

12 Lessons My Grandmother Taught Me

Written by Marc Chernoff

Saturday, 01 December 2018 00:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 02 April 2019 08:36

When my grandmother, Zelda, passed away a few years ago at the age of 90, she left me with a box of miscellaneous items from her house that she knew I had grown to appreciate over the years. Among these items was an old leatherbound book. She'd called it her Inspiration Journal.

Throughout the second half of her life, she used this journal to jot down ideas, thoughts, quotes, song lyrics, and anything else that moved her. She would read excerpts from her journal to me when I was growing up, and I would listen and ask questions. I credit a part of who I am now to the wisdom she bestowed on me when I was young.



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Today I want to share some of these inspiring excerpts with you. I've done my best to sort, copy edit, and reorganize the content into 12 inspiring bullet points. Enjoy.

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Breathe in the future, breathe out the past.

No matter where you are or what you're going through, always believe that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Never expect, assume, or demand. Just do your best, control the elements you can control, and then let it be. Once you have done what you can, if it is meant to be, it will happen. If not, it will show you the next step you need to take.

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Life can be simple again.

Choose to focus on one thing at a time. You don't have to do it all, and you don't have to do it all right now. Breathe, be present, and do your best with what's in front of you. What you put into life, life will eventually give you back many times over. Read Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now*.

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Let others take you as you are, or not at all.

Speak your truth even if your voice shakes. By being yourself, you put something beautiful into the world that was not there before. So walk your path confidently and don't expect anyone else to understand your journey, especially if they have not been exactly where you are going.

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You are not who you used to be, and that's okay.

You've been hurt; you've gone through numerous ups and downs that have made you who you are today. Over the years, so many things have happened—things that have changed your perspective, taught you lessons, and forced your spirit to grow. As time passes, nobody stays the same, but some people will still tell you that you have changed. Respond to them by saying, “Of course I've changed. That's what life is all about. But I'm still the same person, just a little stronger now than I ever was before.”

- Everything that happens helps you grow, even if it's hard to see right now.

Circumstances will direct you, correct you, and perfect you over time. So whatever you do, hold on to hope. The tiniest thread will twist into an unbreakable cord. Let hope anchor you in the possibility that this is not the end of your story— that the change in the tides will eventually bring you to peaceful shores.

- Do not educate yourself to be rich. Educate yourself to be happy.

That way when you get older you'll know the value of things, not the price. In the end, you will come to realize that the best days are the days when you don't need anything extreme or special to happen to make you smile. You simply appreciate the moments and feel gratitude, seeking nothing else, nothing more. That is what true happiness is all about. Read Dennis Prager's *Happiness Is a Serious Problem*.

- Be determined to be positive.

Understand that the greater part of your misery or unhappiness is determined not by your circumstances, but by your attitude. So smile at those who often try to begrudge or hurt you, and show them what's missing in their life and what they can't take away from you.

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- **Pay close attention to those you care about.**

Sometimes when a loved one says, "I'm okay," they need you to look them in the eyes, hug them tight, and reply, "I know you're not." And don't be too upset if some people only seem to remember you when they need you. Feel privileged that you are like a beacon of light that comes to their minds when there is darkness in their lives.

- **Sometimes you have to let a person go so they can grow.**

Over the course of their lives, it is not what you've done for them, but what you've taught them to do for themselves that will make them a successful human being.

- **Strip yourself of people that don't serve your best interests.**

Sometimes that's the only way to get the results you crave. This allows you to make space for those who support you in being the absolute best version of yourself. It happens gradually as you grow. You find out who you are and what you want, and then you realize that people you've known forever don't see things the way you do. So you keep the wonderful memories, but find yourself moving on.

- **Be daring.**

It's better to look back on life and say, "I can't believe I did that," than to look back and say, "I wish I had done that." In the end, people will judge you regardless, so don't live your life trying to impress others. Instead live your life impressing yourself. Love yourself enough to never lower your standards for anyone. Read Jeffrey Zaslow's *The Last Lecture*.

- **Don't be afraid of looking for a new beginning.**

Sometimes that's what you need when you're having a hard time finding a happy ending. Brush yourself off and accept that you have to fail from time to time. That's how you learn. The strongest people out there—the ones who laugh the hardest with a genuine smile—are the same people who have fought the toughest battles. They're smiling because they've decided that they're not going to let anything hold them down. They're moving on to a new beginning.

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