

My grandfather died on the sofa, in his home, as he was talking to an old friend who had come to visit. We knew he didn't have long left, because he'd been having issues and the doctors had said his heart was badly damaged after a number of heart attacks. He didn't know he'd had heart attacks and I'm not sure that he knew the end was nigh. Anyway, he died on the sofa with just my 77 year old grandmother and his old friend present.

I went to the house that night. I was on my last shift as a delivery driver for a Chinese takeaway and about to start a new job as research associate at university. The final shift ended early and I drove to my grandparents' house. He was still lying on the sofa at that point, although the undertaker had arranged to lift his body. I can remember, after the body was gone, that although the house was crowded, nobody would sit on the sofa. I was the first to sit on it because I reasoned it was going to have to happen sooner or later.

To die suddenly on your sofa, mid conversation with an old friend, with your wife there, your family raised and your life lived - I can't think of a better way to go. I used to be freaked out about it, but now I can see how he was actually lucky.

Reaching 42 and having all your teeth still intact and still white is also good. Years ago I took them for granted. The point is, perspectives change with time, age and experience. You can have a good quality of life or a bad one. Similarly, death can be kind or cruel to you.

Take nothing for granted.