

Picture this, you're seven years old attending your very first funeral, only you don't quite know what that means. Here are the things you do know: everyone is dressed in the same color (talk about a fashion disaster), your mom's mascara is running down her cheek, your grandpa is nowhere to be found, and you have a red tube of mini m&ms in your pocket. Good thing, because mom didn't stop at McDonald's before this, and you're starving.

You don't know anyone here except your family, but you spot grandpa! He's sleeping in a very uncomfortable-looking wooden box at the front of the room. Apparently this is a one-man play, and a nap is the opening scene. Mom takes you to see grandpa and you try to wake him up, but he must've taken a heavy dosage of Benadryl because he just. won't. wake. up. Mom tells you he passed away, and he won't ever wake up again.

You don't understand, but you do know he'll probably want some snacks when he wakes up from his nap, because you always love a post-nap snack. Luckily, his rigid bed has a secret snack drawer right above his chest! You place your red tube of mini m&ms in the drawer alongside various notes and other knickknacks and return to your seat.

You can stop imagining this scenario, because it's my actual experience as a first timer with death. Before my grandpa got sick, he would occasionally visit in his bright red Monte Carlo car with hugs and mini m&ms. While he wasn't too particular with the tube colors, he always made sure to bring a red one for me. If you couldn't tell, red was his favorite color, and I was his favorite grandchild.

Now, it's an unspoken tradition for my close friends and family to get me a red tube of mini m&ms whenever I have an important event coming up, or a birthday, or anything that would warrant the same sweet snack from my grandpa if he were still alive.

I carry an "emergency" tube in my backpack in case I get hungry between classes but haven't been able to bring myself to break the plastic seal on the lid. I promise this tube isn't 15 years old, and didn't come from my grandpa, but the sentiment remains the same. That tube will probably stay in my backpack until I graduate.

When I talk to people who knew my grandfather while he was alive, they often say I remind them of him. This is probably because I inherited the Morgan lead foot while driving and have earned my fair share of speeding tickets, but I like to pretend it's always intended as a compliment.

My grandpa's last name was Morgan, and so is mine. I was born with my dad's last name, but legally changed it to my mother's maiden last May. I did this for a variety of reasons, with the biggest ones being I cut contact with my father and feel no connection to my birth last name.

When you petition to change your last name for a reason unrelated to marriage or divorce, you can pick virtually any name to call yourself, it doesn't have to be a family name.

On the day of my name change court hearing, (yes, that's a thing), I prepared to give my reasons for why I felt I had to change my name. The judge didn't ask for the story behind the name I picked, and you didn't either, but I'm here to tell you anyway.

I always felt closer to my mom's side of the family and like I fit in better. I was never the favorite grandchild on my dad's side, or even in the top 5. My mom's family has a history of raising strong women, and my grandpa was no stranger to assisting that prophecy raising two girls of his own.

My name change was for me, but it carries the weight of all who come before me and all who will come after that will be raised the same way my grandpa helped raise my mom and aunt.

When I walked out of the court room that day in May, decree in hand, the first thing I had to do was walk to Wegmans and buy a red tube of m&ms. That day was probably my biggest life event so far, and it only felt right. My grandpa was definitely cheering me on for following through with that life-changing decision.