

My Mama!

As a child I remember riding behind mom on the tractor seat, waking up in wind rows of hay, hot breakfast and fantastic lunches in a row on the counter to get us off to school after of course she had already milked the cows or checked the cows depending on the season.

From an early age we were taught how to do things right or we simply had to do it over again.

For example separating the lights from darks and how to fold clothes. Oh yes that had to be done a certain way and the socks must match up! I remember it only took one rush job before I quickly learned to do it right as mom had me refold them all. To this day I still refold the clothes my husband folds sorry Gord.

At the ranch house dishes had to be done right after dinner. To this day I am still chewing my last bite and doing the dishes. After a party - oh ya whole house must be clean don't want to wake to a mess - thanks mom!

Everything had to be just so on the ranch... the equipment all lined in rows, rocks raked back into middle of road in the spring and most impressive of all was the round log ends on the buildings had to be white and the rest was red with the year they were built.. I remember one time ma in the bucket of a tractor, on a ladder, painting these log ends when I heard help me help me... I found mom on the ground with a messed up arm... I had to get ahold of Betty Paley on the CB she was the closest neighbor which was a couple miles ways.

I also remember every spring mom and I draining puddles into one another creating streams in the barnyard... yup in a weird

way that was fun and we did that often during the spring run off which was essential in helping to dry up the barnyard in the spring.

In the days of the school bus with Fred Hooper and Ralph Cooper ma would walk me to the bus at the top of the driveway in the morning with gum boots on as we had to go through the barnyard, and I would put my go to town shoes prior to boarding bus and then she would meet me in the afternoon with my gumboots. She also did this with me when I was driving to school as I left my truck on top of the hill and walked through the barnyard. Didn't want to get cow poop on my truck and take it to school. Occasional my gumboots would be left in a bag in the event she couldn't meet me.

Oh yes go to town clothes when we came home from school or town we had to change into old ranch clothes so it didn't matter if we ruined them.

When wanting to do something mom always said go ask your dad. I am not sure why she said that cause even when Dad said no we still went to Mom and she said yes. And yes she had to pick up the all the slack and flack from letting us go. When dad said no mom made all things possible!

Ma's famous milk cows most memorable was Annie and Tina!

And the milk and egg money as the result of the honor system in basement of the ranch house when people from the community would come in buys eggs and milk and leave money... I thought that was amazing and I got to spend some of it at the little corner store across from Riverview School...

Parties at the Baker Creek Community hall apparently mom drinking whisky and dancing on tables according to Gordon Fouty while I was probably asleep under the table....

How about all those feasts she cooked up for family and friends on the weekends. Our house was always full...

Spring cleaning at the Ranch House with Geradline & Joyce & Auntie Diane & Sherry. Man could that crew clean.... And later drink and eat!

How about all those off the grid poker games during calving season in January with Mike Paley, Harold Paley, Duane Paley, Joe Fouty, Fred Tibbles, Fred Hooper, Ralph Cooper, Gordon Forester, Auntie Diane and Uncle Bruce and of course Dad who usually went to bed mad as he was not nearly as lucky as mom! Teresa and I got to serve drinks to the poker players and we even got tipped. Sometimes these poker games were hosted at Peter and Elaine Coldwells.

Ma had me in many activities....

She had me in ballet, figure skating, gymnastics, and swimming.... And little did I know but I was her alibi for her bowling and curling! She later learned all I needed to do was run.

How about all the fun on hockey tournaments such as the time she took a random running vehicle for a spin in Fort St John after coming out of the pub.

I think we can imagine her trips to Hawaii with Mrs Zadnorosney and her bus trip to Reno with John and Joanne Marsh...

Getting kicked out of school only meant you spent four days on the tractor.

Many early mornings when waking up to pee as a young child I would wake to ma doing aerobics to the satellite tv, and then later I had to hang out at the Baker Creek and Nazko community hall and the West Frazer Barn while she taught aerobics.

I remember Dad and her having heated discussions about her bouncing around in the living room doing aerobics when she could be doing that outside working...

All the pitching of silage and cleaning the shaving piles and throwing square bales.

She checked the creek at the ranch by foot while the rest of us took a horse or motorbike...

She just told Danny, Jamie, Lana, Gord and I when we took a tour of the old ranch....how she fed the square baler conveyer belt so fast that no one could keep up to her at the other end in the loft in the barn. We totally believed her....

When feeling bad about a decision I made...
ma would say don't worry about it you did it for the right reason!
What comes around goes around! Which was one of her popular sayings. And I have to say on more accounts than none that held true. Somehow she always knew best.

One of the things that may not have been in my best interest when I was little was getting me addicted to dough, no not the money kind the raw kind... She always gave me the beaters and bowl to lick clean. And to this day I love raw dough.... But my love for mom's dough has helped us here in the kitchen at Sylvia's since she passed cause I know what the consistency and taste of what the dough should be.... Little more sugar Heather, little more cinnamon Wendy, but the others have to be the judge when it is baked cause I don't eat it after it is baked.

Ma had a **tough life**, at an early age she cared for her family. She was defiantly the responsible one and the money maker. I

remember stories about how she had to give Baba money and how she had to take Auntie Evy to school and it was a long walk. She worked so hard at everything she did and she never complained. It reminds me of scripture from Philippians 2:14 “do everything without grumbling or arguing, then you will shine among them like stars in the sky”. And she sure did shine in everything she did.

Mom had a lot to grumble and argue about but she didn't, through many bad deals and situations she kept her chin up and carried on. This is a trait I will always reflect on... She defiantly made lemonade when given lemons... And She often chimed in with what comes around goes around....

Mom was **extremely generous**... and as the bible teaches us in 2 Corininthians 9:6-8 “God loves a cheerful giver, whoever sows generously will also reap generously”. Mom gave and invested in a lot of people and she truly did it from her heart. She gave a lot and was given a lot in return.

She was all about following your dreams, she was a huge **advocate for getting an education**. She and Pat Marsh, sent me to Victoria to Dennis and Sue Sargents right out of high school... even though I didn't stick it out then I moved back home for 6 months then left again to Nanaimo where my old time friend of grade 3 Teresa Cunningham was pursuing her education and I remained on island getting my teaching degree and masters and stayed there for 22 years all because of ma's love and support.

In Mom and I's adult life we did many hikes and races together.

In 1998 we hiked the Chilkoot Pass with our cousins Art, Jeannie and Destiny Katzel where Jeannie called Sylvia Sylvia I am locked in outhouse.... So mom got out of tent and rescued

Jeannie she wasn't locked in just pushing the door the wrong way... man did we laugh and for many years later... she took pride in the fact that Jeannie called for her and not for Art her husband. Of all the amazing scenery and encounters with bears on that trip that is the story mom always told.

Then to Cape Scott on the Island mom and I having to ring out our sleeping bags in the middle of the night, made a fire and we started drinking box wine - little did we know we pitched our tents in a marsh it seemed so level and soft!

And when she came to the island we did day hikes at Rathtrevor Park and Englishmen River.

Hills Health Ranch - meeting there for a random weekend - going on a sleigh ride and having hot chocolate by fire and a sing a long. Not sure how I agreed to that location as she had a two hour drive and I had a ferry ride and a 6 hour drive!

Flying into Prince on a number occasions to deal with family drama and one time she got her meeting dates wrong so we had lunch and I flew back the same day to the island.

Mom loved music especially songs with clear lyrics with a story she especially like Tina Turner, Pam Tillis "Don't Tell Me What to Do" and Country Girl Shake it For me... She liked her music loud too non of the sappy slow stuff though... I remember hopping into a vehicle after she drove it and the music was always blaring. And she loved to dance especially the poka.

Merritt Mountain Music Festival ma blaming and cursing the razor for being dull but she actually still had the protective cover on man did we laugh...

And all those country music concerts that Gord and I went to with her and Gloria.

Attending Wine tours - during our restaurant conferences, being tipsy at 10:00 am on a bus with mom was a lot of fun.

Sparkling Hills in Vernon for spa trip which is a pretty nice place.... all mom could say when she returned back to cafe was "it was okay"!

Running Races - not only did she support my running but she also ran a 5km, 8km, 10km, and Half Marathon in her senior years. And still talking about having to do a marathon!

And numerous trips to Kelowna; after Gloria, Ruth, and Nancy moved on, to her dentist appointments! We had to find a pub where I could have wine and she could have a keno board! Then with covid I had to take my laptop for the keno board.... Stopping at gas stations for lottery tickets and Starbucks was also a must.

I would come to mom in tears with problems and for those who knew her she was a matter of a fact type of lady and she always had the best advice and I was always told not to cry! Had to be tough and not aloud to feel sorry for yourself. Even during her final hours during our thank yous and I love you's she said "Don't Cry"

And mama as my boss here at Sylvia's has been the best days of my life...

All I have to say is that my ma had tremendous foresight.

When she sent me away to school, then when I got my masters in Leadership and Training she knew what she was doing.

Somehow she knew I was an investment and that I would be back to help her 22 years later.

And I thanked her as it has been a pleasure getting to know mom and dad again in my adult years being back home with them for the past 15 years! And of course meeting my amazing husband Gord Redman.

Not very long ago mom and I were giggling at the fact that she didn't want me.. I was an oops 6 years after Candace and then I wasn't a boy.. Auntie Diane named me and she had to convince mom that she had to take me home... and now 52 years later she said that it was a good decision.

When I returned in 2007 ma was still doing everything the old school way... just as an example.... They did year end inventory by hand... writing down each item then counting it on fullscap paper! She didn't even sell energy drinks!

She was quick to learn the POS computer at the store and liked how we could log on remotely to fix something, or to check in and see what the girls were doing.

Ma and I have had many arguments when I first returned home to help her about the cafe. Don't you want to travel and see something different Mom.... And finally one day she got sooo mad and she said when I get tired of coming down those stairs I will just lock it up... Fair enough that is where those conversations ended.

Mom had no financial stress everything paid for so she really could just lock it up even though we all know she would never do that... just as we knew Sylvia's Cafe would be her resting place.

Over the years I would ask her why are you getting up so early and she would reply..

Cause Ken Hipkiss will be here at 12:30...

Ronny Larson will be here....

Nipper needs his coffee....

Armand stops in for tea...

And the list went on,....

As Ma's Motto was "you can sleep when your dead!" As Auntie Ginne phrased it so many years ago that she did not require much sleep.

Ma and I were a good team, she took care of the kitchen and I the business. Once again she wanted me to further my education and take some office courses cause the store could write it off... I said no thank you as I don't like office work I would rather serve customers!

Ma and I would grumble at each other cause being side by side working with your mom had its own dynamics. But we always ended each day with a kiss on the cheek and a I love you, see you in the morning and I will miss that forever.... At times it would be annoying cause she would just stand in my office door tapping her cheek for a kiss when I was in mid sentence on the computer! But it was our thing well kinda... cause some of the staff would be kissing her cheeks too... I could have been jealous but it always filled me with joy...

Ma would agree she has never had a way with words....

All too often she would say...

Carla can you apologize to so and so cause I think I may have not said it right.... Okay mom....

As we know mom always said it as it was....

Sometimes not much of a filter...

And how about her famous saying “a reject for a reject”. I finally got through to her that she can’t call the person receiving the reject cinnamon bun “a reject” but you were all so gracious with her and accepted it with the love she intended it with.

Ma corrected and told me what to do to the very day she passed... during her final hours she told me not to put egg in the pie dough, so Heather doesn’t.... ya I got a lot of tips in 15 years side by side

I think another fond memory is how neither her or I wanted to be boss... The girls always went to her first but then she sent them to me....

Role reversals were starting to happen with ma and I and she would just giggle as she and I reflected back...

When walking down the street and I had to wait for her... but when I was little she was so fast and never waited for me until I had a hissy fit in the middle of the street. Then she would give me her index finger and continued to fly down the street and I was like a little rag doll on the end bouncing all over. Man did we giggle about that....

Lately, she was telling me that I have to slow down, then I would tilt my head and look over my glasses and laugh cause we know that was “the pot calling the kettle black”. She was the hardest worker ever and never slowed down till the day she passed.

She always called older people old farts and she was older than them.

Loved to read her horoscope and often told me I had to read mine....

She loved to watch her soap operas but she called them her shows, family feud, jeopardy Heartland on weekends and the News was her entertainment, she also like to do word searches, but most of all she like to watch Sylvia's Reality Show which was displayed on her 16 cameras in her bedroom/livingroom.

And what is with reading the obituaries to see who you out lived! Guess it is a race of life when your in your 80's? And ma was competitive....

I also so appreciated the many of time you folks frequented the store and filled her heart with joy... she would call me and say guess who stopped in...

At times it was a bit of a guessing game cause names were never one of mom's strong points she usually had nick names or knew you by your order, instead... but as of late she got tremendous joy when many of you would sit down with her for a chin wag, or how about the Sunday breakfast gang (Barb, Sharon & Ben, Peter) and to all of you who she gave cinnamon buns too, or when you would bring in your little one for her to put 50.00 in the baby's hand... And all of you unrelated people who called her Granny, Baba, Mom... Man I could have been jealous.

The Coopers, Foutys and Paley families, soup and bun, milkshake or was it smily, her little red heads, and all her boy friends and the list goes on...

In the last few years Mom had a lot of little adventures...

We celebrated her her 80th birthday with many of you here... I took her to Arizona...

We did many days trips:

Went to Nazko, Kluskus, Fish Pot and Vanderhoof

Blackwater through the back on the road they built

Drove to the end of 3900 road as close as we could get to the Itcha Mountains

Drives to see the blocks she reforested
Gang Ranch

And the two most recent adventures were:
A tour of Our Old Ranch in April with our newly connected half brother, Jamie, thanks to Albert and Rainey and JT Renner.

And last month Gord, her and I squished in the jeep and drove around these 100 areas as we toured potential buyers and went in and out of every building something she had not done in a long time.

It was so comforting to see the joy all her accomplishments brought her. I am so happy she was proud of herself in her humble way. Keeping up to the Jones' was not her thing... She was as real and genuine as they came.

As I remember my remarkable mom, role model, friend and boss I take comfort knowing she is resting in heavenly peace with her pre-deceased family. She worked to the day she passed doing what she truly loved to do...

Serving all of you! The amazing patrons over the years who inspired her to do this for 35.5 years. You all brought her so much joy so it is actually your fault she never got out of here.

How does the saying go if you love your job you never work a day in your life.... And this was mom she had it all here at her store.... Heck she didn't even have to go to town she could just shop at Sylvias. And the biggest part of her happiness was that she had all of you for all the love and companionship she needed.

The relationships you people had with her and the lives she touched will be missed and never forgotten. I know this is an over used cliché but when I seen so many of you in the store with

crocodile tears I know she was more special and amazing than I ever knew. I thank you for giving her a beautiful life filled with amazing relationships and joy.

The bottoms line is...

We all wanted more for mom than she ever wanted for herself. She had the financial means to do whatever she wanted but she did what she wanted to do. This was her truly her happy place.