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Over the nineteen years of my life, one of the people with the greatest influence on me was my grandmother. After spending many summers with her when I was young, we came to have an interesting relationship that I believe has gone through some of the stages listed in the text that all relationships go through. I intend to expand on three of these stages. I will cover three because the fact that I was too young to remember the earlier stages of Initiating, Experimenting, and Intensifying. The areas that I will cover however are as follows: Integrating, Bonding, and Differentiating.

clear
me

The first time I ~~really~~ realized that my relationship with my grandmother was becoming significant was when I was about ten years old. The relationship reached the Integrating stage when I used to spend my summer vacations at her home in Minnesota. She and I would spend long hours on those warm humid days, sitting in the living room or on the patio talking about the rest of our family or listening to her stories of her childhood on the farm and we would compare that life to the modern day life that I was growing up in. I sat and listened to her stories and I told stories of my life and we would compare them. We knew we had a strong relationship because we could talk a lot about many things that were personal to us like the situations in the family. Both of us had been through a divorce. We were able to understand each other through these experiences. We found comfort in each other's company because of how we knew how each other felt.

one
actual
quote
me

quote her

She would tell me that I just needed to get good grades in school and go to college and get a good job and my life would turn out to be just what I wanted it to be. I was sure she knew what she was talking about because she was always so kind and understanding to me and I felt like I could always count on her to be there for me when I needed somebody to comfort me.

By the time I was about thirteen is when I think we reached the bonding stage. I went to Minnesota once for Christmas, the day I was to go home she and I went up into her room and I told her how bad I felt about my family situation and how much I didn't want to go home. For a long time in the afternoon before I left for the airport, we talked. The following is a recollection of some of the things that I told her as I compared my life to my Dad and one of my cousins.

my "I just look at the kind of life that Julie has and like my Dad had how everyone was a family and I just wish that I could have it. I want to know why it happened to me." She sat and listened and expressed her empathy for me. She and I hugged and cried and she said:

"I just don't know why things like this happen. I wish you didn't have to back to that." At that I knew we really loved each other. I knew after that day that she and I were so very much like ~~each other~~ that we would always be this close ~~to each other~~ in our hearts. Thus, we had reached the bonding stage. *(yes)*

We stayed at this stage for about four years. She and I hadn't been ~~together~~ as much and I was much older. These are two of the main reasons I believe we moved to the Differentiating

stage.

I had found new ways to deal with problems I would come across in my life. Before I began to notice that we were starting to differentiate, we were able to get back to some of our long understanding talks. She and I were able to talk to ~~each other~~ again after my family moved to Nebraska. Things had changed in my family. My parents had gotten back together and I was feeling better. For a while she and I talked about the same old topics as we used to and we were just as happy to be together, but sometimes I would see a different side to a topic that we were discussing. For instance^s, one night when I wanted to go out with some of my friends we began to see that our perceptions were not as close together.

"I'm going out." I said. She sighed and then came back with:

"Kids shouldn't run around outside after dark."

"What's wrong with it?" I argued.

"That's when you're going to get in trouble. Police go and pick kids up when they run around on the streets at night."

"Nothing's going to happen." I said convinced that I was right and that she was just speaking from a narrow range of experience.

More of these occasional clashes of perception began to come. More recently like within the last couple of weeks there have been other incidents. One occurred when my grandma thought that it would be better if everyone in our house didn't eat all the groceries so soon after they are brought home.

use a
spell
check!

"There's sure nothing to eat." I said

"Well if it wouldn't all get eaten right away after it gets here I could make something for you to eat." She said.

"We can just go buy more. Why should we just sit around and not eat just so there will be food in the house. If there's food we're going to eat it." I said. She doesn't ever seem to agree with me though. These are just a few examples of how things are changing between us.

I feel that our relationship is still very strong. She and I still ^{share} have a great deal of understanding ~~for each other~~ and we both hold our relationship in high regards. It means a lot to both of us because of everything we have been through in the stages preceding the present. However, the relationship is changing. Our differences in the way we see the world these days have caused me to see that not everything in our relationship is always going to be good. That fact is good in itself though. Now that I have gotten away from the way I always looked at things the way I used to with her I have discovered new ideas and have been able to enjoy new things that are uniquely mine. Thus, showing how we have reached the Differentiating stage. We still have a good time together but now I can broaden my horizons with my new found individuality.

well done
A+

only 3 pages please