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Mother & Son: A Decade Together

By Valerie Zilinsky

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As we welcome the beginning of a new year, I am also reminiscing about an entire decade that I've spent as a mother to my son. My adult life began in 1991, when the birth of my son forced me to grow up unexpectedly fast. Admittedly, I made some mistakes in the beginning, but I wouldn't trade those ten years of my life for anything. My son and I embarked on a long journey together a decade ago.

Our roles have changed periodically throughout this time. When he was learning his shapes and colors, I was his teacher. When we took our first cross-country road trip, we were both students of the world around us. And when I learned to stand up for myself and be strong enough to make my own choices, I was the student as he taught me about life in his own subtle and abstract ways.

As we start a new decade together, I see the cycle continuing. Right now, I am teaching him to handle the changes he'll encounter as he matures and faces "grown-up" responsibilities. I think the next lesson will be mine, as he teaches me to let go a little and give him freedom to make his own mistakes and learn from them, or to be proud of decisions that he's made completely on his own. And together we will experience new adventures, as we read books, watch movies, take trips, and simply spend time enjoying each other's company.

A decade sounds like such a long time. But it seems as if it was just a few short moments ago when he was learning how to ride a bike without training wheels. And I know I need to savor every moment in our future, because sooner than I can imagine, he'll be back on four wheels as he learns how to drive his first car.

Valerie Zilinsky is a married mother of two young children, and 'WebMom' of <http://www.RaisingOurKids.com>

Family Ties - When to Let Go

By Margaret Paul, Ph.D.

Mother Son: A Decade Together

Ruth consulted with me because she was confused about what to do regarding her mother, her brother, and her son.

From the time Ruth was born, she never felt like she belonged in her family. Her mother ignored Ruth, obviously preferring her brother, and consistently allowed her brother to beat Ruth up. Ruth had some connection with her father, but he was a weak man and never stood up for her or protected her.

Ruth was a loving child and tried in any way she could to please her mother and brother, to no avail. She could never understand why her family didn't like her.

As an adult, she married an emotionally unavailable man, a man very much like her mother. As with her mother and brother, she tried in many ways to get his love and never succeeded. Her son, Dylan, was eight years old when they divorced.

Dylan always seemed to prefer his father, and finally went to live with his father when he was sixteen. Once again, Ruth was completely in the dark regarding why her son didn't like her. She had been such a devoted mother, so why was he rejecting her?

Ruth finally married again, this time to a loving man, and had another child. Her current family was totally different from her previous family and from her family of origin. However, she still hoped to have a relationship with her mother. She would send her mother birthday and Christmas cards, but rarely heard from her. The final blow that sent her to seek my help came when she found out that her son had gotten married without telling her, and that her brother had moved her mother into a nursing home and sold everything without telling her.

Ruth was a shining light of love. Her eyes, her smile, her gestures all radiated love and compassion. Her deeply gentle and peaceful nature was evident at first glance.

"Why? Why don't they like me?" she asked.

"Because you are a giver and they are takers," I told her. "Givers care about others, while takers just want to take from others. You can never give enough to a taker to receive any caring back, because they don't like themselves. They reject themselves and try to get others to give to them. Because they have emotionally abandoned themselves, they are angry at others for not giving enough to them. Your mother and brother were united in their taking from you, as were your first husband and son. They look at you and see a fountain of love coming from you and they want it, but they are incapable of receiving it. Your light contrasts with their darkness and they hate you for it."

"But what can I do?"

"Nothing, other than not be around them. They will suck the life out of you if you allow them to spend

time with you. I know you care about them, but they are incapable of caring about themselves or you, so you have to let them go. It is not in your highest good to be with people who are incapable of valuing you - who just want to take from you."

"But can't I help them?"

"No, because they are not asking for help. I know you have believed that if you just love them enough, they will heal and love you back, but this will never happen because they are not open to your love. They feel inadequate in the face of your open heart and their closed hearts, and they take their self-judgment out on you. There is nothing you can do to help them open their hearts. Only they can do that. It is unlikely your mother or brother will ever open their hearts, but perhaps your son will in time. He will come to you if he does."

"But I have such a great life now. Isn't it selfish of me to just let them go?"

"No, it is self-responsible. It is not loving to yourself to be around people who treat you badly."

Ruth understood. She felt sad, but relieved. She finally saw that all she could do was pray for them to open their hearts.

Margaret Paul, Ph.D. is the best-selling author and co-author of eight books, including "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You?" She is the co-creator of the powerful Inner Bonding healing process. Learn Inner Bonding now! Visit her web site for a FREE Inner Bonding course:

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