

Mother & Me

📅 Sep 7, 2011 👤 Wicked Mike

My mother is dying.



My mother was so full of life in this old moment. I'd love to have met her then and helped her defeat her childhood demons.

Childhood sucked. My mother, Gloria, ruled the household and she was a religious monster without logic. My father spent more time away than in, often holding down three jobs and sleeping 4-6hrs per night. He would not contradict her. He avoided. But he provided some fond moments for me, whether it was watching a "sinful" video at someone else house or having a small, secret braai on secret, horse racing Saturday.

I wasn't destitute in a physical sense (thanks, Dad!). There was always a meal (although Marmite and peanut butter threatened to bore me to death – and we couldn't make lunch without permission). Working odd jobs taught me independence and from that i gained self respect and learned more about people than i would've at home. My parents, for all their faults and attributes, made me stronger.

Spiritually, though, i was dying. My mother saw the devil in everything except that prostitute fucker, **Jimmy Swaggart** (when he got caught, the first time, she reckoned it was a conspiracy by sinners – Jimmy Swaggart was like God in our home). Girlfriends, commercial music and visiting most people was not allowed. I couldn't even ride my bicycle to school so that meant a slog every day. If friends went to the beach, i would, more often than not, be stuck at home.

So i escaped into books.

But one day my mother wanted to hit me with a hangar (my arse broke many of those) without telling me what i'd done. For the first time in my life i said no and actually threatened her. It was bluster but it got a coffee table thrown at me. Without thinking, i kicked her glancingly in the leg, chased her into the kitchen and told her to never do that again.

Her response was to ban all my books as evil (i wonder if authors such as Wilbur Smith, Willard Price and Margaret Weiss realized that they were baddies). That was a life changing moment for me. There i was, 16yrs old, and my best friends were those books. Sure, i had some mates but the words were always there for me.

Almost every cent i had earned from working in the local tea room had gone into that collection of about 500 books. Hell, there'd been many crappy moments but that symbolism that changed everything.

The rebel stepped in.

At my all-boy school, i accepted no crap from power-hungry teachers anymore but i fear i disappointed the good ones. In my final year, i won the History and English prizes but, with the final exams, my overall grades had dropped 20%.

At 17yrs i was out of that home and renting a place at the beginning of Smith Street, a dodgy area of Durban city after i'd lied about my age. I owned a kettle, a pillow and a portable radio. There was a magical moment in the early hours one morning when i lay on the floor, unable to sleep cause of financial woes and an always overactive head, when **Metallica's 'Seek & Destroy'** reached my ears from the then named Radio 5 (now 5FM). It was a liberating moment-

-but not completely. It took me about 6yrs to lose my anger. At 39, i still don't have it. I haven't spoken to her in many years. When i hear people use "but it's your parent" as some magical excuse for their actions, i used to want to scream.

We are all human. We are all fallible. We are all accountable.

I chose to walk away, the best decision i made in my life. I do not carry scars. I became stronger. My advice to anyone in a toxic relationship that has no solution is to walk away. **Love your self!**

My mom reaped her own whirlwind. I don't mean that in a karma way because i don't believe in karma. I don't mean that in a wishful way because i wish her no harm. It just is. She's an agoraphobic without visitors. My father told me that **she has cancer** which has removed sight from one eye and has started on the next. More importantly, it's festering towards her brain which can only mean eventual death.

I've felt totally indifferent about her and things like her, except for my normal intolerance of all fools, for a long time now. I probably find balance in passion for other things.Â But these past couple of months provided me the opportunity to test my indifference and sociology. The result is that i don't feel the twinge as a son may for his mother. Some will call me cold or horrible but i believe in Truth. And the worst thing we can ever do is Lie to ourselves. Life is what it is.

However, i do have compassion for her as a human being. It's a terrible way to die and, at some stage, once i know more i will reach out.

I try look at the situation as my workaholic Dad eventually discovering the world and that who he is is much more than a man working in a factory. That should be

a much bigger definition of responsibilities and personal will but i will leave it at that except to say that i hope that he takes the first holiday in his life...and that i can persuade him to experience the utter beauty of Knysna and realize that there's a bigger world than a sock factory and his wife.

I include this poem (more a snippet), even though it's been posted before, because that period was definitely a building block towards part of who i am:

*I asked for a mother
and you gave me a priest
yet when i cried for love,
you turned away,
left me floundering in waves of hate
which bred confusion
and questions unanswered
that brought me closer to death.*

Update June 23 2014: My mother has somehow clung on but at great price. The surgeons made a crater in her face, from above her eyebrow to below her cheek. She lost an eye. A month later, a 5cm long by 1cm high growth has appeared. They cut some more of her away. Now the radiation 'treatments' have begun. It's one of the most horrible experiences i could imagine. I have been in contact and even suggested that my parents spend the remainder of her time in Knysna so that they at least share something beautiful. But i doubt they will. Strangely (thankfully), wrapped in bandages, my parents have been going to restaurants weekly. This from the woman who hasn't even stepped in her husband's factory, which is less than a kilometer from the house, in over a decade. It may seem to be too little too late but it is at least something. Live while you can!

Share this:



Related

Appreciation for Domai.com
Oct 1, 2010
In "Sexy Women"

How to Fast the Wrong Way #3
Nov 23, 2011
In "Vicious Diary"

Goodbye, Sylvia
Kristel...Thanks for the Show
Oct 19, 2012
In "Sexy Women"

► Vicious Diary ♦ agoraphobic, cancer, childhood, compassion, death, father, mother, my mother is dying



Comments

***Mother & Me* – 2 Comments**

James Blonde on Apr 8, 2016 at 2:25 am said:

I remember some of those moments from your high school years. My dad has cancer too and its untreatable, but is amazingly positive person with support worldwide. I hate to think how your parents can do this on their own. I do remember also being inside that apartment and meeting your mom...

Reply ↓

Wicked Mike on Jun 29, 2016 at 8:16 pm said:

Sucks to hear that. Approaching death with dignity is to be respected. Death teaches us to live our lives better. If we don't learn that then we're not really living.

Reply ↓