



A Letter to My Mom A Diabetes Perspective

Contributed by Kelly Alladina, RN, BSN, CDE –an individual with type 1 diabetes turned diabetes educator at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. Kelly is giving back to the type 1 community and working alongside the endocrinologist who diagnosed her nearly twenty years ago.

Dear Mommy,

I'm a grown-up now. I know I'm still your baby but I promise you I'm 28 years old and I'm a big girl now. I even have my own baby. Hard to believe, right?

We don't always talk about our feelings but I want you to know that I think you raised me and Ryan perfectly. Every day wasn't perfect, but our lives would not be the same had you not been there for us as you were. In the end everything is perfect.

We have never really talked about how you felt when I was diagnosed with diabetes. I was always ok with it. Yes, it stinks to have diabetes. But to me, it's just a part of my life. Being a diabetes educator now, though, I see what you had to go through. I meet parents every day that are devastated to hear that their child will have to take shots the rest of their life. I remember that day when I was 11 and you had to convince me to come to the doctor because I was drinking and peeing a lot. I didn't want to go and I was in denial that something was wrong, even at 11 years old. We went to the doctor and they immediately called us back and told us to head to the hospital.

I remember driving and asking you, "Do I have diabetes?" and I remember you telling me yes. But neither of us really knew what that meant. I remember Dr. Rappaport talking to us in the emergency room and asking about my symptoms. He asked me if I had been wetting the bed and I said no. I lied. That was too embarrassing. Did you know that?

I remember getting home shortly after our education classes and my blood sugar going low overnight. I remember you and Daddy were right there watching me drink my juice and rechecking my blood sugar.

Do you remember all of this? I'm sure you do, but just from a different view point.

I already said I think the way you raised me was perfect. But I want you to also know that the way you and Daddy approached my diabetes and how we managed it was also perfect. My blood sugars were actually never perfect and I'm pretty sure I only checked my blood sugar 2 or so times/day during high

school, but the fact that you were there for me made a huge difference in the way that I am now. There was a fine line between us-- enough independence for me but I also always knew you were there to support me.

Thank you for always watching over me when I had low blood sugars. Even though I hated it (and still do) that you get so worried, I get it now. You have to be that way. But just remember, I only need about 4 oz. of juice...not 16.

Thank you for constructing a special garter for me to wear under my prom dress to fit my pump. That was a good idea.

Thank you for always ordering my supplies, especially when I would inform you that I needed new strips like....yesterday.

Thank you for bringing me supplies whenever I needed them. Remember I would call you in high school when I would forget to fill my insulin cartridge for my pump? Without hesitation you would bring me whatever I needed, no questions asked and no "getting onto me." Remember I did that not too long ago and Daddy brought me some insulin at work? Yes, I'm an adult but these things still happen. Thank you.

Thank you for sticking up for me when I got in trouble for using my cell phone in high school to call you for diabetes-related issues.

Thank you for not asking too much about my diabetes while I was in college. Thank you for allowing me to divulge that information as I pleased. I know it must have killed you.

Thank you for being worried when I moved into a "single" dorm room in college. You were so worried that something would happen to me and no one would know. I thought this was ridiculous, but now I get it. Thank you.

Thank you for being a phone call away when I was pregnant. Thank you for getting on the first flight when I told you she was coming that day. Remember when we couldn't even talk to each other that day because we were both crying? Daddy had to get on the phone and calm us both down. Remember after she was born my blood sugar had gone up to like 200, and everyone was frantic because it was too high? Thanks for not being frantic, because I was really ok with 200 at that point... better than 50, right?

Thank you for STILL worrying when I have a low blood sugar, and STILL reminding me to bring insulin to your house if I'm going to sleep over. Yes I'm 28 but I'm also a human.

And last...

Thank you for being an awesome Mimi to my baby. You've shown me how to be an awesome mommy. I hope that my baby will not get diabetes; but if she does, I will look to you to see how to act.

I love you! Happy Mother's Day!

Love,
Kelly