Amelia Perez

I will begin by saying how grateful and fortunate I feel that I have had an opportunity to interview with, I will call her Mrs. Dee. Interviewing Mrs. Dee has provided me with a much more in depth look at our life, family, friends and changes that occur throughout our life span. She has reinforced my original beliefs on how our actions and the decisions that we make in life will forever affect what our life becomes or does not become. This is not to say we can or are in control of everything that comes our way. It’s just a constant thought, we must always be mindful of how we live and treat each other in our life.

Mrs. Dee was born in Manhattan New York on April 25, 1936. She is 75 years old with a birthday soon approaching. She was born to Mr. Beqir Ymer and Mrs. Mary Ymer. Mrs. Dee comes from a mixed ethnic back round. Her father was a practicing Muslim that was born in Albania. Her mom was French Canadian born in the United States and was raised as a Catholic. When asked to describe both her parents and feelings about them, there is quite a difference among them both. Mrs. Dee describes her father as being a very hard working man. As far back as she can remember he always knew him to work as a welder. She says her father was always very loving and easy going. As she thinks back she tells me “he was always good to all of my kids”. This is a very different than what she remembers her mother being toward her children. Becoming pregnant at the age of 17 was a problem in itself. Having children from a Hispanic man who was dark skinned was even more of a problem for Mrs. Dee’s mother. She states her father never shunned or treated any of her kids as if they were different. He loved them all the same. Mrs. Dee reports her father died sometime in the 70’s due to a pneumonia. At the time of his death he drank and smoked. Mrs. Dee reports her mom and father having a very big age difference between them, but not knowing the exact number of year between them. She states her parents had an arranged marriage. Because her mom was extremely poor as a young girl, she was allowed to marry such an older man who had three children of his own already. His previous wife had passed away. This was allowed with hopes she would have been taken care of and hopefully given a better life. Mrs. Dee’s mother had only achieved a junior high school education level. Mrs. Mary Ymer (mother to Mrs. Dee) lived as a house wife and had six additional children with Mrs. Dee’s father, giving them a total of nine children together. Mrs. Ymer was born on April, 15 1917 in Falls River Massachusetts. She died in 2009 at the age of 91 years old in a nursing home in Florida. At the time of her death she suffered from dementia and had complications after a hip surgery. She is described as being a very cold woman when Ms. Dee was growing up. She was not very motherly. Mrs. Dee says she believed her mother was this way because she resented having to become a wife and a mother so early in life. She said her mother had a hard life and never had a childhood. Mrs. Dee says she always felt as though her mother disliked her the most of all her kids, but wasn’t sure why it was her. As Mrs. Dee thinks back of memories of her mother, she tells me she would never forget the first question her mother asked her when she had her first child. She describes her mother as being very prejudiced. She says her mother’s first question was not ‘is the baby healthy’ it was not “is it a boy or a girl’. The first question was what color did it come out? At first Mrs. Dee reports her mother would have nothing to do with her children. Her father would sneak over to visit his grandchildren and bring them food because Mrs. Dee and her husband were very poor as well. As the years passed the children and her husband were tolerated by Mary Ymer. After the death of Mrs. Dee’s father Mary Ymer never lived anywhere very long. There were times when she lived with Mrs. Dee and her husband. She would move often between New York and Florida. She never had stable living arrangements. She did not have an income that would pay for an apartment so she mostly would rent a single room. Mrs. Dee says her mother insisted on living this way and was happy. She describes her mom as being a loner.

Mrs. Dee married Mr. Jerry May, 12 1953. As of today they have been married 58 years. Together they had 6 children, 5 boys and 1 girl. Their oldest child has passed away due to alcoholism. Mrs. Dee attended both grammar and high school in Williamsburg Brooklyn. Her highest education level was 1 year of high school. She gave birth to her first child at the age of 17. All 6 of her children were born during the “baby boom” era, therefore will contribute to our future fastest growing population (United States Census Bureau) Mrs. Dee never had a true profession however has worked various jobs. Some of them would include sales, waitress, factory and her last job as a receptionist. At the time when she was working a “career” was not the focus and furthering her education was not even a thought, making money was. As she thinks back to when her children were young she remembers being so poor with the constant thought of how will they ever make it? Her husband always worked more than one job. Many of them were factory jobs with low pay and no benefits. Considering all the hardships and struggles encountered, when asked about her feelings about being a parent, her words were “I love it”. She has 10 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. She was 42 years old when her first grandchild was born. Her age of retirement was 30 years old voluntary without any retirement benefits. At the time she retired her husband had a decent paying job, still without any benefits. She never thought about the future or getting old. Since retirement they have moved from a one family home and currently reside in senior public housing on the 14th floor of an elevator building. As the article “How to make it old York City” mentions New York City housing authority has begun to build senior developments but at snails pace. Mrs. Dee mentioned she was on a waiting list for her senior housing for nearly six years. She has currently lived there for approximately three years. She resides with her 82 year old husband. According to the text Social Forces and aging, Atchely (2004), most seniors live with their spouse or family member and not alone. They share the apartment with their small dog that constantly barks, however they refuse to part with. They currently live in Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn. Mrs. Dee says she goes out often and feels safe in her neighborhood. This is a neighborhood she has lived in for many years when her children were small. The only problem she reports is it can be a little loud during the summer, but doesn’t bother her much. She does not have a car but travels by bus and her granddaughter drives her around. Mrs. Dee suffers from a heart condition due to many years of smoking and poor eating habits. She suffered from a heart attack about 10 years ago and had recent surgery due to two major blood clots in her legs. Since her heart attack she no longer smokes however she admits to not being very mindful of her diet. She states not really having a clear understanding of what eating healthy is anymore. She is not clear with all the constant news reports on what is healthy one day and not the next. She says she just does the best with what she knows. Mrs. Dee is in need of a hearing aide, but has no physical disabilities and is very active. She enjoys baking, reading, looking through her family albums, cooking and listening to country music. She also enjoys babysitting her great-granddaughter from time to time and taking her out. She makes use of her community center and doesn’t indulge on T.V. shows. She expressed reading as a much better way to relax and unwind.

Mrs. Dee and her husbands only income source is social security benefits. She reports a combined income of less than 1500 a month and receives 200 in food stamps. Although after paying out all monthly expenses leaves them with very little Mrs. Dee reports no serious financial problems. In our interview she tells me she does in fact have many outstanding medical bills. Due to the fact they only have Medicare and no secondary insurance they still have a difference of what Medicare does not pick up. She explained to me she can not afford to pay the bills therefore she does not worry about them. In fact there are many things that Mrs. Dee does not worry herself about. Some of these things would include power of attorney in the event she become sick and can not care for herself. She nor has her husband established a will of any sort. She explained to me she is not afraid of dying but she does not think about it at all and has not made any preparations for it. She says “she takes things as they come”. She says she feels good and doesn’t worry about negative things. She makes all of her doctor appointments and takes care of her heath. Not only does she not think about her own death she does not think about the death of others or any illness. She says those things are depressing. She enjoys life day to day. She enjoys the simple things like shopping and spending time with her granddaughter, great-granddaughter and talking with her daughter on the phone.

Although she has many grandchildren and a few great-grandchildren she does not express a closeness or affection for any other than her granddaughter and her granddaughter’s daughter (her great-grand). When asked if her other grandchildren come to visit her, her response was only her oldest granddaughter. She expressed that she blamed herself for the way things are. She barely has a relationship with her grandchildren except for the one, her daughter’s daughter. She has no relationship with any of her living family members. Without getting to deep into the history, she tells me she blames her husband for the way their family has turned out. She tells me although her husband never left his family and was a hard worker and a good provider he also was the one who hurt and disappointed her most in life. She says if she could have done it all again she would have never married him. She describes him as a very controlling force in her life. As time past because he did not like her family he made it very hard for her to communicate with them. He would not “allow” them to call or come over their home. She allowed this she says because she didn’t feel like the arguments. Although she reports her husband never being physically abusive she says her was very emotionally abusive. She tells me she and her husband did not like their son’s girlfriends when they were teenagers. The girlfriends have since become their son’s wives. A lot of the time they wouldn’t be welcoming to the young ladies and even mean at times. This would eventually play a part in the relationship they would have with their grandchildren.

She expressed reminiscing often. Mrs. Dee says she thinks most of her parents and junior and high school days. She says she always believed and felt her mother disliked her most while her father loved her most. She thinks back of all her friends and how one of her best friends was stabbed to death at the train station that is closest to her home now. The happiest memory she says is when her kids were born. They never had much, but Mrs. Dee says she just loved being a mother. Her earliest memory and one she describes as one she would never forget is when she was about five years old. She says she had a kitten that she wanted to throw out the window, her brother stopped her but he stuttered from that day on. She says out of all her past and more recent memories, the memory that stands out the most is when her first born, her oldest son died due to alcoholism. At the time of his death she was 62 years old. She says she would have never thought she would out live her own child.

Although Mrs. Dee has some issues with her heath as far as her cardiovascular system she is a very active easy going woman. She has been through so much in life and maintains a welcoming, nurturing, and warm demeanor. She truly makes the best with what she has and has seem to have done that for much of her life. When comparing my interview with Butlers Characteristics on Aging I find there to be many similarities or truth to his theories.

1. *Change in the sense of time*. Mrs. Dee definitely is satisfied with her quality of life at this point and finds enjoyment in the “quality” of her life opposed to the quantity. She does not complain about health issues or pain, however expresses the things that bring happiness and things that she enjoys “the simple things” The future is not something that concerns her at this time living for the moment does.
2. *Tendency Toward Life Review*. I have identified some similarities pertaining to this characteristic. When Mrs. Dee speaks of her husband, and the fact that many family ties have been broken in the past. She proves a progressive return to the consciousness of past experiences in particular unresolved conflicts and her decisions when she allowed him to control her ties with her own family. Although there are similarities I do not find this characteristic to be completely accurate when describing Mrs. Dee. She does review her life; however she does not seem to allow it to overly concern her. She does not express any grief due to the unresolved conflicts.
3. *Attachment to the Familiar*. Mrs. Dee has proven this to be true. She has a very strong attachment to her records that her father recorded songs of him singing on back in Albania before Mrs. Dee was even born. She also expresses a strong attachment to her photo albums, especially those that carry memories of both her son who past and her father. She expressed feelings of both sadness and happiness when going through them.
4. *Conservatism of Continuity*. In expressing her love for cooking and baking, Mrs. Dee also shares her past down family receipts to her granddaughter. As a gift she has purchased a wooden box especially made to hold receipts and has filled it and given it to her granddaughter.
5. *Desire to Leave a Legacy*. Mrs. Dee has mentioned that although she doesn’t have much, she intends to give a string of pearls and earring’s to her great-granddaughter when she is old enough.
6. *Sense of Consummation or Fulfillment in Life*. In interviewing Mrs. Dee it is very clear that most of her life was lived being poor and without much. This does not interfere with her overall satisfaction with her life. All of her children have families and live productive lives. I believe when she reflects back on her life her children are what she takes most pride in. She takes a lot of pride in her children, and at the hardest and most difficult times always loved being a mother. This provides her with the feeling of knowing she has always done her very best when all odds where against them.

**Reference Page**

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