30 Days of Gratitude Challenge Day 3 — My Kids

My kids teach me every day how it feels to walk around knowing my heart and soul lives in large part with them.

November 3, 2018 By Lisa Vento Nielsen

My kids — I would not be me without them, I can't remember what life was like before them. Becoming a mom defined me like nothing else would or could. Not even being a survivor is more tattooed on my soul than being a mom.

I had some issues with mom-hood — my mom left the family when I was young and it left me all kinds of skewed with what being a mom means. To me, pre-cancer, being a mom was all, it was everything, it was all that mattered. I did not do anything without my kids, and partly there were circumstances that made that my only option but I made it my only option, too.

When I got sick, the hardest thing, the only reason why I wish I never ever got cancer, is because I had to tell my kids and in my opinion ruin their lives — or did it?

It sucked donkey balls but it really opened up their lives in ways nothing but stage 3 fucking cancer can do — I had no option but to let go, to give them freedom and to watch people step up and help out.

Day in and day out, even during my illness, I am the stable person in their lives — meaning I'm the one who provides the sense of routine and order — it is just who I am deep down but I also know that I'm still Lisa and though I was a motherless child they are not nor will they ever be — they will know I worked hard to balance my need for control with my love of them and my love of myself and that sometimes I lost that particular tug of war and sometimes I won.

I want them to look back on their childhood as a time when their mom went from being their all their only to being a more balanced and open person who still was the one with the bulk of the child-caring and work but who also focused on herself and them with equal care and love.

Recently I told my son I needed to rest and he told me I should have done that before I had kids and that moms can't rest and I fixed that and told him that was mom 1.0 and now we have mom 2.0 and I'm better because I can rest and opt out of the constant entertainment of children…

My daughter knows I'm leaving to go to Italy with my dad in February and she's like,"you are

abandoning us…” and v1.0 of my software of motherhood would never have let me even consider this trip, period — I would never have wanted to go. At all.

But I know that I’m not like my mom — I’m not leaving for good, and no matter how statistics and reality hits me with the world of cancer patient / survivor, I have no intention of leaving them motherless — and I won’t. Fuck cancer.

I’m thankful for my kids because they teach me every day how it feels to walk around knowing my heart and soul lives in large part with them — that they follow me and learn from me and that the most meaningful contribution in this world for the future is raising them to be normal, functional and most important kind.

One day they will take my narrative over or explain in their own words what it was like to watch Lisa their mom go from living only for them to living for herself and them and I hope they always know I love them and support them and won’t leave them…

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