

mother

On or around 30 March 1988, my life changed forever. Only 12 at the time, Jeremy, my brother 14, and Jennifer, my sister 8, watched my mother drop a phone, collapsing in utter despair. I will never forget that moment, branded into my memory as if it happened yesterday. My father was dead, gone, and our family was over a thousand miles apart.

This letter is to address my support, love and admiration for my mother. I am doing this now because despite who I am, I wouldn't be here if she gave up at that moment in my life. No matter the reason, my father was gone, there was no getting him back. Turns out, no matter who raises you, when they do the best they can, it shows. So, mom, if you're reading this, I just wanted to make people realize how important one person can be.

After that day, I noticed a strange sort of stigma attach itself to our family and it never left. The moment she collapsed was the last time I saw my mother overcome with anything. My father was abusive to say the least. I won't dwell on what led up to his death. Turns out we were better off alone with a strong mother, then together with a weak father.

The next branding to my brain came when we were all taken to identify his body. There was a discontent man behind an expansive glass window. He pulled out my father on a metal slab. Sliding his body out like you see in movies, except this was with malice. He took no time pulling the white sheets back all the way down to his crotch. My father had shot himself, a large hole in his chest. His skin a pale that comes with death. Even at the age of 12, I knew that man behind the glass did the wrong thing. In my mind I was screaming, "For Pete's sakes man, we are just kids!" Suicide can be treated with such disdain, instead of understanding.

For the next few years we moved around a great deal. We had always been gypsies, moving where food and jobs were available. My mother always did what she had to. I will forever be grateful for her hoisting our family up and carrying us through what could have been the end. I learned from her example, as much as I could. What I got was an undying work ethic, morale compass (free from sex labeled gender roles), and the gratitude I could never appropriately express.

I love my mother as she is. She always loved me as I was, not what she may have wanted me to be. I am a distant, quiet, heavy thinking, comic book nerd. I am more than a man; I am the product of her work. I try to be a good human being, not a man or women or any other label. She understands I rarely call, visit or talk and she doesn't ask me to be someone else. I, however, understand this may send the wrong message. So, we are here. Let there be no mistake, I am grateful for you, everything you have done, and will continue to do for me.