



Dear Mom E-Letter—The Sun Always Rises

The sun slowly emerges in the east this morning, casting pinks and purples in the sky to the west. It's morning on the prairie, where the sun always rises. It's just a matter of whether or not we can see it.

I'm enjoying a cup of coffee as Christmas music plays in the background as I think about why I'm feeling a little funky, then I realize it's December 5. Today is the anniversary of Mom's death.

The morning after a death always amazes me. After the anguish and sorrow of the day of loss, after an evening of tears wetting pillow cases and a heart feeling broken forever, the sun still rises. It's always a matter of whether or not I see it. I can't be grateful if I don't "see" it.

The sun rises after loss in many ways. For me, the sun not only rose, but transformed me when I expressed gratitude to Mom for all she gave me. Dear Mom is like one big thank you card, and saying thanks healed me of Mom's death.

I believe we're meant to be creatures of gratitude. Saying thanks to our moms for their gifts is a natural progression more likely to take place after they die because we take them for granted when they're alive.

I no longer take Mom for granted. I look at the sky and wonder why I can still feel moments of sadness 16 years later. Then I know. Those two grandchildren of mine—those perfect children I get to see in 11 days—have not met my mom. And I wish they had.

I want them to know the woman who was creative, whose resourcefulness made things out of next to nothing. I want them to know the value of hard work and simplicity, modeled by the woman who lived a simple life. I want them to know life is best lived with a sense of humor, modeled by Mom having plastic pink flamingos on the prairie.

Maybe that's why I have plastic pink flamingos in my yard. Maybe I've become my mother, and that's how my grandchildren will know Mom.

I believe that the moment we say thanks to our moms for the gifts they gave us, they smile and say, "She got it!" They know that when we truly become grateful and express that gratitude, we're living in a better place. We see life differently, and we become better people.

When I value the gifts of my mother's life and intentionally pass those gifts of values, life lessons and love onto my daughters and grandchildren, I will have done my part in helping them—and me—see the sun rise every day.

What gifts from your mom are you most grateful for this Christmas? Think about those for a moment, hold them to your heart, and next time you see the morning sky light up with pinks and purples, offer thanks. I think she'll hear you. And she'll smile.

Thanks for sharing the journey...

Dee Dee

Dee Dee Raap is the author of Dear Mom: Remembering, Celebrating, Healing. All rights reserved.