

THANKS MOM...

I watched as my mom sat hunched in the second pew with my sister and brother-in-law. I was struck with how pale and small she looked. I was overwhelmed with love, overlaid with my own pain, as I saw her sitting there in quiet shock, tears streaming down her character lined face.

As I stood to speak in tribute to my father who had passed away earlier that week, I was overcome with the emotion of today. How would she cope without him, how would I cope without him? How would we fill the black hole left when he was taken from us?

I choked back my tears and began to speak knees and voice trembling. I found my voice, in being able to tell those in attendance just how much he had meant to me. To share stories of how he had taught me by quiet example, the values of honesty, of compassion and consideration for people regardless of their color or social standing. Of unconditionally loving his wife and kids, in sticking by us in spite of some of the tough lessons I remember him facing. Of his steadfast faith and obedience to his God, and to his calling as an encourager. Of sharing the inscription, "God's Friend" I chose for him and felt was a worth testimony to his life.

As speaker after speaker shared stories of my dad and the role he played in their lives, I was amazed at the impact he had on so many people. I wondered, if he ever knew how much he had meant to so many? And I wondered, if anyone had ever told him?

I was humbled yet comforted that the last words I had said to him the day before he died was "luv you pop!" Moreover, that the last message from him was how proud he and mom were of me, and how much they loved me. I was grateful that someone had challenged me years earlier, to verbally acknowledge the important people in my life. Grateful that I had been able to share that love with mom and dad.

Since that day, I constantly began re-affirming my love and affection for my mom and sharing with her stories we have lived as a family. Stories which upon reflection, form-in-part the foundations for my life, as it is today. Stories and lessons, which definitely form a foundation for some of the successes, I have enjoyed of late. I am humbled and pleased that both my parents lived long enough to see some of their hard work and support pay off.

My mom was a wonderful woman! She had always been there for me; challenging me to be my best, in stretching past my comfort zone, in comforting me when I missed the mark either physically or psychologically. I held her in my arms on August 20th, 1999, as she slipped away to join dad in heaven. I am forever grateful for those last 6 months spent loving each other and sharing stories to inspire and encourage each other. My mom's legacy lives on in my writing as she constantly encouraged me to put pen to paper and capture and share my thoughts. Thanks mom!

I decided to make sure that she understood just how much she had meant to me over the years. And, to make sure I was more vigilant in my encouragement of my audiences to make time for the important people in their lives, and to acknowledge them NOW while they still have the chance.

As mother's day approaches, I can simply say, "THANKS MOM.... I still love you!"

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