

Erin Dunn
Community Comment
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This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

On this Tuesday before Mother's Day, I feel inspired to talk about my mom.

Like many moms, my mother was funny, infuriating, strict, indulgent, perfect and flawed.

I say was. I lost my mom on New Year's Day 2012 after a years-long battle with dementia.

I am the youngest of four children--seems funny to say children since I'm nearly 60—and was essentially an only child at home beginning in seventh grade.

My mom was trained as a nurse, but was thrust into motherhood 10 months after her wedding day.

Near the end of my eighth grade year, my mom opened a gift shop with a friend and all of a sudden I had a working mom. She was a great role model because she loved what she was doing and, because she had good taste, the store was a big hit—THE place to go for birthday and bridal gifts, as well as home décor. When her partner moved away, my mom became the sole owner...And, my primary employer.

Although I didn't want to admit it at the time, my mom was a huge influence on my life—both in big ways and little ways.

She had two mantras she regularly shared with me that impact me to this day.

The first one was “Dare to be Different.” She said it constantly. This was in the 70s when being different wasn’t as en vogue as it is now. I took it to heart and wore vintage clothing with shoulder pads before it was mainstream, had the latest short hair cuts, played Baritone sax, and embraced my interests that ranged from sports to theater and everything in between. There seemed to be a caveat waiting however—dare to be different as long as she approved. But it worked.

The second mantra—I was endlessly being told “There’s no Hurry.” What did that mean? My siblings had three weddings in 18 months and my mother didn’t want any one of them to happen. First my brother, then my sister left college after two years to get married, and then suddenly, the other sister got married and moved to Colorado after one semester of community college. So, I heard “there’s no hurry” from the time I was 10 years old.

Today they would all say mom was right—they were too young. And there was no hurry.

I’ve never been married and have never wanted to be married. There was a time when I wanted to want to be married but once I admitted that marriage wasn’t for me, a burden lifted and I’ve embraced the single-but-in-a-relationship lifestyle with no regrets.

Other little things my mom passed on to me: not liking symmetry in design, the love of sharp scissors and an appreciation for good customer service.

To all the moms out there now with whatever your definition of motherhood is—I salute you. Happy Mother’s Day on Sunday.

This has been Erin Dunn with a community comment.