

The Importance of Connection: A Tribute to My Mom



My beloved mother, Leatrice Lazarus was small in stature with an exceptional nurturing heart, which influenced her parenting style. The goal of this article is to inspire and transform parent's attitudes about their children and themselves. My intent is to pass along the experiences I learned from her, which in retrospect is a testament for all parents.

My mother touched so many lives. For the numerous Learning Disabilities Association families and members who knew and loved her, she will be truly missed. For 12 years she happily volunteered for our the organization by sitting behind the table welcoming participants at our public information meetings and folding/stuffing flyers into envelopes for our numerous mailings. She loved to participate with families, encouraging and hugging the numerous children, teens and parents who she encountered in our social skills, parent groups and her favourite, our bowling parties.

She shared her relentless belief that all children, especially those with ADHD and LD, have great qualities and need to hear about them. She trusted in each child's potential and enlightened parents that children require love, understanding, time and positivity. Her approval of children was obvious and judging by the hugs she accumulated as they entered our group room, they sensed her acceptance as well. She knew how to connect, it was within her and she believed it lay within all parents.

The pain and sadness of her loss and the joys of being her daughter exemplify how grateful and appreciative I am to have had her as my mother. I am comforted and strengthened by the countless treasured memories of our times together and how she positively influenced my life. I am more thankful by the revelation of her sacred gift to me, "our connection."

Our connection she fostered when I was young remained consistent throughout my life, and has impacted on who I am today. Her hand was the very first one I reached for, taking my first steps and that same guiding, reassuring hand remained present and extended, encouraging and

strengthening me throughout my life's journeys. My mother's unconditional love, gentle eyes, distinctive smile and positive phrases, made even a cloudy day for me gradually disappear.

She understood the importance of attachment and knew that connecting, a function of reciprocal communication, does not reside in the child alone. It begins with the parent who fosters and expands the attachment process. When I analyse my mother's parenting, we rarely experienced a disconnect and if any occurred, she quickly refueled and repaired it, with a hug and a recognition of my qualities and strengths.

Reflecting back on the pivotal role my mother played in my life, I realize that without even knowing it my mother facilitated positive parenting, her ever present hand shaped my GPS guidance system. Her recognition and validation of my strengths fortified me from the inside out, allowing me to blossom.

I feel eternally grateful and blessed. She was a safe, nurturing harbour that sustained me in both joyful and difficult times. Her remarkable gift to me was our unique, irreplaceable connection and in the end, that is a parent's greatest legacy.