

The Day I Saw My Mom Cry

On December 31st, 2017, my family and I went to my aunt's house for the New Year's Eve celebration, just like we did every year. But that time, I decided to do a twist to the festivities, changing my life forever. I convinced myself to finally be honest about who I am to my mom.

We all got there around 9 pm, looking as elegant as possible. After all, it was New Year's Eve, and the Venezuelan tradition was to wear something new to receive the New Year. I looked at my mom while we got out of the car after parking, and she was looking stunning in a long black dress with full makeup with tints of gold. I could not stop thinking of how I did not want to ruin her beauty by making her cry. I knew deep down that it was going to happen regardless.

The night went by as smoothly as possible while we celebrated the family reunion. My pocket started buzzing repeatedly. I received several texts from my girl best friend asking if I told my mom already. She was one of the few of my friends who knew my secret. And she was as scared as I was.

Thirty minutes before midnight, we were all gathered in the backyard of the house. The wind was blowing towards us, intensifying the chills that were running throughout my body. I constantly watched the hours pass, *when would it be the perfect time to tell her*. I had to do it before midnight, or that was the deal I made to myself to finally say the truth.

Fifteen minutes before the New Year, I slowly breathed in, gathering all the possible courage to approach her. As I started walking toward her, my teeth began to clench. The pain from my gums was rapidly increasing, but my mind decided to destroy my teeth to hold myself together. I finally approached her. "I have something to tell you," I said while moving my mom aside from the tumultuous agglomeration at my aunt's house. Her eyebrows frowned from the

statement that came out of my mouth. She was completely intrigued, and she did not have a clue about what was going on. “Can we go inside?” I added while my heart was going faster and faster, bumping my chest as if it were the drums of a rock band.

We both walked inside the house. The noise of the music was slowly diminishing, and I could only hear the blow of the AC on top of the white wall in the living room. I decided to sit down on the black sofa next to the kitchen. The living room was empty at the time, a spacious living room with a black and white color scheme with a tint of green thanks to the illuminated and heavily decorated Christmas tree placed in the corner next to where I was sitting.

I could not find the words to start the conversation. I did not even practice how I wanted to approach the topic without killing my mom on the way. I only wanted acceptance and love from her, but the end was uncertain. I started the conversation with how much I loved her. Her face was full of love and warmth, with a big smile. “Are you proposing or something?” she jokingly said towards my words. She always found a way to light up my day, but it was not working this time.

I tried to continue the topic, but someone came into the living room, making my body shake even more. I had to tell my mom before midnight, and I was running out of time, but I did not want everybody to know but her. She was the only one in my family I trusted enough to show my true self.

I guided my mom toward my cousin’s room. I needed more privacy between us. Otherwise, my mind was not going to cooperate with me. And my body was not cooperating enough to add my brain to the mess of the occasion.

“I like guys,” I said. There was silence. No words came out of her mouth. But the words were unnecessary because her eyes gave me all the answers I did not want to hear. Pain and sorrow were the only things I saw as if it had been my death. Her head shook, and tears came

out of her eyes. The noise of my thoughts intensified as the minutes passed. She was speechless. "Say something, please," I shakily said without breath. The darkness inside of me was slowly growing in my body. Sadness and hopelessness were the only emotions going round and around in me. *I lost her.*

We did not have a chance to talk about what I said. I heard loud knocks on the door. A relative started banging on the door. It was close to midnight, so the New Year's countdown was nearby. We had to get out of the room with our emotions still all over the place.

"You can do it, smile, and breathe," I constantly repeated to myself while getting out of my aunt's house. I heard noises, and I saw faces. But I could only see my mom's head shake and tears from when we were in the bedroom. The image was going over and over in my head like a broken movie. It was hard to pretend everything was fine in front of my family. But I was not the only one struggling. My mom had to sit down. And me knowing her better, she might have said she drank too much to avoid the truth.

I will never forget how intense that day was for me. And yet my mom and I have not touched on the gay topic since then. It is like it never happened for her, or at least it is how she shows it to me.

It is difficult for a person to pretend to be someone else. It was difficult for me up to that day. She never knew about my sexuality. But how could a mother who is the one who gave birth to me and who is supposed to know me through and through not know about her child's likes and dislikes? It is a mystery because there are different reasons based on the case. But I realize some people prefer to live in denial. And she was living in denial. I imagine for her it is somehow easy to block feelings or reality rather than face them. However, it does not benefit her in any way. Reality always comes around the corner, and the truth hit my mom the hardest.

She currently still chooses to be in denial. However, I do not regret coming out to her because there is nothing more relieving than living in the truth. I do not have to hide or lie about something that is a part of who I am. I do not have to control how I express myself in front of people. I do not have to pretend I like someone I do not. It would have been easier for me if I did not go through the whole coming out. Yes. But it is an act of bravery I had to do. And I can finally say I am on that bright side of life after the dark tunnel.

I always say a mother is a mother, no matter what. And the equation goes both ways. A son is a son, regardless. And sexuality is something that does not change the fact that we are still family. She did not realize that at the time. I guess she was scared about me getting hurt because being different from the majority is not easy, and she wants me to have the best life. However, my parents are supposed to be there and guide me throughout the journey of life. She forgot about that on that day. But I will never blame her for reacting the way she did. She pictured my future differently. And I completely changed her perspective.

I can say that I am pretty lucky. My mom could have decided to hate me and cut relationships with me. Or she could have kicked me out of the house that day. And my life could have gone down. Instead, she chose to love on top of anything else.

I hear worldwide stories of kids who go through so much pain solely for being gay. Murder. Suicide. Homelessness. And the list goes on and on. But the only pain I got from my sexuality was emotional. And it ceased when I told her. But the journey does not end with coming out to my family. Now I have to face the reality of the world. And I know it will not be easy. People out there do not like me, and some will find a way to destroy me. But even though my mom does not talk about it, I know I have her back. And no matter how hard the future is going to be. I am ready for it because I am happy with who I am, but most importantly, I am free.