



2020 Ben Strauss Youth Program  
High School  
Teen Essay Contest

# Sarah Lattanze

## Dear Grandma

Hi Grandma,

I haven't talked to you in a while. I'm sorry, senior year is just crazy busy with so many different things. But don't worry, even though I haven't talked to you, I still think about you every single day. And now that I'm stuck inside, I have a lot of free time and figured that I owed you a conversation.

I would ask you how you've been, but I know that you're doing great. Or at least better than you were about six years ago. I can't believe it's been six years. It feels like so much longer.

I still remember the day that mom told me about you. I was in 6th grade at the time so I was still pretty young. Maybe that's why mom only told me that you were really sick instead of telling me the truth. But you know me, you always used to say I was as quick as a whip. I caught on right away that "really sick" meant "having cancer". But I was young and didn't really know what "having cancer" really meant.

I remember not being able to see you for a while. Mom said that you weren't feeling well. I used to see you every single day, it was hard for me to just stop.

You used to do so much for my sister and me, even when you were sick. Looking back on the things that you did, like taking us on vacations, going to the pool and coming to school events, I'm impressed. You really loved us.

And we loved you. We loved you so much, but since then I've realized that we definitely should have loved you a little more. I was young, I didn't know what "having cancer" meant. Now I do.

I remember the last time I saw you. It was Christmas Day. You looked so exhausted, but you still insisted on hosting it. Everyone was so happy then.

I remember the last words that you said to me. It was on the phone a couple of days after Christmas. You were in the hospital. You were supposed to leave the next day. I remember saying that I would see you tomorrow, and you said the same. Then we hung up. That conversation haunts me to this day. I wish I said something else.

This all leads up to the worst day of my life. Getting a call early in the morning. My mom crying in the shower while on the phone. Her forcing my sister and me to still go to school, as if nothing was wrong. Me, feeling sick to my stomach, going to the bathroom a couple of times because I felt like I needed to throw up. We live two blocks from the bus stop, but my sister and I took 15 minutes to get home. As if not going home would mean that you were still alive.

I remember curling up on the bathroom floor, just crying. It was the type of cry where your face gets hot, tears are streaming, but you just can't seem to make any noise. I felt like I was trapped in my own personal hell, a nightmare of some sort, and I just couldn't wake up.

I don't like thinking about that day. Or the funeral. Or any of that. So I just don't. Maybe that's why I don't talk to you as much as I should. I'm sorry that I don't because you might think that means I don't love you or I forgot about you, which breaks my heart even more. It's just every time I try, I break down. That's why I'm writing this. Writing is a lot easier than speaking the truth because hearing the truth over and over again makes it seem more real.

I finished out my soccer season grandma. I cried during senior night. I know you used to love watching me play. You would come to every single game, whether it was a school game or a club game. You would come and sit through the entire thing, even though we lost almost all of them. You were my biggest fan. I know you were watching every single game even after you left. I know you still are my biggest fan.

I also got into college. I will be at the University of the Sciences in the Physician Assistant Program. You always thought I was going to be a doctor. I thought I was going to be a lawyer. I guess you were right, you always were.

I still cry myself to sleep some nights. It's gotten better though. It's not every night and I don't breakdown about it quite as much as I used to. I just can't stop thinking about you and everything that you've missed and everything that you're going to miss. When I lost you, I didn't just lose my grandmother, I lost my best friend. The person that was always there for me, to back me up, to make me laugh, to pick me up when I fell down. No one can do that now in the same way that you did it. That one piece of my life is missing, and I feel like it will be forever missing.

We all still miss you so much. There isn't a day that goes by that I haven't thought about you, and it's been 6 years. I know that maybe that isn't the healthiest thing for me but there are just some things I can't control.

I hope that I turned out to be the granddaughter that you always wanted. I really hope that I am not a disappointment or failure. I just hope that I made you proud. You're the only person that I've ever wanted to make proud.

You're still my best friend grams. You always will be. I can't wait until I can finally see you again.

I love you