

I have always thought I knew my Mom very well, but I never did, not a single bit, until she burst into tears and started sobbing uncontrollably in front of me for the first time of my life.

I was lying in the hotel watching YouTube videos, morning sun shined on my face but I had no intention of getting up. Hardworking weekdays of my internship finally came to a brief stop and I was savoring the moment of a Saturday morning. Then suddenly all of this was ruined by some rapid knockings on the door. Unreluctantly, I answered the door, only to find my Mom standing outside, with a big 'surprise' smile on her face.

I never expected her to visit me nor did I want it. I was at that strange stage of life when I thought it would be lame to hang out with my parents. They always loved me, but I took their love for granted. After I went to college in a different country, I would sometime purposefully deny their facetime call when I was having fun with my friends, even though it would be totally convenient for me to take it. As my mom was unpacking and taking out some of the favorite snacks I love, I remained grumpy and even a little angry with her showing up without telling me, not noticing her smile froze as I kept my attitude. She sat in a chair and didn't say anything, only staring at my face. At first, I thought she was too tired from her travel and stopped complaining. But all of a sudden, she crumbled into tears, going out of control and could not hear anything I said. She just sat there, cried and cried until she could calm down enough to hear me asking "Mom what's going on?" She refused to answer, repeating "no, I cannot answer" like she was convincing herself not to tell me the thing. As I finally realized something serious went wrong, I sat with my Mom for hours until she broke down to me the secret of her life.

Dad has been cheating on her for 10 years. To make things worse, she found out about it 5 years ago but my Dad kept cheating even though she told him to stop. They have been acting in front of me the whole time to keep my focus on my study. As she was talking, my body froze, as if someone pinned me into a coffin. I was screaming inside while the outside of my body remained cold, heart frozen. My brain got stuck, running at its maximum speed trying to figure out the first sentence but I failed. As soon as I could finally semantically understand it, I

clenched my fist tightly and my mind went down a deep dark path where I am holding my father's lover's neck and trying to break it. Then as I went on to the second sentence, I was like a robot who does not want to listen to the command. However, 18 years of logical training guided me to keep on processing. She found out about it 5 years ago? But he kept on cheating on her for 5 years? How many times did my Dad stay out late on weekends during the 5 years when he is actually meeting his lover? But still, I wanted to hit the brake on my thought, while doing so the brake broke and I, too, started sobbing uncontrollably. The image of the word "father" broke into thousands of little pieces and I found my dad so unfamiliar and far away from me. Just a month ago before I started my internship, I looked up to him as the head of his company. He seemed like he had knowledge of everything to me, and I had always been proud when people say I inherited a lot of good traits from my father. But now, all of these are gone.

I wanted to go back home immediately to condemn my Dad for everything he had put my Mom through. Just as I grabbed my Mom's arm to leave for home, she stopped me, saying she felt relief telling me the secret and she will sort things out, begging me not to say anything to my Dad so that we could still stay a family. That's when I understand the notion of family. A family is not something I bear with, not something bound by blood, but something members of which need to pay everything to maintain out of pure love. My mom loves me so much that she has been struggling with basically everything in the world for the past 5 years. Struggle with the man who promised to love her till death, struggle with helping me through my study, struggle with my temper and ill-understanding of her endeavor. I suddenly realized I have been a terrible and childish son, who took my family's love for granted and did not pay any effort back. Even though my Dad caused everything but I am not the one worthy enough to condemn him for what he did.

Ever since then, I have been keeping in touch with my parents and providing them with the love and support from a son that they deserve. Even though it's minimal compared to what they did for me, I will always try my best.