

A Tribute to Mum ...

Thanks for driving me to Training!

*'I can remember it as clearly as if it were yesterday. I was eight years old and from a young age was fortunate to be blessed with some above average Australian Rules football ability. In fact, at that time, I won the award for 'Best and Fairest' at the junior club for which I played. At the end-of-season barbecue the awards were presented and the last trophy for the day was the prestigious 'Best and Fairest'. My name was called and excitedly I ran up to collect it. I was asked to make a short speech and all of a sudden my mind went blank! What could I say? I didn't want to make a fool of myself. Then, after a few uncomfortable moments, it just came to me; the one thing that, throughout that whole season, had impacted me the most. I stood up tall and proud and I said with love, 'I would just like to thank my mum for driving me to training!'" **



What would we do without our mum? Or at least, what would we do without the memory of that one person who loves us unconditionally and who would drop everything to be there for us — even when we really don't deserve it?! She loves us even when, at times, we don't love ourselves. She is thinking about us and worrying about us even when we haven't spoken to her for far too long. She forgives us without a second thought and our happiness is often even more important than her own. She is there for us at any time of the day or night;

'... I cannot remember one single instance in my whole life leading up to my mum's death when I did not feel unconditionally loved by her. There was not one time when I did not feel that she was extremely proud of me and that she would drop everything, no matter what she was doing, to be there for me.

I can remember a particular incident when I was in the young and dumb stage of my early twenties. I was still a student and had gone away with some of my college mates to a country town in Victoria to compete in what was supposed to be an inter-collegiate sports competition. Really it was just an excuse to drink too much alcohol and get really silly. So, who was I to go against the popular trend! We started drinking early in the day, kept drinking throughout the highly serious and competitive sports competition and

continued late into the night and, as happens, young men and alcohol are a potentially dangerous combination. A group of five of us stumbled back to our hotel room that night and, along the way, for some reason, we got fixated on a street sign. I can't remember why, but we decided we wanted to have it. After that much alcohol, you don't need a reason!

One at a time we jumped up, grabbed the street sign and tried as hard as possible to pull it off — all to no avail until it was finally my turn. With some help I got up there and was hanging off the street sign, legs dangling in the air, jerking up and down trying to get it off. All of a sudden I was drenched in light. The headlights of a police car were shining directly at me as I hung from the sign! In my intoxicated state, and as I hung there, I thought to myself, 'How am I going to talk my way out of this one?'

Consequently, I was 'fortunate' enough to get free accommodation that night! The next day I drove home with a terrible hangover and with charges against me for drunk and disorderly behaviour and wilful damage together with a summons to appear in court ... When I got home and walked through the door mum was there to welcome me. As always, she could tell something was up as soon as she saw my face. 'What happened? What have you done?' I explained the situation to her and waited for a blasting, but it never came. Her response amazed me then and still does today as I revisit this story; she simply smiled at me and said, 'It's never dull with you around!'

*A few weeks later she drove with me for several hours back to the town — which, by the way, I have never returned to since — for my day in court. She wanted to be with me to support me through this trying time. I escaped with a small fine, a good behaviour bond and another lesson learned! This is just one of thousands of stories I could tell about Mum's unconditional love and support and the 'addiction' she had to her family. When her cancer hit, it was this addiction that gave her the strength and courage to 'keep dancing' and achieve what she did. **

Our mum is always there for us — but then don't we often just expect her to be? She looks after us, feeds us, nurtures us, protects us and all of this with few or no complaints ... but, what about her? What about this amazing person who just keeps on doing the best she can and giving & giving without ever expecting anything in return? This amazing lady whom we rely on so heavily and often take too much for granted is a person who, just like us, needs to feel loved and appreciated.



' ... Just two short months before she died we were spending some time together in Queensland and found ourselves talking about her life and her journey, the story that I will share with you in this book. For days we talked, we laughed, we cried, we loved, and then an amazing thing happened: I saw my mum in a completely different light. She was no longer my mum — the giver, the carer and the protector. Instead, I came to know her as a vulnerable child, an uncertain adolescent, a searching adult, a creative being and someone, like all of us, wanting to feel important, to love and be loved and just be happy.' *



Do we always love what our mum tells us or makes us do? No we don't, but it is always inspired by love. Is she always able to communicate the way she feels effectively? Probably not, but then neither are we. Has our mum ever made a mistake that we still haven't forgiven her for? Is our mum often giving but rarely receiving enough love and respect in return? Only we can answer these questions and only we can do something about it - now is the time to take action ...

Why do we need a **Mother's Day** to remind us that we have a mum who would drop anything and everything for us at any time of the day or night if we really needed her? Let's not wait for a *cry for help* for us to take action and to tell & show her just how much she means to us. In my case the 'cry for help' from my mum was in the form of breast cancer! Boy, do I wish I had told her how much I love her far more often than I actually did.



It is **Mother's Day** and it is our chance to make it count ... to make this woman feel, at least for a day, that she is the queen of the world. Doesn't she deserve it?

Let's all pick up the phone, pick up a pen or lift up our eyes to the heavens and tell our mum just how much we care ...



I love you, Mum xx

**(Excerpts taken from 'Dance Until It Rains')*

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