

Dear Mom:

I love you mama, but not for the reasons that you would expect or things that you are known for. My reasons are wrapped up in the everyday things - not special events. They are gifts that others take for granted in their everyday lives that to me are so simple yet so special.

First off, I love that you taught me to read. I read almost obsessively. It doesn't matter if it's a cereal box or a receipt. I need to read. You also taught me to love the library and I do. I also take out stacks of books just like you – some I read, some I bring back because it's ok not to finish a book you don't like.

Second: It was not the women's movement or other social issues that you were actively involved with during my youth that made me proud. Don't get me wrong, those are good reasons for pride, but it was the complete opposite that made me proud.

- I love the fact that you are an excellent cook and baker. I get fat on all the goodies you make and I'm so proud when I share (but not too much!) with my friends who love your baking. There are not many people that can cook and bake and I'm so proud that you can. You have always made the most amazing meals. I love your spaghetti sauce, it is 2nd to none!
- I love that you knit and sew. I am always wearing what you make and I'm so proud that I tell everyone that you made it. My regret is that I didn't learn.

There is more:

I love that you know and have used quotes from Shakespeare, poets, the bible, etc.

I love that you made it a priority that the holidays are special no matter what. They are always important even if we don't feel it. You bring out the china, the stuffed celery and the silverware for example and you always wear your Christmas socks and earrings.

I love that you take off and travel.

I love that you love animals and we always had them growing up. You look at animals as if they had their own individual personalities and characteristics as if they were a characters right out of a children's book.

I love that you have given me the love for history. Having long discussions of U.S. or European history with someone who is informed is truly a gift that I savor. I also love when you talk about the history of our family: how you met dad, living in New York, and hearing about great aunts that I have never met and other characters in our family tree and the crazy things they did.

I love that sometimes you make me laugh so hard that I double over and fall to my knees.

I love that you brought me up on God, Jesus, Mary and all the Saints and how you can instill humor in discussing them and as if they were not some far off distant cold being but are near us and relatable.

We have had highs and rock bottom lows. We are getting older and I know there will come a time when we will part briefly in our journey together, but I know it won't be for long. It will be difficult during that time not to see each other, rehash old memories, complain about the political candidates, try out a new restaurants, etc. When we do get together again after this brief pause, we'll catch up.

I love you mama.

Carla