By Anna Forman-Greenwald

My dad was a man who bristled at convention. His childhood was certainly unconventional due to his congenital heart defect, among other things. As a dad, he was far from the norm. He and my mom shared childcare duties (not all that typical when I was growing up), taking turns seeing clients so one of them could always be home with us. While this gave Abe and me ample time with our dad to play games and watch TV, we were also subjected to his feeble attempts at 'cooking' which inevitably led to cereal for dinner. But he believed that silliness and fun were an integral part of parenting and never took himself too seriously. When I became an adult living nearby in Philly, my dad would immediately rearrange his schedule if I said I was free, just so he could spend time with me, oftentimes just shooting the shit.

My dad was certainly not a conventional grandfather, as evidenced by his preferred nom de 'Granddude'. It's hard to imagine anyone more suited for granddudehood. He spent hours rocking baby Sage to sleep, singing made up songs. When I needed childcare so I could work, he would take Sage to the now defunct Wells Fargo museum among other urban adventures. He devoutly and without complaint listened to Harold's infinite Frederick stories and happily enabled his LEGO addiction. Just being in the company of his sweet and brilliant grandchildren was heaven for him.

My dad always told me my calling was psychotherapy, even as a teenager. I tried to forge my own path but was inevitably called to the family business, even though my uber supportive parents for some reason seemed to think me capable of anything. My form of rebellion was becoming a social worker instead of a psychologist. I learned partly through osmosis just by growing up with my parents. As a child I wasn't aware that not all parents lead with empathy, showing me and my brother that there's nothing wrong with feeling your feelings and 'it's alright to cry', which he used to sing to me regularly. So even though I figured out at a pretty young age that I was more emotionally mature than my dad, he was always 100% emotionally available and present. How fortunate Abe and I were, not

only to be **told** we were loved but also to be **shown** regularly and unwaveringly by both our parents. It wasn't perfect, but it was most definitely more than good enough (shrink joke intended).

I had the privilege, along with my mom and Abe, of being with my dad as he took his last breaths at home, surrounded by the people he loved, instead of alone in the hospitals of his youth. After, I went into their home office to take a soothing breath of my own. For the first time, I saw a Rilke quote taped to the wall, written in my dad's handwriting:

LET EVERYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU
BEAUTY AND TERROR
JUST KEEP GOING
NO FEELING IS FINAL