

Relationships That are Priceless – The Best is Yet to Come

By Sharan Tash

It all started on Sunday, September 23, 1979 when I was 27 years old. It continued on Friday, November 7, 1980. The next blessing was Monday, April 11, 1983. It sadly concluded on Monday, February 20, 1989 at the age of 37.

I had a big family growing up. I was the oldest daughter, the second oldest of 5 children in 5 ½ years. We were the typical baby boomer family. Dad was building his business – traveling from Monday morning and arriving home for Shabbat dinner on Friday night. Mom stayed at home with the five of us and had someone come to help with the house. My parents did the best they could raising us with the knowledge they had on parenting. I knew one day I wanted to be a mom.

When each of my children were born the unconditional love I felt was like no other feeling I have ever experienced in my life – even now. These children were my life. I knew I would do anything for them and would always protect them. I promised to be a strong role model for them and pass along to them the values I cherish so much: honesty, optimism, a strong work ethic, and the love of family. (They also became avid Packer fans like my parents and my brothers and sister.)

My full time job since 1979 has been the most difficult job in the world, yet the most rewarding. I was a mom – a single mom. Not only was I a mom to my four children, but to the neighborhood of

friends they each had. Our home was always open for their friends. Food was always available for them. I never turned them away.

More than half my life has been spent raising children. They have always come first. I have coached football, soccer, baseball and softball. I have volunteered in the lunchroom and the classrooms. I have been an Ensign in Sea Cadets and a chaperone for Safe Rides. I have been PTA President and chaired many committees. This has been my life for 28 years.

As we know, time goes on. Children grow up to become young adults. They go off to college, graduate from college and start their lives as independent adults. No matter how hard you try (and I have tried), you can't stop time. Now what?

My three oldest have graduated college and are all working and living independently. Avi graduated from the University of Kansas and is an architectural and theatrical lighting designer with Lightswitch. Aliza graduated from Loyola University and is a conference producer for Marcus Evans. Golan graduated from Indiana University and is busy working with his dad in business development for Garden Fresh. All three of these independent young adults live in the Chicagoland area.

Daveed, my youngest is leaving for college soon. This has been my last year as a full-time mom. It has been a year filled with tears of joy and tears of sadness. A year filled with "this is the last time"s and "I am so proud"s. A year filled with phone calls to friends for guidance and a year filled with phone calls to my children for support. My life is about to change forever.

Now it is time for me to develop my independence. I am still a mom, but my grown children do not need me in the same capacity as before. When they call, I will still be there for them whether they need me to help them with something or just to talk. Now it is time for me to build my career as a professional speaker and help other young people understand the value of connecting.

Being an empty nester will be a whole new experience for me. I have not lived alone since 1977. Will it be hard? Absolutely! Just as I have taught my children the values of honesty, optimism, a strong work ethic, and the love of family, I will be looking at this new phase of my life through the eyes of experience and using my values to guide me.

I am proud to say that as a single mom, I have raised four successful, independent, caring, well liked, altruistic young adults. If I can achieve that success, I can achieve anything. Look out world, here I come.