

As a child, I often thought to myself, "My eyes are brown... Momma's eyes are blue... I wonder if she can see different colors than I do?" I later found out that yes, she does! I quickly slipped into a newly bought pair of jeans and ran into the living room and asked, "Momma, do these jeans look okay?" My mother has always been a woman of style and has often thought of by others as another Elizabeth Taylor, so it was always important to find out what my mother thought about any type of clothing before I went out into the public. My mother steadily examined my jeans and said, "They are blue jeans Kasey... they look like the same ones you had on yesterday." I was for sure that I had purchased a pair of jeans that were nothing like any pair I had ever had. I said to her, "No Momma, these are a darker color than the ones I had on yesterday." "They look like blue jeans to me," she said in an assertive tone. That was just one of those moments where I knew my mother did not see exactly the way I did. Although true, the fact that she saw differently than I did was not because our eye colors were different, but because our minds did not think alike.

Growing up with a mother like mine was an experience worth living for. We were not always on the same wavelength; however, I am who I am today because of her and the ways she saw the world around her. My mother's wise intuition came in handy during my years as a child, and all the way into my young adulthood.

As a young child, I remember worrying so much over the smallest details of everyday life. There were little things, like being afraid that I would look stupid

wearing my hair a certain way, or claming up during my piano recitals and totally forgetting how to play! Most of the time, I did not see myself as a child, but merely as a walking life in the midst of others who stood taller than I did. I had not grasped the reality of what being a child was all about and that messing up was merely a segment of growing up. During these troublesome times, my mother was there to pick me up. There were occasions that she did what every mother feels she is supposed to do. For my mother, it was sheltering me from my own fears. Sometimes she talked to the sales people when they asked *me* what I was looking for. Whether this was at a restaurant, a doctor's office, or the mall, I was too scared to talk to anyone. I realize now that I may have suffered from anxiety as a child. My mother, who seemed bewildered at my fears, thought that what I needed was a little practice out in the world. Out in the world for me meant talking to people I did not know! "Kasey, you are too big for me to keep doing this kind of stuff for you, you talk to them... tell them what you want." I remember times where my mother and I would be in the car traveling into town to run errands. On the way to our destination, I would ask my mother what it was I needed to say if someone were to ask me what I was looking for or needed. As she told me, I would memorize. It was like preparing for a test. I would rethink each word, each sentence, hoping every word sounded okay. There were times where I would become sick at school for reasons that did not pertain to my health but my mind. I often called my mother to come and rescue me and take me home away from everyone. My mother left

her job a number of times to come and pick me up. Now try and imagine what type of mother I would have had to have during this time. She was patient, sympathetic, loving, understanding; the list could go on. All that mattered was that she fit each of those descriptions during the most important times in my life.

Becoming more socially skilled became a true battle for me, but my mother soon realized that coming to my rescue was not always the answer. She soon began to let go in hopes that my fears would soon fade if I would just face them. My mother slowly weaned me away from her every footstep and pushed me out into the water where I was able to get my whole body wet.

While growing up as an adolescent and a young teenager, I found it quite difficult to make friends and fit in. I was merely too shy to open up and break away from my security blanket made of steel. I felt as if I were an elephant traveling through a crowd of lions that were eager to tear me apart and scatter my soul, leaving my wounds gaping like an open book for everyone to view. This horror of mine withheld me beneath the shadows, afar from everyone else around me. For such a long time I was a skinny, undeveloped girl with natural curly hair I barely even knew how to style. Sometimes I truly felt I had the capability of being the focal point of ridicule. There were many times I would go to my mother and express to her how afraid I was to go to school, or how terrified I was when I had to give a small speech in class because it meant that all eyes were going to be on me. I remember her comforting me and saying to me, "Kasey you are a *wonderful* person... you have so much talent and are so

smart! ... Do not worry about what other people think of you. You are beautiful!" Her words were so serene and hearing those positive attributes come from her mouth so many times allowed for me to actually begin to believe it! I began to feel more confident in myself and even began to change not just emotionally but physically as well. By my senior year in high school, I had already made really good friends and with the help of my mother, I was on my way to becoming someone with a great sense of style. I became an ongoing creation of art, a worker bee in the midst of a great number of other worker bees that were probably going through some of the same things as I was.

After all of those years of unneeded worries and shyness, I was finally rid of my shell and became the clever, creative, and impressionable social butterfly that I am today. Now a young adult, I often wonder, "Why in the world was I so timid... why did I worry so much about the most minute phenomenon's of life?" Oh, but if I would have known then what I know now! My mother to this day continues to grace me with that motherly wisdom. I will not deny that I still require it every once in a while. There are times now where I will ask for advice on how to handle a troublesome colleague at work, or even what I should say to my boss.

I do not regret the fact that my mother and I did not see everything exactly the same way. I fear that if it were not for the way she saw me, I would have never broken away from my own tyranny. She saw much more in me than I gave myself credit for. My mother never once showed any doubt that I could do

absolutely anything I set my mind to. The words I remembered her saying the most were, "Kasey, you can do this. I have every faith in you that you will get past this and be okay." As it turns out, I always was okay. Her confidence in me gave me a new insight into the person I was and what I had to offer to everyone around me. I became a color of vibrancy and was finally able to actually *see* the glow I so passionately possessed... exactly the way my mother did.