A mother is a key aspect of every child’s life. She is there to teach you lessons, make you laugh, be a shoulder to cry on, and help you to grow both physically and mentally. She should be there for all the key events- first day of high school, graduation, weddings, and grandchildren.

Although in most cases, it is common to have your mother at these events, my mom’s experience was a bit different. At the age of fourteen my mom’s mother, my grandmother, died due to breast cancer. My mom was suddenly the oldest of four, and left with a single father to provide for all of them. I may not have been there to experience the pain and sorrow of the loss of my grandmother, I still see the effects of it today. By losing her mother, my mom has been shaped into the woman she is today.

As I said before, my mom was the oldest of four. Her youngest sibling, my uncle, had just turned four when my grandma died. My mom suddenly became the primary caretaker of her siblings by making dinner, helping with homework, and making sure they were in bed on time. This made her grow up quickly, but also changed the relationship she had with her family members. She wasn’t simply an older sister anymore, but was viewed more as a mother. It may have been hard for her, but my mom took this as an opportunity to seize life. With her time in high school she became an editor of the school yearbook, was homecoming and prom queen, and was also part of the student council. At a very young age my mother became a professional at multi-tasking and time management; skills that usually takes every other mother many years of practice.

Since my mom had already had experience in partaking in motherly duties, I understand why she has raised me so well. She has a way of doing things and those things get done. Meals are made in a timely manner and done to perfection, all the laundry is completed one day out of the week, and the house is spotless. I have always been grateful for a mom that has a sense of organization and stability.

Our relationship on a personal level has been different due to the way my mother was raised. Ever since I hit the age of thirteen, every year spent with my mother is an extra blessing. Since she didn’t get this time period to spend with her mom, this is a new experience for both of us. She gets to experience the firsts in a new way, which is exciting for the both of us. Every little hurdle or time marker is that much more important to her as well. It was important for her to drop me off on my first day of high school, help me pick out a dress for my first high school dance, and even answer my
questions on boy problems. And not to mention my whole senior year experience with getting ready for prom, graduation, and college—she’s loving every second of being around. I find that she is more wise on every situation where I need guidance because it high school she had to figure everything out on her own, or with the help of her single father. She has instilled in me a sense of modesty and old school parenting, and even though it may be a challenge at times, I love her for it. Every year that we both get older, it’s viewed as an extra blessing, because we have been granted time together that she never got to spend with her mother.

Due to my grandmother’s battle with cancer, it also brings up anxiety and stress for my mother. Every year she gets a screening to make she there are no possible cancer signs, and is preparing me to start these screenings in the next few years. Every strange lump, bump, or lasting signs of a flu can result in a trip or call to the doctor. Vitamins are an everyday aspect of my life, and let me tell you, there are a lot of them. I know it’s only because of past experiences and to make sure I am healthy so a majority of the time I go with it. Cancer’s huge effects on my mom’s life shaped the way I am taken care of on a daily basis, which is something I have learned to accept.

Cancer has been given the reputation to take and ever give. It takes away a person’s health, life, and loved ones. Although cancer took away my chance to meet my grandmother, I also received the greatest gift—my mother. Without losing her mother she wouldn’t be the woman she is today. My mom received her confidence from this experience, having to learn to be strong in the choices she makes every day that affects not only herself, but her family. She has become courageous from learning at a very young age to survive without somebody to hold her hand along the way. I get the opportunity to see this beautiful human every day, and I am already dreading the days we won’t be able to spend together. I get nervous just thinking that she won’t be here forever, but I am blessed for the days and memories we do have, knowing that not every girl gets this experience. Cancer may have taken a mother, but cancer also created the mother I have today.

Amanda Osborn