



In Honor of Mother's Day

By Alexander Ben-Israel

When I walked into the living room recently there was my older son Daniel looking at a picture of my mom. "I miss her," he said with tears running down his cheeks. I gave him a big, long hug and said quietly, "I miss her very much too, everything around me triggers a memory of her."

My mom died just a few short months ago. She was a precious mom I was blessed to have. She loved me the special, unconditional love a parent knows.

Sunday, May 13th is Mother's Day; a first in my life without my mom. The feeling is still new and frequently I need time to orient myself to the reality that she's no longer just a phone call away.

All my life, my mom was part of everything in my world. From when she built a place to grow—a safe place, warm and comfortable, to ultimately help me create my own place for my family and my kids to grow.

I am today what her care, trust and encouragement made me. Thinking about her, and how proud she was to see and know that she, in the long-run, shaped my having grown into a less traditional father to my children. Intuitively, she knew early on, that there was a good chance for me to mature into a father who either sits in the waiting room, or on the golf course playing the back nine while his child is born versus being in the delivery room with my wife during the births of our three children. So from the beginning my mother knew me and prepared me to change a diaper and snuggle my baby.

My mom and my wife enriched my life as a father by guiding me to bond with my babies from birth on, not delaying bonding, and waiting until my kids were old enough to start playing ball. My mom taught me about girls, and so when my little girl was born she was more than an afterthought because my mom took the time to teach me about girls. When I look at my son, who'll be eighteen in a few months, it warms my heart to see the intimate bond he has with his mom—how close they are and how she is his confidant.

When I reached a certain age and began reacting to peer pressure and feared being labeled a "mama's boy," my mom made a point and clarifying that all boys are mama's boys, since if it were not for the moms, there were no boys, period! And so being a "mama's boy" did not hurt my standing among peers.

I always loved my mom and now, just a few months since she died I know that will never change. And just as my son, Daniel, I too look at her picture and say, "I miss you mom." Tears run down my cheek. I miss our talks, I miss her guidance, and I miss her unique, caring perspective. Most of all, I miss the way she made me feel.

She was a wonderful teacher. My mom had a gentle soul, a sweet spirit and was generous. She was my best friend. I lament not having spent more time with my mom. I feel fortunate for having had a mom who took time to listen and loved me, unconditionally, just the way I am. My mom, in her actions, taught me

unconditional love, and I'm working hard that my kids experience the feeling of being loved, just as my mom did for me.

Mama, I think of you every day, I close my eyes and see your beautiful face and smile.

In a quiet moment in the my kitchen, I hear your admonishing voice when I am tempted to drink milk from the jug. I feel your embrace when you greeted me after returning home from a trip, or just came by to visit. Mama, I miss you. I love you.



Alexander Ben-Israel is the Executive Director at the Stafford, A Boutique Retirement Community opening in Lake Oswego, February 2008. He can be reached at abenisrael@avamere.com.

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Kirsten Crowley, M.D., Pediatrics
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