but I could tell that even when she was not with me, she was lingering in the spaces surrounding me and it was better this way.

There were also amazing people, family and friends, filling the rooms of my grandparents' house to full capacity. All the people had grown with my grandmother and I, and we developed a new sort of unity. It made every single one of us stronger.

We kept her with us, in the comfort of her house where we could all be together. The atmosphere was much more pleasing than that of a hospital's. There was a nurse who stayed in the house with us most of the time to watch over her and help us adapt. There was care in this home and there was beautiful quiet. She deserved at least that.

My grandmother was not just a grandmother, but a Yiayia. In the Greek language, Grandmother

translates to Yiayia, and in Greek culture, our Yiayia is our second mother.

She cared with a heart larger than any man or woman I know and she did it with pure grace and prestige.

My Yiayia was the first one I called to tell her I received Principal's Honor Roll, when I was hungry and there was no food in the fridge, or even if I was not sure what button to press on the washing machine when I had to do the laundry. She lived right down the road, which means I saw her almost every day. How could you go from every day to these circumstances?

This occurrence is a great devastation, but I will fight through the same way she did. I have my loving family surrounding me and I could never be more grateful in my life.

This is real and this does happen, but with the people surrounding you, empathizing alongside you, it is much easier to handle what goes on. This life gets tough and everyone has their own story, next harder than the last, but there are seven billion people to share the not so tough times with- in peace and serenity and downright happiness.

I realize passing away means leaving. It is only passing by and passing through. I know I will never stop loving my Yiayia because with life and death, love is eternal, and I have only just learned that.

Evangelea Dabagia is a student at Barker Middle School. In the Middle is a regular column which is produced by middle school students in the Michigan City Area Schools.