

Caring for Grandma

“Take care of yourself, take care of others, and take care of this place.” That's what I grew up with throughout my elementary school years. I've always had a drive to help others, regardless of what it is. From what I saw, the people that needed the most care were my grandparents, or kupuna. Kupuna had made the people we are today, and had taken care of each and every one of us. Now it's our turn.

My grandma started living with my family and I, after my grandpa passed away last year in January. This was a difficult year, as it was my brother who was graduating high school, and me graduating elementary school. But he wouldn't be able to be there. However, the person who needed the most comfort was my grandma. My parents had always put family first, but as our busy schedules went into place, they needed some assistance.

Everyday, she followed a routine that helped her mind keep going everyday, which helped her to stay active. She would wake up, check the time, have breakfast, get ready for the day, and take her medicine. Later I learned how simple acts of kindness had impacted some part of her routine.

When she carried bags that were too heavy for her, I would carry them instead. Gradually, as I started to learn how to cook, I cooked her eggs or made a sandwich for her, in the morning. She also drank coffee, but didn't know how to use the machine, besides my mom. Therefore, I learned how to use it as well. She would then say “Thank you for making my

breakfast!” as I head out for school. Because of that, I started to grow closer to her; talking together while watching her shows late at night, and helping her with word searches during the day.

Till this day, she’s living a healthy lifestyle! I’m glad with how much progress she has made over the past year, especially with what she’s been through. Which is why, I feel that caring for kupuna this way will help them to get out of their comfort zone. Even when you’re older, that doesn’t mean you stop learning. A strategy that could be used is to simply get them into doing something regularly. Such as doing puzzles, or playing memory games in the afternoon. Secondly, to have them interact with others. Socializing is one of the things that helped my grandma become more lively, and I believe that it can help others too. However, nothing can compare when being with family, which are the best people to interact with on a daily basis.

Hawaii Community Foundation had made an article explaining the difficulties of being able to communicate with the elderly. After learning about telehealth or online calls, they got right back to it. One of the people part of the check-in program had said, ““Right away, when they pick up the phone, and they hear voices, they’ll start crying. They’re so thankful: ‘I’m so glad you’re calling! I thought you’d forgotten about me.’ It’s that relief to hear a familiar voice.”” Kupuna Power also explained what it means to be living a healthy and active life during our elderly days. One of the main topics is how exercise can help. Some of the benefits can be to help: improve balance, manage/improve diseases, reduce negative emotions and more.

This goes to show how living in a positive environment can benefit kupuna! My family and I used these facts to help my grandma become the person she is today. Most importantly,

through these small acts of kindness, making her breakfast, making her bed, talking to her during the night and more, had helped her as well. I realized how important it is to really take care of my grandma, after I lost my grandpa. So, spread kindness towards kupuna, and only then will they thrive.