

# What I'd like Sam to learn from his great grandfather

Hello. I'm Andrew. Dr. Berkas was my grandfather.

I'm grateful that grandpa got to meet his first great-grandson, my son, Samuel. Sam is one year old, too young to keep first-hand memories of his great-grandfather. So I got to thinking about what I'd like Sam to learn from and about his great-grandfather, when he's older. I'd like to tell you just a few of the things I'd like Sam to learn from him.

## Work ethic

I'd love for Sam to learn his great-grandfather's **work ethic**.

Grandpa had this **lake house** in Indian River, Michigan. I called it the "vancation house" because I'd be stuffed into a minivan for eight hours to get there. A lot of my memories of grandpa are about that place. I remember a well-stocked workbench and so many projects. You didn't want to walk by grandpa too slowly, or inevitably you'd hear "**I've got a job for you**" and any of an endless supply of projects. **Seaweed raking** and hauling with the tractor. He would have projects involving walking into the lake in these waders, re-arranging the shoreline rocks, getting at the seaweed that hadn't quite come to shore yet.

I remember watering his tomato garden. One summer we knocked down a disused outbuilding together. I have some fuzzy memory involving drainage ditches and some pipe snake tool for clearing a drainage line. I remember painting the dock, and the stairs down the hill, and the deck. I remember projects involving pavers.

And it wasn't just us grandchildren who were drawn into Grandpa's projects. I remember my father and uncles gathering with grandpa in the garage to **build a trailer for the tractor**, what turned out to be a big and useful trailer we use to this day, and not just for road crew.

**Grandpa worked hard.**

## Gratitude

I'd love for Sam to learn his great-grandfather's **gratitude**. Grandpa was thankful.

We'd have these bonfires down by the lakeshore and make **s'mores**. Grandpa was always interested in his grandchildren making him a smore and was thankful for them, mostly no matter how they turned out.

He had a habit of calling most meals "**the best meal I've ever had**". If they were really bad, he just wouldn't say anything. I remember one such meal at an Outback steakhouse. It was the best steak he'd ever had. I remember being just old enough to cynically think "Really? At Outback?" Grandpa

wasn't cynical. He was thankful, thankful for his meals, thankful for his family, thankful to God.

## Humility

I'd love for Sam to learn his great-grandfather's humility.

I remember **Grandma had this whistle**. And when she wanted Grandpa to come back to the lake house, she'd walk out on the deck, and blow her whistle.

Not every man would cope at being whistled for. Grandpa saw himself as a man who serves others. He came when whistled for. I want Sam to think about what his attitude will be when his family calls for him.

## Values and patience

I'd love for Sam to learn to, like his great-grandfather, focus on what's important, to value family and to provide for children.

I remember grandpa's lake house being a welcoming place, a friendly place. It wasn't just grandpa's projects. I remember **a box of toys** and going straight for it on arrival.

I remember so many **piles of sand** for playing in, building in, and use in projects filling in the low spots and on road crew repairing the private road.

Those piles of sand made up north what it was. I remember one summer we had a heron living in the corner of the property, that was neat to see. Grandpa gave me a place to grow up with that, to grow up catching frogs and minnows and swimming in the lake.

I remember one winter when we were all sick with the flu. I think that was the winter my cousins Jeff, Jon, and I entertained ourselves with what were doubtless very loud epic nerf blaster battles in the lower level of the lake cottage. You know what I don't remember? I don't remember being yelled at to knock it off, to keep the racket down.

**I don't have a single memory of grandpa raising his voice.** Not the time he gave my sister and me **stuffed animals** and we immediately, immediately, started fighting each other about what to name them. Not when his neighbors permanently "**borrowed**" **his tools**, even when marked. Not any time.

Not even when I scraped, dented, **smashed his van** against a tree on the way back from the dump. He wanted his grandchildren to learn to drive and function and thrive, he didn't so much let on he cared about the van. It was just a thing. People, relationships, these are just more important, they were just more important to grandpa. I'd love for Sam to learn that from his great-grandfather.

## Conclusion

I'll always be grateful grandpa got to meet his first great-grandson. I'd have liked Sam to have had a

chance to form his own memories of his great-grandfather, to learn his work ethic, gratitude, humility, values, and patience first hand. I know I'll tell Sam about his great-grandfather when he's old enough, and I hope he can be a role model to Sam as he has been to me and to my cousins.