

Imagine you are 13 years old. Getting ready for school in the morning, and you go to grab the milk from the fridge for your cereal, but you can't find it. After minutes scrambling to find it, you find it inside the oven, empty. This is just one of the many things young Amanda had to deal with growing up. Her mother, Ann, was diagnosed with dementia at the age of 52, and left young Amanda to deal with the repercussions.

Finding her mother confused, lost, or sleeping on the kitchen floor was the normal for Amanda. It's something that not really a lot of people talk about. Having to grow up quick and take care of their mother, sacrificing her youth to aid a sick mother.

Going to school, work, and finishing homework was a difficult task on its own, but also having to watch over mom made it dreadful at times. When asked the question, what did you do to help, she nodded her head and said, I had to do a lot. From helping her get dressed, cook, bathing, and changing her diapers.

She explains how dementia is the smoothing of the brain, and how it can commonly effect memory, language, thinking skills, and the ability to complete everyday tasks. When Amanda was still taking care of her mother, I asked how else she would help her mom with daily tasks. She replied that she would try to leave sticky notes around the house with simple instructions to try and trigger any memory response.

Living with someone who has dementia can only be described as difficult. Amanda's father, Bob, didn't have the same emotional response to Ann's sudden illness. He chose to direct his emotion/frustration toward Amanda and become distant. This is what caused a strain on the relationship between Bob and Amanda.

It's been a tough 3 years since dementia has taken its full effect on Ann. Amanda has since placed her in a nursing home, where she can receive the proper care and support, she needs and well deserves. When asked if this was an appropriate decision, Amanda was hesitant to answer. She responded that yes it was a necessary advancement to better her care. Nobody wants to put their own mother in a home, but when it gets to the point you can't go to work or school without an incident happening, it was a critical move. One that everyone has gained a piece of mind from.

After a full year of Ann residing in a home, it's an agreeable medium. Ann is safe, happy, content, and surrounded by people in similar situations and that want the best for her. As for Amanda, she is now able to attend school full-time, maintain a job, and still visits her mother Ann at least twice a week.