

GOLD AWARD

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Tell your grandchildren a bedtime story about an inspirational person

Every one of us has different perspectives on life based on what we've been through throughout our years of living. Many of us don't know the meaning of life; we take it for granted, and without a doubt, it happened to me too. As I grew, I discovered that there was more to life to appreciate. As much as life has its downs, there'll be a light at the end of the tunnel. In my 68 years of living, of course, there were times when I wished I could just give everything up and be at ease, but there were also times of happiness, joy and peacefulness. Being thankful is something I should've embraced in my life because not even the finest diamonds nor the highest quality of gold can repay what someone very dear did for me.

Bedtime stories for my grandchildren are a norm, but today's was exceptional as it will be profound. I went to their bedrooms to prepare for the story routine. "There, there, children, it's story time now." They were all excited as usual, but to my dismay, the title 'The most Inspirational Person in my Life' did not excite them. Very vague, isn't it? My grandchildren weren't enlightened, but this story would definitely take them on a roller coaster of emotions. The story is about my best friend. Never have I ever seen someone put their life at risk for a person who isn't related to them, and it touched me greatly. Our story started in 1967 when I was 13. I transferred schools during that time due to financial issues. I was always called the "poor kid" at school, but whenever that happened, a girl named Tatiana would step up for me. I wasn't sure why she did it, but I was always thankful to her. Once, she saw me sobbing in the bleachers and reached out to console me. I truly meant it when I said I've never been more grateful for her. We were inseparable.

"Every friendship has its own ups and downs. We also fell into arguments, but this particular argument made us fall apart. Due to that argument, we didn't contact each other for over a year and trust me, it was the worst year of my life. Imagine having to live your life acting normal without your best friend by your side, and it was so tough to the point I had to cry myself to sleep every night. There was also a war going on at that time, and my older brother was forced to serve the nation on the battlefield. I lived in agony, waiting for his return.

When all the soldiers in my town returned, I walked in fear finding for my brother, hoping he was there. My heartbeat got faster with every footstep I took. He was nowhere to be found. Millions of

thoughts ran through my mind. The worst-case scenario occurred. My dearest brother had gone to sleep forever. My heart shattered to pieces; I wept and wailed. Being the one who knew about it, I had to break the news. But how? How was I going to tell them and act brave in front of them when it felt like my whole world had crumbled? Being devastated is an understatement, for I was going through something more significant than that.

My brother, the person I could share everything with, left me for good. To make things worse, my family was still indebted. Being the eldest, the burden fell on my shoulder. On the way home, the head of the village demanded the money, or he'll throw us out of the village. Did I forget to mention that the village head was Tatiana's dad? At that time, I saw Tatiana there to defend me. She went against her own family to help mine. She walked away from home and came towards me. We hugged with much love. The fact that it was always her who saved me made me feel guilty, but it also made me value our friendship. Since that day, Tatiana has lived with us, and it felt like I reunited with my long-lost twin." When I finished my story, I found all my grandchildren fast asleep except for one. "That, indeed, was a really hard time you were facing, and I surely took much inspiration from Tatiana. You are one strong woman grandma, goodnight."