

My Mum's Wisdom

In April, a few days before Mum's birthday, I asked her a number of questions, and took videos on my phone of her answering. Let me tell you, it took a bit of persuading for her to take part. I'm so glad I persevered. There was a part of me which recognised that Mum was nearing her end.

One of the things I asked, was what she had learnt during her life, and what things she wanted us to know.

The following was her response:

Stick up for what you believe

Always tell the truth

See the best in people

Be content/grateful with what you have – don't look at what others have with envy

Pray at all times

These are great values to hold to. They are values that take courage and perseverance to live by. Qualities that Mum quietly exhibited. I want to briefly just tease out each of these.

'Stick up for what you believe'

This isn't so easy as it sounds. It takes fortitude to stand by what you believe. Too often in our world people go with the flow, not wanting to rock the boat, not wanting to cause a drama. However, sticking up for what you believe doesn't mean you need to be confrontational, or shove your beliefs upon others. Rather, it's about living your life according to what you believe, and not being easily swayed by the many voices trying to convince you about their beliefs. It's about being able to explain to others why you believe as you do and being able to have a healthy conversation about it.

Sticking up for what you believe also involves at times letting go of something you always believed in, and realising that you no longer hold to that in quite the same way anymore. You need to allow your values, and beliefs, to be a little flexible – not rigid. As you gain more understanding and knowledge throughout your life, it only follows that you will change.

Therefore, your beliefs and values will change along with it. Even if it's just slightly.

So yes, 'stick up for what you believe'. But also, be able to give a sound reasoning for why you believe as you do.

Always tell the truth

Now this one is tough. Being truthful with yourself and others certainly does take courage. Stating the truth can sometimes cause pain. Pain to another, while also pain to oneself. Yet, living out this value helps you know who you truly are. It also shows others, who you are. Honesty, integrity, and truthfulness, sadly seem to be disappearing within our world.

Speak your truth gently though. Truth is not meant to be a weapon, or a tool to cause harm.

See the best in people

It seems to be easier to pick out the faults we see in another. To criticize and judge others by how we believe they should be, or behave. Yet, when you recognise what is good about a person, and focus on that, not only will you see that person differently, and want to understand them more. You will find yourself changing.

See the best in people. Perhaps this is one way of changing the world, or at least, your world.

Be content/grateful with what you have

I certainly saw this in Mum. She was content with what she had. Coming from having so little in her younger years, she had learnt how to appreciate all things, no matter how small.

I believe this is one of the greatest values you and I can cultivate – a life of living gratefully, and being content with what you have. Life is much more pleasant and meaningful when you do.

Thanks Mum, for showing me what this looks like.

Pray at all times

There is something cathartic about prayer, or meditating. For those with faith in God, praying, or just talking to God, connects your spirit to something other than yourself. Stilling your mind, and listening for that still small voice, or to feel the rippling within your spirit, connects you to a source which brings meaning and stability to your life.

Mum was a good one for praying. I guess that's why she was the convenor of the Church Prayer Chain for so long. Sometimes she was a little self-conscious of the way she composed a message for the prayer chain. Her English was a little interesting at times. I often found myself telling her, that it just needed to come from her heart, and people who were receiving the message would understand.

Pray at all times. There isn't some special formula, or right, or wrong way to do this. Let your heart and spirit guide you. Take time to just 'be still' and let your inner self communicate to God, or to that power that's beyond you and your comprehension.

These are special pieces of wisdom that Mum had found important to her throughout her life. They are certainly things each of us can take into ourselves as well.

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