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Advanced Composition, Block 4

17 November 2015

Laws of Life

### Last Words

In life there will be countless lasts. There will be last days of work, last birthdays, and eventually last words. I learned the value of last words when my great-grandmother left this earth. Last words have an immense impact. My law of life can be found in Barbara de Angelis's quote, "Love is a force more formidable than any other. It is invisible- it cannot be measured, yet it is powerful enough to transform you in a moment, and offer you more joy than any material possession could." My law of life is to never be afraid to overuse the words "I love you."

I had a relationship with my great-grandmother like no other. She lived in Tennessee. Due to the distance, I did not get to see her frequently; however, I had the blessing of talking to her every night on the phone for five years. The phone calls were not a chore for me. I genuinely cherished talking to the woman I admired so much. Each night before we ended the call I would say, "I love you," and she would reply, "I love you too, more than you will ever know."

Over a period of years I began to notice my grandmother's memory and rational thought process deteriorating. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Hearing the diagnosis caused my heart to immediately sink. I knew the disease was not treatable, and I was aware there was little doctors could do to slow the progression. I feared most she would forget who I was. Despite the illness, we continued our nightly phone calls. We talked mostly about old memories she could still recall from her childhood. No matter the topic of discussion, we would end our

phone calls the same way every night. Even though I was broken hearted as I watched her mind slip away, I found peace in know when God called her home the last words I would say to her were “I love you.”

I vividly remember my last conversation with my grandmother. On a bright afternoon in April my grandmother called me. Her memory was better than normal that day. We talked for fifty-two minutes. At the end of our conversation I said, “I love you,” and she answered, “I love you too, more than you will ever know.” Those were the last words I would ever say to my precious grandmother.

On April 10, 2014 my grandmother packed a suitcase, and told one of the nurses at the assisted living community she was going home. Around five that afternoon she laid down for a nap, and she never woke up. Whether her comment to the nurse was just a statement of confusion due to the terrible disease, or if she really knew God was calling her to her heavenly home is unknown to me. I find peace in knowing she did not suffer. The last words I heard from her are one of my greatest blessings. Words of love have more power than any force of this world.

Throughout life people will endure an unlimited number of lasts. Perhaps the most significant of those lasts are the last words an individual says to loved ones. My great-grandmother taught me a law of life I will never forget. Every day I remember to never fear overusing the words “I love you.” We never know when our time on earth will end, and the words we leave on loved ones have a substantial impact.

Word Count: 585

## A Small Act Can Turn a Life Around

I recently read a quote from Leo Buscaglia that explained, “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” Reading this quote reminded me of an event that happened to me that was both surprising and exciting. This incident that happened to me came during a time in my life that was very difficult. I had just lost my grandmother, and I was just taken away from my parents. This incident, like the quote says, turned my life around.

It was a Thursday afternoon, and I had just arrived home from school. My aunt received a phone call from a girl from my school. I was curious as to what the phone call was about when I heard our doorbell ring. My aunt told me to go answer the door, so I did. When I opened the door to my surprise there were three girls from my fourth grade class standing there with a box in their hands, so I invited them in. When they came into my living room, they handed me the box and one of the girls said, “This is for you. We hope you like it.” I told them thank you before they left. After they were out the front door I opened up the box. In the box was an American Girl doll. I was so excited! This wonderful act the three girls did for me brightened my day.

Somehow the girls knew that I was going through a tough time. They knew I was just taken away from my parents, and I had also lost my grandmother. They knew I wanted an American Girl doll. When they found all of these facts about me, they decided they wanted to do something kind for me. I later found out that the girls had a lemonade stand to raise enough money to buy me an one-hundred and fifty dollar American Girl. The fact that these girls raised

the money on their own was surprising. I was not even close friends with them. They were part of the “popular group.” It was surprising to me that “popular kids” would care so much about a little girl like me.

I do not think the three girls realize how their act of kindness affected me. It changed my outlook on life. The fact that these girls, who I wasn't even really close to, cared so much about me gave me a great feeling. Leo Buscaglia's quote which says, “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” is a quote which is very true. People really do underestimate what a small act of caring can do for someone. The small act the girls did for me helped me to realize that there were people out there who cared about what I was going through. A small act can turn a life around.

## Big Red by Braden Green

It is known that most young boys believe they can do anything. Though, only a handful of those boys find their own motivation. I was fortunate enough to be given the chance to set me apart from others. Bill Bradley said, "Ambition is the path to success. Persistence is the vehicle you arrive in." I took that and drove with it.

All my life I grew up admiring that red hunk of metal with the brown patches, that stayed parked in the same spot of the driveway until I was fourteen years old. My Peepaw( my mother's step father) always called it his hunting truck, but I knew that it was much more special than that. While the other grandkids would all swim and play games, I would gaze at that truck until I could work up the nerve to beg my Peepaw to take me for a ride. Though, I would always have to settle for his stories of him driving that truck through all different kinds of terrain until I fell off the edge of my seat.

One hot summer day when I was ten years old, my Peepaw asked if I wanted to ride with him in "Big Red" to Home Depot to get some pine straw. The ten minutes there, and ten minutes back was one of the best memories of my childhood. As we cruised back into the parking spot of the driveway with all the stains, I asked him, "Do you think I can have Big Red whenever I turn sixteen?". He jokingly said, "Why sure you can." I began to count the days until I could have that truck.

As a few years crept by, I got a lot bigger and Big Red got a lot rustier. A couple of months before I turned fifteen, in the summer of 2014, I asked my Peepaw, "So how much are you gonna sell me that truck for?". He cracked a smile that even I had never seen before because he knew that Big Red was going to have new life. "Are you serious now, cause she's gonna need

a lot of maintenance?” Peepaw asked. All I had to do was smile at him, and then he said,” She’s yours if you can get her out of my driveway.” Nine days later, the rusty pickup truck was in my driveway, but it looked like a Porsche through my eyes.

Problem after problem came up with that truck, but I was determined to make it look brand new. After a year and two months of countless hours and sweat poured into Big Red, it was finally finished. I have never had such a feeling of accomplishment as I did when I could say to my father,” She looks good doesn’t she?”. Though, before he could answer, I took the words out of his mouth,” Actually, she’s beautiful.” On the day of September 24, 2015, when I received my license, I drove the thirty five minute journey from my house to my grandparent’s house. As I pulled in, My Peepaw strolled outside with a grin on his face. I gave him a hug and asked him what he thought, but I got no reply. When I looked down at his face, there were tears rolling down his cheeks and he choked out the words,” You did good, you did real good.” Hearing those words made the six year wait and the labor invested into that truck worth every bit of it. I realized that I had the determination to do anything that I put my mind to.

Bill Bradley once said,” Ambition is the path to success. Persistence is the vehicle you arrive in.” That little, rusty pickup truck that I have loved all my life, has given me the tools to achieve anything. At ten years old, my whole family doubted my ability and willingness to accomplish much, but now they know that I can attain all of my goals in life. Through my ambition and persistence, I can literally arrive in the vehicle in which my work is shown.

Word Count: 698

The Mountains are Not a Problem by Anna Wiggins

I will never forget my Nana, and I always refer to this one fable throughout my childhood. At the exact moment I walked in the front door, I was welcomed with an abundance of hugs and kisses. Each time, without fail, we would always read *The Little Engine That Could* written by Watty Piper. As childish as it may seem, I have consistently referred to one quote out of this book, no matter what the situation is. As a child, when I heard one of my parents utter the words, “Get ready, we’re going to Nana’s” I would become extremely ecstatic, not only because of the delicious food, but to read that story.

For those who have not read the story, a short summarization would be about a train hauling toys and gifts for the children across the mountain, but suddenly, the train breaks down. After trying to convince a number of different engines, one little blue engine finally agrees to help get the toys over the mountain even though she has never attempted the frightening journey. She is not sure if she can make it up the steep mountain or not, but sits aside all her doubts while she chants “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can,” over and over again. She eventually gets over the mountain, and successfully gives all the toys to the children.

This phrase was drained into that infant, eager brain of mine, and no matter the situation, my Nana and I would always mention it. I could be doing challenging homework, trying to go to sleep after a nightmare, or even attempting to reach an object from the top shelf, and she would acknowledge that unshakable quote each time I reached a bump in the road. That quote became something I would say in my mind daily, for around ten years, especially the year of 2014. In August of 2014, I got the news from my family that my Nana had been diagnosed with leukemia, and from that day forward my life was flipped upside down.

When I was first told the alarming news, I was certainly upset, but I knew that this was just the beginning of a challenging journey that was coming my way. The very next morning, my Nana was admitted into Northside Hospital in Atlanta to start chemo treatment. The doctors required her to have a caregiver, a person who is capable to stay with her and be there at all times. My father stepped up to take that job, and together, my dad and Nana stayed in Atlanta to be closer to the hospital.

Throughout this time, I was faced with what I call it to be, the most difficult time of my life. I learned an abundance of lessons during this time, one of them being to never give up, and that is exactly what the little blue engine taught me. One might be trying to get over the tall, risky, challenging mountain, mine happened to be a year long, but they are not going to get anywhere without confidence. Remember to always chant, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." Just maybe, if someone is going through a rough time, they can deliver all the toys to the children over the mountain, and deliver the toys I did. A couple of months ago my Nana, family, and I received the remarkable news that she was in remission, and nothing in the world could make me any happier than those words.

Word Count: 593