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**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
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**Raising Up A Woman: My Daughter, My Heritage**

**By Sheila Webster-Heard**

>From her highchair, she gazes at me with admiration. Enchanting brown eyes follow me as I bustle about cleaning the handful of Honey Nut O's she's tossed on the floor.

She's a year old, gorgeous and her daddy's joy, and she's smiling so sweetly; at her tender age she's already taking in tidbits of information that will shape her into the woman she will eventually become. I can't help but think of the position I'm in. I have a huge responsibility to her.

By my example, my daughter, Alysia, will learn to respect herself and value her mind, body and spirit.

Through my actions, I'll teach her to make sensible choices. I'll advise her that people will judge her by her attire and by the company she keeps. I'll gently steer her away from anyone and everyone questionable in her life. I'll always be in the background watching, leading and guiding.

I'll take a strong interest in her abilities, and when she becomes an adult, I'll think highly of this stunning young woman with the amazing personality and numerous talents.

She is learning everyday, from the way I interact with her father, how to relate to men. She sees a loving union between us, and she will use it as a guide for her own relationships, but I will also instruct her on the benefits of using her head instead of her heart.

I'll rejoice when she makes the right choice in a mate, but I won't ridicule her if she makes the wrong choice. In fact, I hope to instill so much love in her that she will only attract loving and supportive people.

I'll always speak honestly about life because what I tell her from this point forward will shape the way she views the world. This is precious cargo, you see; an African-American youngster destined for great things.

And great she will be! I knew this the moment the ultrasound technician told me I would be blessed with her. I realized that being her mother would be the most important job I would ever have. I thought

## Raising Up A Woman: My Daughter, My Heritage

about how, if my husband and I instilled in her all the hard-knock lessons we've learned through the years, she would be tough, intelligent and well-rounded. She would be knowledgeable. I was more than ready for the challenge because, sadly, I've seen the other side.

I know the mothers who'd rather invest more time in their latest boyfriends instead of spending time with their daughters.

I know the mothers who leave their daughters with whomever is willing to baby-sit, even the new boyfriend; a stranger. Too bad mom can't see that baby girl is afraid and would rather be home with her, secure and protected.

Unfortunately, I've seen those same daughters, who had so much potential, grow up and try hard to pull themselves out of the cycle of abuse and neglect to no avail. I've witnessed them reaching out for someone, anyone, to fill them up on the inside with the love distant mommy and absent daddy wouldn't

spare. Sometimes they've reached out to the wrong crowd. Sometimes the end results were tragic.

Thankfully, I was raised with strong women in my life. I had aunts and grandmothers and my own mother who were excellent examples of what a nurturer should be.

My childhood wasn't perfect, but I revisit it with joy when I remember all the things mom helped me to accomplish. I learned invaluable life lessons from her. She was always nearby; she shaped me into the woman I am today.

I feel honored that I, too, have the opportunity to mold my princess into a queen and, one day, her own daughter will admire her from a distance. I'll be there also, embracing them both. My broad smile will be a declaration of triumph; our legacy of successful black women continuing.

Sheila Webster-Heard is a Freelance Writer who loves to write about her life experiences.

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### **My Mother, the Person**

**By Heidi B. Lapin**

#### **My Mother, the Person by Heidi B. Lapin**

I left home at 17 and got my own apartment. I was very rebellious and independent. The first few months away from home, I was excited, but deep down I felt the insecurity of not having my mom, my safety net, to take care of me if and when I may be in need. As I grew up, I realized how she must have felt when I left home. (It was just the two of us for a long time because my dad left when I was 10 and my brother was off at college.) My mom had so much stress on her; especially around the time I was between 14 and 17 years old. We had no money, her mom died, she had a rough job, and all this was

## Raising Up A Woman: My Daughter, My Heritage

happening when she was going through her own reassessment of life; as was I.

As an adult, I understand her anger and resentment regarding my leaving home. I left her...alone. I realize now that when I was feeling insecure being newly on my own, my mother must have been feeling the same way. She wasn't just feeling the effects as MY mom. She was feeling the effects of being a woman on HER own for her first time, too. She was feeling the effects of being a divorced woman, overdue bills, the loss of her mom, an independent son far away at college, and the daughter whom she pushed away due to misdirected anger while her daughter did the same to her.

A few years later, Mom and I began working out our kinks. We both realize now, that we both had our own demons as individual people. It was 2 hormonally changing females who both got the short end of The Stick of Life, together, against the world. What's the lesson we both learned in time? Those two words I just said...Together. Together we are mother and daughter, sometimes against the world still, but not against one another.

I know now that my mom was more than MY MOM, she was a woman, a wife, an ex-wife, a working woman, a daughter, a sister, and more. At age 32, I still believe the world revolves around me, but now I know that it's not my mother's life-purpose to keep that world moving. I think now I have earned her respect as her daughter, and as a person. I know she sure earned mine. If she wasn't my mom, I would be so lucky just to know her.

A 9 time published author of poetry, a long-time practicing witch, and day career of a 14 year manager of a veterinary hospital, I am hoping to publish my own first non-fiction book of writings and poetry in the near future. I have been writing and creating my own "greeting cards" since approximately age of 7 and still continue to date.



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