



My Two “Moms”

By: Laura Urista

My mom, Charlotte Jean (“Jeannie” to those closest to her) passed away nearly nine years ago. If she had lived, she would have celebrated her 95th birthday a few months ago. My mother-in-law, Teresa, would have been 88 years old this year. But, as I write this, she died just a few weeks ago.

As I think about *my two “moms”*—these two wonderful matriarchs I was blessed to have in my life—I am struck by the stark contrast in my unique relationships with each of them.

“Jeannie”

My mom and I had what most people would consider a fairly close relationship, but like many mothers and daughters, we excelled at “pushing each other’s buttons.” I’ve heard it said that a mother knows exactly how to push your buttons because she programmed them for you. As I grew up, I learned the hard way that there are just some things it’s better not to talk about. It simply isn’t worth all the emotional drama or fall-out. So, while we got along fine most of the time, and there was a lot of love and affection between us, there were also many things “better left unsaid” between me and my mom.

When Mother’s Day would roll around, I always struggled to find

just the right card that showed my love for my mom but still rang true. Some cards were just “too perfect” to fit our complicated relationship. The first Mother’s Day after Mom died, I found myself walking the aisles of a local drugstore, looking at cards and trying to find just the right one, when it suddenly dawned on me that I would never send her a Mother’s Day card again.

For months after Mom died, I had a recurring dream that went like this: I would try and try to call her on the phone, but something prevented me from getting through. Either I dialed the wrong number, or I searched everywhere but couldn’t find the phone, or the phone would ring and ring but there was no answer. After the dreams, I would wake up in a panic, and it took a long time to fall back to sleep.

I finally decided to ask my daughter, Tawny, (who has a Master’s degree in Psychology) if she had any advice. She told me it seemed like I had some things on my mind that I never got a chance to talk to my mom about, and she suggested I write a letter.

After getting my feelings out and putting them down on paper, she recommended that I destroy the letter. It seemed simple, but it was one of the most difficult things I have ever done.

But it worked! Shortly after writing that letter and destroying it, the recurring dreams stopped, and I haven’t had one since.

“Teresa”

My mother-in-law, Teresa, grew up speaking Spanish, and she didn’t speak English too well. I took four years of Spanish in high school, but I don’t speak Spanish very well. So, for the past 37 years we did a lot of hugging, gesturing and



Me with Mom (Jeannie) celebrating her 85th birthday.

laughing—just trying our best to have a conversation in mixed English and Spanish.

But we didn't talk about things on a deep level. We mostly talked about the family, and she would ask about how our two kids were doing. Yet, deep down I felt like I could tell Teresa anything. Maybe because we didn't speak the same language, I knew she wouldn't judge and critique me or harp on me about how to do things "the right way."

We never had an argument, which is almost unheard of for a mother and daughter-in-law! What a contrast to the relationship between me and my birth mom.

I have a lot of respect for *my two "moms"* and the sacrifices they made for their families. I am thankful beyond words for the many lessons they taught me—by their examples and by their words—about love, self-sacrifice, loyalty, commitment, generosity, faith, kindness and much more.

I hope and pray that I have lived and will continue to live up to their examples, and I hope I will pass the lessons down to my own

children and grandchildren.

This Mother's Day I'll probably again walk the aisles of a drugstore looking at cards I wish I could send *my two "moms."* Wherever they are, I hope they know how much I love them, although I'm sure I never said it enough.

I miss them both so much, and I long for the day when we'll all be together again, and there will be no

more sorrow, no more pain... *"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall all be changed"* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, KJV). □

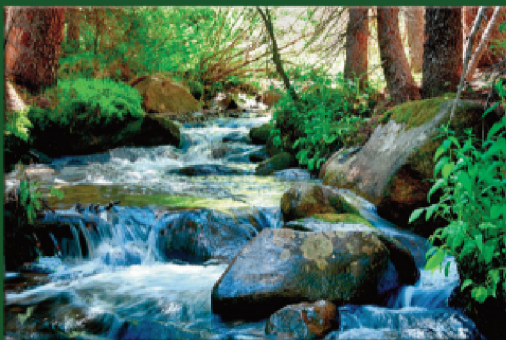
Laura Urista is the managing editor of Plain Truth and Christianity Without the Religion magazines.



Tawny with her grandparents at her graduation from Loyola Marymount University (with Master's degrees in Psychology and Special Education) on Mother's Day, 2014.

Wonders of His Love

Greg Albrecht



Photography by Ron Kelly

Coming Soon!

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featuring the
photography of
Ron Kelly