

Joe Jacobsen
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Dear Fredric Winkowski and Frank D. Sullivan,

I have always been fascinated with airplanes since I was in preschool. My teacher, Ms. Dawn always enjoyed my curiosity for planes. I remember taking toy jets and rockets into school for show and tell. My parents were especially supportive of my obsession over airplanes. My dad always bought books full of information, which didn't really interest me at that young age. I was too busy playing with my toys. However, one book really caught my eye. I called it the "Gold Book" or the "Big Book". The real title was 100 Planes 100 Years and it made me want to become a pilot. My dad would always sit down and read it to me after I had played for hours. I would be about ready to drift off to sleep, but I would force myself to keep my eyes open. Every page was more fascinating than the last. I would always look at the pictures of the planes, studying the shapes and sizes. It was simply the best book I had ever *looked* at.

My dad read that book to me for a good year until I became more interested in other things. I put the book down for a while, but every now and then I caught myself staring at those same planes over and over. Sometimes I would actually read the captions,

skipping the words I couldn't make out. I slowly started to learn more and more. In 3rd grade, that book disappeared from my line of sight for a while. I became more involved with sports, particularly baseball. The thought of airplanes was now history.

In 5th grade, I did a project on airplanes, which made me remember the "Gold Book". For the first time, I started thoroughly reading the book. I remember my dad reminding me when he used to read the book to me. It made me think of when planes were everything to me. After reading the book, I learned gigantic amounts of information and I was able to make a pretty awesome project. Again, that book started to attract me. Any time I wasn't busy, I would wonder into my room and pick up the book.

In the summer of 2015, my dad was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, a type of bone cancer. I found out in Northern Michigan, where my two older sisters and my mom were enjoying our stay at our cabin. My older cousins had just took my sister Olivia and I out to Applebee's. My mom called Olivia and said to come back to the cabin. It didn't seem like a big deal until I saw my mom balling while my grandma comforted her. I remember looking at the ground and shaking uncontrollably after my mom told me. I was certain that he would die.

Waiting was the hardest part. I didn't know if I would see my dad again as my grandpa drove me and my two sisters to Fort Wayne Indiana. I remember thinking about how unrealistic it was that my dad had cancer. The next morning, we caught a flight to Chicago. Despite my depression, I was able to find some entertainment in the takeoff of

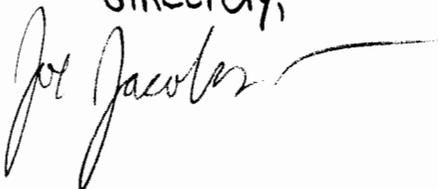
the flight (my personal favorite part of flying). From Chicago, we flew to my hometown, Seattle. My dad looked the same he did when I saw him a week earlier, except this time there were tears in his eyes. I was overcome with sadness and immediately started to cry as I hugged him.

About a month later, things for him became bad. He couldn't walk anymore and we had to rent a wheel chair. I took on a whole new life style. I was always helping him put his clothes ^{on} I pushed him in his wheel chair and got food for him. I started spending more time with my dad and less time with friends. I can't tell you the amount of times I've heard him scream in the middle of the night because the pain was so extreme. Sometimes I wouldn't sleep because I would be worried that if I woke up, I wouldn't have a dad.

My dad spent at least 2 weeks at the hospital throughout the whole process of recovery. I would come home from school and he wouldn't be there. It was very rare that I got to talk to him in October. He was too busy getting blood tests or chemo. I remember finishing my homework one day after school. I went down to my room to change out of my school clothes when I saw a gold book peeking out from underneath my dresser. I reached down to grab the book and began to read. Thoughts and memories swirled in my head. I remembered my old bed, with red covers and an airplane pillow case. I remember all the nights my dad would tuck me in and read 100 planes 100 years. Anytime I couldn't see the planes, I would pull the book back towards me. This book

really helped me think of my dad anytime I couldn't be around him. I am really thankful not only for the information it provided, but for what it reminded me of: my dad.

My dad is now almost fully recovered, and even to this day, I still peek at the same book I did back in preschool. Who knows, maybe I will be a pilot one day.

Sincerely,

Joe Jacobsen