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Introduction

A professor once remarked that I didn't ask questions; I asked answers. He said that when I asked a question, I just wanted to confirm that I knew the answer. One day we had a chance to talk. He explained that news reporters ask questions more often to get confirmation rather than information. If they learned how to ask questions, they would get more information and be able to write a more factual and accurate report.

He said that reporters ask questions with an agenda in mind. They want a story, not the facts. If you wanted directions to a restaurant, you would want simple directions. You don't need all the scenic details, bumps in the road, and names of all the people you might meet along the way. Just give me the facts.

The professor turned out to be a great mentor in my business and professional career. I learned to be a better listener. The look over his glasses was all I needed to see. I learned to listen in order to get information and not to respond. I learned how to seek knowledge, how to ask questions in order to get information, not confirmation.

We need to go back and listen to our children. Their questions are pure (often profound) and based on a certain natural curiosity. They don't ask what we are having for dinner. They just want to know, "When can we eat?" Just the facts. This story is about the simple questions that children ask. They see something, and they ask a question. They don't have an agenda other than, "Keep it short, Grandpa. I don't need a lecture."

Grandpas are very special people in our family. They are looked up to for all the answers, but they know that with all their experiences, they still don't have all the answers. What grandpas

do have is life experience, both personal and by observation of others, which translates into wisdom.

Being a grandfather gives us a second chance at being a dad without all the day-to-day duties of being a dad. Fathers get one chance at being a dad. They get their training from watching their own father. How did Dad lead, teach, and support the family? He established the moral foundation for his children. He supported them when things were tough and coached them to succeed. His relationship with Mom, with his parents, and with siblings would be an example for his children. He set the example for the family. Good or bad, the lesson was taught and would be used in the next generation.

Even though this book is about grandpas, there can't be a grandpa without a grandma. This may be a simplification of the family unit, but I believe that the two parents make up the family leadership. They complement and support each other and must step up just as any team members support the rest of the team. It's not just another game; it is the only game. Parents get one chance to raise their children. They want to get it right.

In those circumstances when there is a single-parent family unit, the responsibility to lead, teach, and support is on that single parent. In those cases, the grandparents can be helpful, but the responsibility still rests on the parent. As tough as it might be, it can be done.

We hear every day of children from a single-parent family unit that went on to become successful. Conversely, we hear of children that blame their failures in life on their early and current family circumstances. We are where we are today based on the decisions that we have made in the past. The family unit, two parents or a single parent, is only one element in the development of children. It is the place where they learn. It is the classroom, one teacher or two. What is taught in the classroom is the foundation. How the child uses that information will determine and distinguish the child's future.

What is a Grandpa?

This is a story about a grandfather and his grandson Andy. You may know an Andy and likely have a grandfather in your life. He is just a typical grandpa. But grandpas are interesting birds. They sit, they listen, and they decide when to talk. They understand that there are two or more sides to every argument. They understand that perception may cloud wisdom. They understand that their opinion is based on knowledge and wisdom, but that wisdom does not always prevail. And they understand that if their wisdom does not prevail, the consequences of one's actions are borne by the actor.

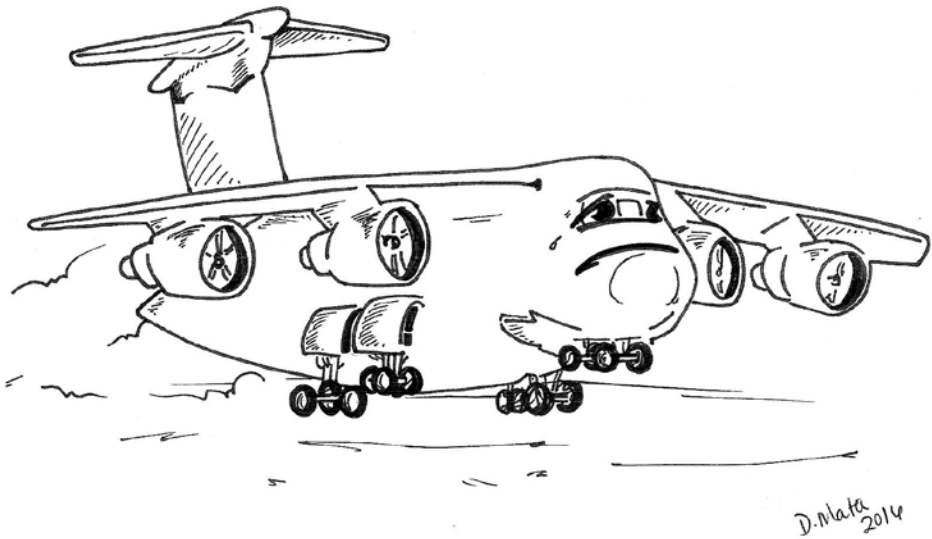
Sometimes Grandpa's message is a few words. Sometimes the message involves the whole lecture with a PowerPoint presentation. Well, maybe not that intense, but at least the whole lecture. Grandpas are beyond trying to impress people. They know who they are. They look to understand people and see where they might be able to help them, if they'll listen. They try to anticipate the challenges that their grandchildren will face and give them the tools to persist.

What is neat about being a grandpa is that he was raised by a mom and dad, he has raised a mom and dad himself, with grandma's help, and has nearly completed the grandfather's post-grad training program taught by grandma. He has learned that he can get the last word in, so long as it is "Yes, dear."

Grandpas get a second chance at being a dad. Dads only get one chance to learn how to be a dad. Now, kids have two grandpas from whom to learn. It's not a competition. It's called the diversification of wisdom. The kids can decide who is "more" right. That's why, from grandpas' perspective,

the moral, ethical, and family values should coincide. The knowledge, experience, and wisdom of each grandpa should support and complement the family values lessons.

Children will relate, respect, and respond to Grandpa as a reflection of their parents' respect for Grandpa. The author sees this in children who come for treatment. Even though they may be sick or in pain, some children are respectful while others are commanding and disrespectful. If they are that way with a doctor, even though a stranger but someone who can help them, then they are likely to act that way with most adults with whom they encounter. They learn this from their parents. If the parents are teaching the right values, the child gets the help that he needs, and he is most likely to listen to Grandpa.



Chapter 1

Mixed Emotions

Grandpa sat in his chair quietly watching the events unfold. He had received a CD from his grandson Andy's friend, and he was anxious to take a look.

Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, came across the screen and a military formation was assembling. The airplane was huge. The tail section slowly raised, and four soldiers in full dress uniforms stood at the top of the ramp. Behind them, rows of coffins could be seen. What was this? Grandpa's heart sank. No. This can't be.

"Andy! Andy!" he shouted at the TV.

Slowly, each coffin, draped with the American flag, was brought down to the tarmac. The soldiers were at attention, saluting their fallen comrades. One by one. Grandpa just

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stared at the screen. Not a word. He thought, they gave their all and a salute from their comrades in arms was all the thanks they needed. To them it was worth it.

The Other Side

Grandpa finally saw the other side. In Vietnam, he was on the AF surgical team in the Mekong Delta and saw the carnage of war. In Saigon, he saw truckloads of coffins, every Friday, waiting to go to the flight line. They were to be loaded on the C-141 transport planes and taken back stateside to waiting, grieving families.

Every day, the dispensary processed 50 to 100 wounded soldiers who were the lucky ones. They were also headed for the flight line, but their destination would be to military hospitals for treatment and rehabilitation.

Seeing the video at Dover and the flag-draped coffins brought back a lot of memories. Andy and Grandpa had talked about Vietnam on many occasions. As Andy became a teenager, he wanted to know more about the war. In school, the teachers taught them that the Vietnam War was wrong and that the United States should never have been involved. Grandpa would get so upset.

One time Andy asked, “Grandpa, why would the government send us to battle if we weren’t supposed to be there? There were fifty thousand men and women killed and hundreds of thousands wounded in that war.”

“Andy, let me tell you about war,” he said.

Grandpa on War

Grandpa explained that we have had wars ever since our country was formed. There are books on warfare and books

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on individual wars. Grandpa didn't talk too much about why wars were fought. He just felt that if we send our men and women to fight on behalf of our country, they should be given all the support needed to do their job. He said that soldiers and their generals fight wars, but politicians start and end them. It is easy for politicians to start a war. They don't have any skin in the game. If they had to lead from the front, their attitude would change.

Grandpa remembered a president who had tears for people caught in domestic gun violence but wouldn't acknowledge the wounded or deceased soldiers he commanded. Politicians end wars when it is politically expedient, when it is more comfortable to talk than to fight.

He also recalled another president, George Bush, who took his staff to the Vietnam memorial late one night just before he gave the order to start the first Middle East war involving Iraq and Kuwait. He was a president who was a WWII vet and understood the sacrifice that he was asking these young men and women to make. He had tears in his eyes before he sent them into battle.

When Politicians Fight Wars

Grandpa said that in Vietnam, they would drop leaflets announcing when the B-52 bombers were going to drop their bombs. The enemy fighters were not allowed to read these leaflets.

The leaflet police would watch, and if an enemy fighter picked up a leaflet, they were put on probation and not allowed to participate in the war for at least a year.

The civilians were allowed to read the leaflets, knew when and where the bombing would occur, and could seek safety. The enemy fighters, because they weren't allowed to read the

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leaflets, had to stay in place and wait for the bomb to drop on them.

Andy just shook his head. “Grandpa, you’re kidding me, right?”

“Yes, Andy. The villages did not have leaflet police. We just trusted that the enemy would not read them.”

“If you told them when and where you were going to bomb, then how did you kill the enemy fighters?” he asked.

“We didn’t. But we probably scared them.”

Grandpa’s pitch was that if you send a soldier to fight, let him do the job you sent him to do. Don’t put him in harm’s way and then tie his hands to fight. Grandpa was concerned that our war in the Middle East was not too different than Vietnam. We put men and women in harm’s way, but the “rules of engagement,” written by the bureaucrats for the politicians, prevented them from doing the job that we sent them to do. And just like the leaflet program in Vietnam, the enemy fighters in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan were not allowed to read our rules of engagement.

The enemy fighters were not allowed to search the Internet that we built, with the technology that we developed, with the computers and phones made in the United States, to print out and distribute our rules of engagement. They were not allowed to know that if they shot at one of our soldiers, the soldier could not shoot back until he could identify the enemy fighter and make sure that there were no women or children that could get hurt during a firefight.

The enemy fighters were not allowed to know that if they launched a rocket from an area in a town and it killed one of our serviceman, we had to make sure that civilians were safe

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before we engaged the fighters. We explained that we wanted the enemy fighters to stay in place until we could engage them. We just had to be sure that the women and children were out of the way.

Andy just shook his head. He was sixteen now, and he could understand Grandpa's humor.

"That sounds like the leaflet program all over again."

"Same thing, except now we don't have to drop leaflets. We just give them the website where they can look it up on their own."

"Was that more humor, Grandpa?" Andy asked. "Sadly, yes," he replied.

Andy chose to serve his country.

When Andy joined ROTC in college, he asked Grandpa if it was a good decision. It was a puffed-up moment for Grandpa. He was proud of Andy. His country would be proud of him.

Grandpa and Andy talked about a lot of things, but as Andy learned more about military tactics and strategies, he began to understand war. The *Art of War* by Sun Tzu was a popular reference. "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting" and "Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories" were Grandpa's favorite quotes from the book.

He talked about being responsible as a soldier and representative of our country. It was an honor to wear our uniform. It was something that every soldier wears with pride. The soldier's chest is strong with muscle, but it's true strength, dedication and determination, comes from the pride and honor to serve. It's not until you wear the uniform

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that you will understand. With each new uniform that Andy put on, he understood. Grandpa was right. You had to wear it to know.

Grandpa was eighty-six now. He didn't keep up with things like he used to. Why did Andy's friend send him the video? Why didn't Andy send it or even call him? What was so important about all these caskets draped with our flag?