

I am Ariel, Granny Razel's oldest great-grandchild. I was lucky enough to meet 3 of my great-grandparents, but I only had the opportunity to develop a real relationship with Granny Razel, and I'll share some of my memories of the time I spent with her.

A few years ago, my siblings and I started visiting Granny Razel every shabbat morning. When the weather was nice, we would sit together on the porch, watching the garden and the birds. Her knowledge of botany is legendary in our family, but the garden was not a time for lessons - it was just for calmly listening and looking.

When it would start to get cold, we'd sit inside - at first, usually in the living room, where Granny Razel would sit in her embroidered armchair, and we'd sit on the couches playing with the pillows.

Eventually, we started bringing Granny Razel over for lunch. I think when this started, she would only bring a cane, but that was switched for a walker, and eventually a wheelchair. That's how one of our weekly rituals got started - we would encourage her to walk, pushing the wheelchair as far as she could manage. At some point, Granny Razel would suggest we start to push her, and thus our negotiations would begin - another block, another house, until she would announce that she was sitting down, and we would push her the rest of the way. While I was perhaps too tough, I also appreciated her little smiles as we went through our ritual each week.

On weeks when Granny Razel wouldn't come for lunch, we would make kiddush - and eventually would bring challah too - and sit and talk. Granny Razel would ask us about our lives - often repeating questions, but still asking things that were relevant to each of us. It was always tough to satisfy her interest in our plans, especially as we got older and started making bigger decisions.

The most frequent thing she said was how much she missed Oompie. She would occasionally tell us stories about life in South Africa, and those were some of the moments when she got most emotional, beyond her always-calm and quiet mood. These Shabbat mornings were the most special moments I spent with Granny Razel.

Many of my memories of Granny Razel are associated with food. I still remember the gefilte fish, though I think I was too young to like it whenever she made it. When we would visit, there would be the white plastic container of chocolate chip cookies next to the fridge, and my siblings reminded me of her creamy scrambled eggs. We all still prefer twizzlers when they're stale because the bag in Granny's cupboard never sealed properly.

Of course, pride of place goes to her scones and mulberry tree that I would eagerly check for ripe mulberries every year.

More recently, I started going through some of Granny Razel's albums with her on Shabbat morning. She could often identify people I wouldn't even recognize.

Granny Razel was always calm and collected, continually expressed love for her family. A landline phone was pretty much the closest she ever got to using the internet, and I'm so lucky, and I know my siblings feel the same way, to have spent so many years able to spend time with Granny Razel.