

There are so many things that I believe in, that I am passionate about. I believe in God. I believe in family and friends. Love and compassion. But as I was listening to Jeff last week, I realized what I truly believe in.

I believe in the power of memory. I think people underestimate how truly beautiful memories are. I believe in the good memories – the ones you can look back on days, months, and years later and still smile about. I even believe in the bad memories. These might be the most important, because we can take those memories and learn from them. Come out stronger because of them.

When I was eight, my grandpa suffered a massive stroke. It left him almost speechless, unable to form coherent sentences. The stroke led to dementia. So, every time something stressful happened in his life, even something as simple as catching a cold, his health would decline. This went on for nine years until he couldn't remember how to walk or feed himself. He slowly forgot each of our names until he couldn't even recognize us anymore. I don't know if any of you have experience with this type of thing, but watching someone forget literally every aspect of their life is heartbreaking. My grandpa and grandma died six months apart almost two years ago. They lived their last nine years not even recognizing the love of their life right beside them.

So. Memories. Without them, we are lost. Without them, it is hard to remember who we are, or who we've been. Remember this simple fact before being bitter about love lost, or chances missed. I invite you all to cherish each and every memory you have – the good and the bad. They help shape you into the person you are meant to be.