

As I sit down to write this, it was my fathers 70th birthday a few days ago. And for his birthday all his three children were asked to write something about our father and read it out in front of everyone. My brothers came prepared, with heartfelt loving messages, their words are already shown in my fathers birthday blog post.

But for me, I said nothing. I held my fathers arm after they said their words and everyone was eating cake, after my son had sung his birthday song to his Opa. And I said nothing. I couldn't say anything. The lump was stuck in my throat and I worried, that I'd just be a blubbering mess, trying, with little ability to express my love for my father. That enormity. That incredible fine balance on a knife-edge of loving so much, coupled with the great fear of loss.

You see, initially the request of speaking at his 70th birthday was along the lines of "what would you say at my funeral?"

Gulp.

And see, for a self confessed 'daddy's girl' I hide from the concept of my own father's mortality. The thought, that my go-to for advice and backup for just-about-everything could (ahem... does) have an inevitable end date leaves me feeling like someone just punched me in the guts.

But I let myself down. I said nothing that day, on his birthday celebration. Simply, because I couldn't express.... IT ALL... the gratitude, for the wisdom, for the disagreements that made me learn, for the boundaries that were held, for the support that's constantly given, for the endless love, for the feeling that he will always be there at the end of the phone (even if the news is on). How could I express all this? And so much more, which I felt was deserved (and asked for), yet a tall order for this 'daddy's girl' to put into words.

I guess at the heart of it, it's as simple as this, since becoming a parent I have discovered just HOW MUCH my father loves me (in fact how much ALL my parents love me, all four of them, but for now we're just talking about dad), because his love for me is expressed through my love for my sons.

I learnt to love by being loved.

And my greatest role to date, Motherhood, and my fulfillment in it, is therefore directly attributed to you dad.

But, dad can also be a bit of a shit, let's just be honest. You can't cook with onions, or garlic when preparing a family meal, when our great meaningful conversations come to the topic of God (a subject we wholeheartedly disagree on) he'll spend the next thirty minutes trying to convince me his opinion is CORRECT.

Stubborn he may be, but judgmental he his not, and his pursuit of PEACE is central to his work and that work creates ripples throughout the family, the community and indeed the world.

I believe that I chose one of the great men of this world to be my father. He is a light that shines, and is a light that shines in my heart. And that is expressed through the feeling of being loved, attracting a partner who truly loves me, knowing I'm worthy, knowing a strong woman is valued, knowing that I can, like really CAN, and I WILL because of the love my father has instilled in me.

This love, this sense of wholeness and worthiness, will be passed down to my children, and then their children and their children and so on. And my dad will be remembered. For creating a family of empowered, wholehearted, gentle, kind, strong, adventurous, courageous, passionate, driven people who will have an impact on this world... all this began with the love of my father. So he will be remembered. Forever and ever.

Happy 70th birthday dad! I love you back.