



## *My Mother is a Class Act*

My mother is a class act- a well-spoken, educated, elegant beauty. I would say so if she wasn't my mother. These are truths that have echoed in my ear forever from those who have known my mother over the years. It's true; she is a perfect lady... in public.

Behind closed doors, Mommy is silly and fun and free and I'm so grateful that my younger sister and I get to know this dynamic woman in the raw. She loves to laugh heartily, even at herself. She makes funny faces and eats with her fingers sometimes. She sings in the shower. She talks about her hopes and dreams. She doesn't hide it when she cries. She's not afraid to grow and change, even in her fifties. As time goes on, my mother is morphing into more than a parent. I'm seeing her for all that she is as a woman.

As a kid, it used to spook me to see my mother cry. It seemed unnatural, sort of like when you spot your school teacher at the grocery store because it's hard to imagine them outside of that element or in some other role. From my child's point of view, Mom was unshakable and watching Super Woman shed tears was incomprehensible. In my twenties, I now understand that my mom is human- a grown up girl. Allowing herself to be transparent and vulnerable before me and my sister is the most super thing that she's ever done. Mom's unapologetic openness empowers me. With flaws and all on display, she made me see that being myself was good enough. This was an especially important message for me since I'm the Denise Huxtable of my family but Mom embraces me regardless of my eccentricities and I know she wouldn't have me any other way.

She taught me that every person has a gift to be used to better the world and that I should never be afraid to use mine. I watched my mom battle the shy little girl within herself and release the voice that she struggled to find for decades through songwriting and poetry. It's something that she had to do because she knew that I and my little sister were watching and she would not allow us to grow up afraid of ourselves, afraid of our talents. It is because Mom has allowed us to see her fight to believe in herself, that today I can believe in myself.

Mom talks about her hopes and dreams and goals with vitality and excitement. In her fifties, she still has them and she goes for them, pushing me and my sister to do the same. She sits down with us at the kitchen table and with light in her eyes she encourages us to make plans, think big and never sell ourselves short. She describes her fears and permits us, her daughters to truly know her. Her transparency is a lesson to us. My mother has taken down her walls- yes those same walls that keep children respectful and in line- and trusted my sister and I to come close and examine her. She converses openly about the things that she wants to change in herself, striving to be a better woman and still a better mother. It is out of great love for her children that she takes the risk and critiques herself before us, exhibiting that we will never be done growing.

I believe that one of the greatest things a mother can do is show her children that she's a multi-faceted, sentient individual, and that she is more relatable than she appears. Naturally, this openness doesn't happen overnight. It comes with time, maturity, and trust. But a really beautiful thing happens when a mother can truly lead her daughter into womanhood by example of being real. Watching my mother's journey of self-discovery has brought me to my own. This Mother's Day I am reflecting on and celebrating mothers who empower their daughters by showing them that it's okay to be afraid sometimes, to cry sometimes, to struggle within, to be authentic, to live on purpose, to go for any goal no matter how big. To my mom, thank you for the deeply intimate love that you pour out from your very core.

**"My Mother is a Class Act" by Akira May**

e-W.I.S.E. Contributor article

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