



# Maternal Advice Lives On

By Mira Temkin

When May rolls around, it's always tough for me. The second Sunday is Mother's Day, and my beloved mother is no longer with me. How can I celebrate when there's a large hole in my heart?

My mother died at the ripe old age of 91, her faculties completely intact as her body was failing her. She lived a full life with my father in the warmth of the Sarasota, Florida, sun before he passed. Together, they enjoyed eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

While she was able, she was a fierce competitor on the tennis court. But singles soon became doubles and she finally had to hang up her racket. Fitness was her game, too, and she loved it all, especially swimming. Even in her weakened state, she continued to exercise.

My mom was a great baker and her apple kugel was renowned as she generously shared her recipe with anyone who asked. How she loved those canned Comstock apples that created the magic! While I've tried her recipe, it's never quite as good.

I hear her voice in the quiet moments, continuing to give me good advice and suggesting ideas I hadn't thought of before. I hear her thoughts with things she used to say now coming out of me. I listen to her words that serve as a comfort to me in the darkest moments. I see her face in the pictures that line my walls. I feel like she's like an angel, perched on top of my shoulder, urging me on. Her presence is still felt.

There is no question that when my mother died, a part of me died with her. Yet, I have found that her soul has now

become a part of me. The key, I have learned, is negotiating an ongoing bond with someone who is no longer with me. That's true on Mother's Day as well as during major lifecycle events. My mother lived to see three of my eight grandchildren and I feel now she's looking down from heaven on the others. It brings me great consolation that my mother is still watching over me and protecting me from harm.

As a now "expert," I've developed some coping strategies on Mother's Day:

- Embrace your feelings and don't try to sweep them under the rug.
- Hang out with your father, siblings, or your children who knew and loved your mother.
- Share the wonderful memories.
- Bake one of her favorite recipes and take it to your police or fire station.
- Volunteer at a nursing home; read to the residents.
- Stay off social media. It will hurt less if you're not bombarded with images of other families celebrating the day with their mothers.

For now, consider that her soul resides within you. Continue to love her, cherish your memories, and honor her by living well. Feel her closeness. Just look inside your heart — and see her light shining through you!

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