**When I was a little girl**, I was told to do many things by my Mother and Father. At that time, I had very little choices in the matter. When they said, it is time to eat, I had to eat.

When my parents said, go to bed. Even if I was not sleepy, I was made to go to bed.

Most of the day, I was told what to do and what not to do. I was told what to say and how to say it. I was told how to sit and where I could sit. Moreover, this went on for most of my younger years. It seemed like I was being corrected at every moment of the day. It seemed like I could do nothing to please both of them at the same time.

There were a few moments in my day, when I went outside to play or when I found a quiet space in the house and no one was around. In those times, I could be myself.

As I got older, more times of leisure came my way and I had opportunities to make my own decisions and say whatever I wanted to say.

When I was alone, I could say whatever I liked. I could eat whatever I could get my hands on, at the time. I could sit anywhere and any way. No one was around, who could tell me what to do.

When I grew up and became a little older, I began making a few of my own choices without permission from my parents. However, their influences had already embedded themselves into my mind. Whenever I made a decision to do something or to go somewhere, I could hear what I thought was the opinion of my parents. So there were times that I ended up making a decision based on what I thought they would prefer me to do instead of what I planned on doing.

I don’t know why I retained memories regarding their opinions for me; however I believe this is normal.

Now that I am older and wiser, I have the freedom and ability to choose all my decisions. But just like my parents, there are still rules, laws and authorities that limit some of the choices that I can make, even now.

As I am older and can better understand the things that surround my life, I find that my parents were providing a type of structure for me, just as their parents tried to provide a typed of structural life for them.

My parents understood that there were laws of the land and in order to fit into society comfortably every member in the household would have to be told and/or trained on how and what to do and say. Their fears and love tried to protect me.

For many years in my life, I rebelled against most of what they tried to instill into me. I was angry and filled with deep regret on the methods that they used to embed into me their policies and their regulations.

At that time, I believed that they could have done it in a more loving way, like the pictures on the television or movies. I believed that all they had to do was to, float over to me and in the voice of an angel, kindly say to me: “Theresa, please darling come in here and eat the wonderful food that I enjoyed taking time to prepare for you, my sweet little darling girl”.

Back then, it hurt my heart, that my parents did not speak to me in these types of loving words all of the time.

My reality was plain and simple, “You come down here and eat or you go to bed hungry”. Now that I think about it, she never really sent me to bed hungry :)

I have more time alone now. I can make my own decisions again. I also have had three wonderful sons for whom, I am so very proud of.

I look back on the way that I raised my children. I told myself when they were little that I was not going to use any of the tactics that my parents used on me.

There was a day, or two, or three or, well you know what I am saying. I found myself yelling out, “If you don’t come down here and eat, you will go to bed hungry.”

Was I really going to send them to bed hungry?

History sure does repeat itself, over, and over and over.

My oldest son just came by to visit me, as I was writing this piece. He said me, that as parents, we sometimes neglect to present our messages properly; the way a child would like to hear them. This is true.

However, as the children grow older and experience their life, the wise ones can look back and recognize, that our messages were meant for structuring the child’s life and done out of love.

Parents over the years have made plenty of mistakes. On a scale from one to ten, with ten representing the best structural representation for raising a child, my parenting techniques could easily be place in the lower numbers, at times.

My hope is that as my sons grow in stature and in faith, they have an opportunity to realize that my intentions were meant for all good.

It would be nice if both Mother and Fathers could be given some sort of Grace Pass by the young adults of this generation. As a parent, I know that we have made several mistakes, many that maybe hard to forgive.

Now, however, is the time that we can learn what tactics are necessary for the healing of the past. Now, it is time to move forward giving back to ourselves the gifts of the heart that we did not receive. It is time for each of us to learn how to experience the gifts of joy, comfort, and peace.

In earlier times, we had to depend on our parents for these gifts and we had no choice in the matter. Now, we can choose. I choose me. I choose to lift myself up and rise to the occasion in peace, comfort, and prosperity.

We are no longer children and we do not have to hang on to our past. We have the power to walk right out of those memories and to walk right into our future by encouraging ourselves. As we complete this task, everything will fall in order and we will find ourselves encouraging others on our journey of life as well.

I send out a call to all who were hurt as children, who are now older and wiser, and say, “Let us look back and smile inside with a forgiving heart because the next little ones, who come down this same path way will one day, be our judges.

I pray that they too, will have the courage and wisdom, to look back at us and say, “It is alright, mom and dad. I now understand that it was all done in love”. TQB 8/6/2012