The Art of Communicating Without Words  
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Whenever I hear someone say “actions speak louder than words,” I think of one person in particular. I think of my grandmother who suffered a stroke that left half of her body paralyzed and speech abilities limited just two years before I was born. My mother tells me she used to sing as loud as she wanted and tell stories that every person in the room would lend an ear to. She tells me of all the times they laughed until they cried and how everyone lit up just being in her presence. Although I have never been able to experience these things fully--never listened to her tell of growing up in Europe, dying her hair purple, finding love with my grandfather overseas, and eventually raising my father--she has shown me who she is through simply being herself. She will rearrange an entire room of furniture walking with a cane in one hand and a heavy chair in the other to show her determination. She will steal wine bottles off of airplane carts to show just how far she will go to feed her deep love for fermented grapes. She will nod her head to any music I play to show that she enjoys being together whatever the music may be or whatever we may be doing. We have been there for each other through everything. I have felt her tired hands caress my sunken head as I lay next to her watching The Price is Right. I have admired her as she silently flips through pages of old photos taken by my grandfather--her face lighting up as she remembers people and places she has not seen or thought of in decades. I have pushed her wheelchair through malls, in and out of elevators, and across bridges in the countryside of Norway where she grew up. I held her hand as I fought through tears while saying goodbye to my grandfather, her being the only person to give me any genuine comfort in that time of sadness. Even without having the normal relationship that others do, I would not change what we have even the slightest. I know that with just the few words she can muster, she has taught me so much about life and about myself. She has shown me the most special form of love I have ever experienced and she is the most beautiful person I will ever know. She is my grandmother and she is the reason I believe in the art of communicating without words.