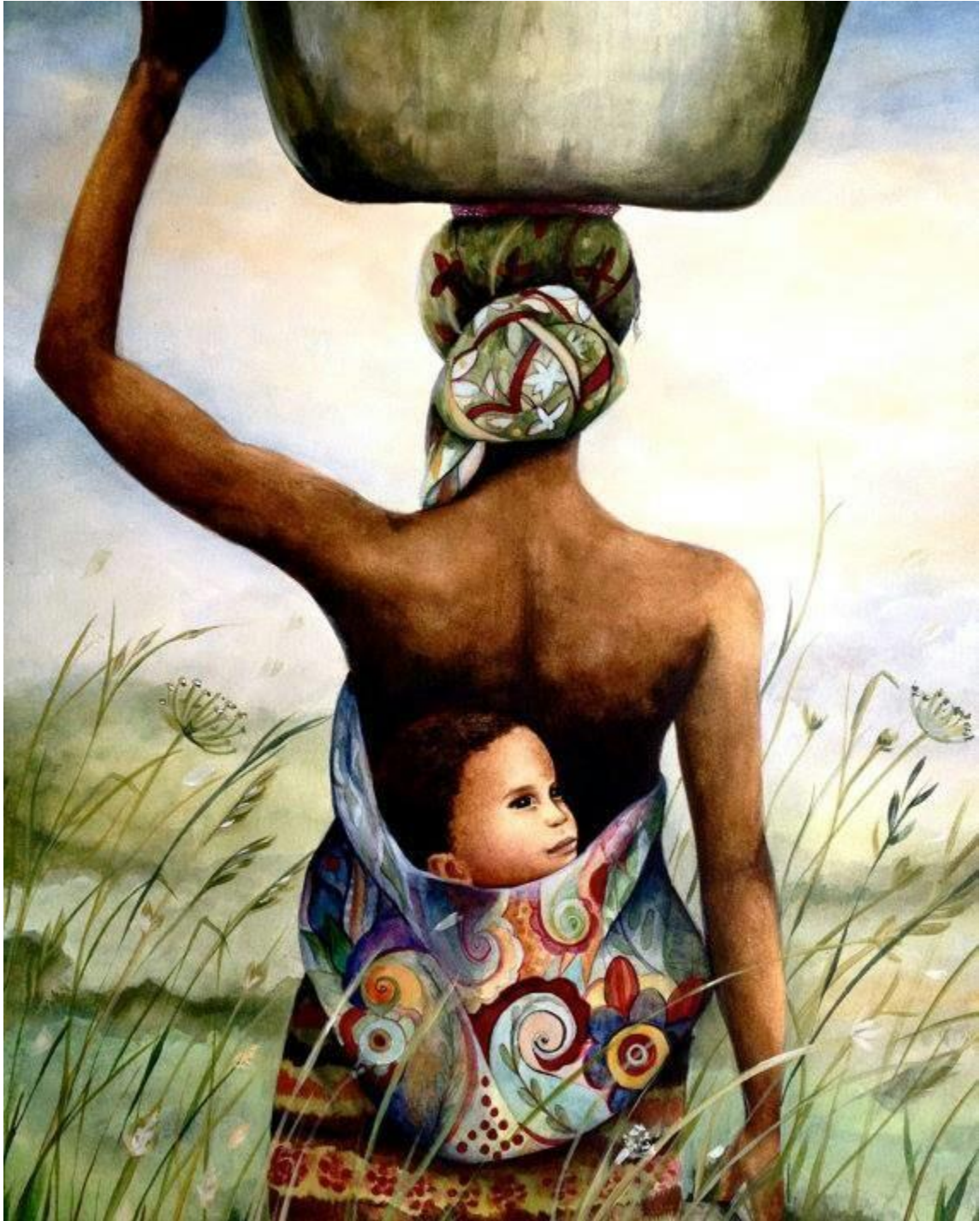


*To Mothers,
Happy Mother's Day.*





Hello,

My name is Sandra and I am the founder and creator of the Conversations256.

I started the Conversations256 to share my passion for writing and to create a safe space for us to find our voices, start our own conversations and tell our own stories.

I reached out to the Conversation256 Community and challenged them to write to their Mom's on Mother's Day.

At the heart of each of these essays are powerful stories and lessons.

These are stories by and about mothers, mothers-in-law, and grandmothers: the women who gave us our lives and taught us how to live them.

This is my gift to all you mothers, aunts and grandmothers

Happy Mother's Day

I hope you enjoy them.

I hope you enjoy today!

One day out of the year,

We have this beautiful opportunity to give back the people

Who have given us so much: our mothers.

We love them (at times, maybe not so much) and as we get older, sometimes, we become them.

Whether she carried you inside of her for nine months

Or is a non-blood related woman, who has loved you like her own,

Most people can identify a person who they can remember and be thankful for on this holiday.

So, Mothers, this one is for you:

Mother's love is peace. It need not be acquired, it need not be deserved.

– Eric Fromm

THE SMILE THAT STAYED WITH ME

By Patricia, Uganda

My mother didn't live long enough.

That beautiful, strong woman that birthed me, Miriam; she didn't live long enough.

It always breaks my heart when I think of the life we could have shared and the memories we could have created. The loss of my mother, it left behind a wound that never quite healed. I just learnt to hide the pain better. But I carry with me the memory of her smile.

I like to imagine sometimes, that she is watching. I give everything I have to whatever I set my mind to just in case she is watching; such that she looks down upon me and.....smiles.

After my mother died, I was lucky enough to be granted another, My Grandmother.

She took on the role of mom with such grace and patience; never once complaining about having to raise and deal with teenage tantrums again. We had so little and yet she made the little we had seem enough. I remember sometimes, when school visitation days came around; granny always made sure that she was there. Sometimes she came empty handed while other times she brought whatever little she could. And whenever she came with nothing; she always promised to send when her finances got better. The effort and love with which she took care of me was a special gift.

The parts about myself that I hold dear and cherish were all planted and allowed to blossom under my granny's care. My independence and fearlessness, my compassion and empathy, the fierceness which I attack whatever obstacles are in my way that has earned me the nickname "super hustler."

From a young age, she drilled into me that no matter how bad the situation is, no matter how ugly things get; I can always rise above. No matter what!

This Mother's Day I choose to remember the memory of my mother's radiant smile and to cherish the grandma that calls me 'daughter.'

Happy Mother's Day Grandma; to you I wish more life and health.

You already have all my love.



TWO SIMPLE WORDS

By Abigail, New Jersey

On the first day of first grade,

I stood by the front door with butterflies in my stomach.

I voiced my biggest concern to my mother:

“How will I make friends?”

Crouching in front of me, she handed me advice I carry with me to this day:

“Be Switzerland.”

Be friends with everyone. Treat everyone equally and fairly.

For all of my 20 years, I have lived by these words.

Soon I will graduate and become a part of the real world.

And on that first day, nervously facing new responsibilities,

I know I will whisper two words to myself: “Be Switzerland.”

Mom with Only Eye

By Unknown

My mom only had one eye. I hated her, she was such an embarrassment. My mom ran a small shop at a flea market. She collected little weeds and such to sell anything for the money we needed. She was such an embarrassment.

There was this one day during elementary school. I remember that it was field day, and my mom came. I was so embarrassed. How could she do this to me? I threw her a hateful look and ran out. The next day at school, "Your mom only has one eye?!" and they taunted me.

I wished that my mom would just disappear from this world so I said to my mom, "Mom, why don't you have the other eye?! You're only going to make me a laughingstock. Why don't you just die?" My mom did not respond. I guess I felt a little bad, but at the same time, it felt good to think that I had said what I'd wanted to say all this time. Maybe it was because my mom hadn't punished me, but I didn't think that I had hurt her feelings very badly.

That night I woke up, and went to the kitchen to get a glass of water. My mom was crying there, so quietly, as if she was afraid that she might wake me. I took a look at her, and then turned away. Because of the thing I had said to her earlier, there was something pinching at me in the corner of my heart. Even so, I hated my mother who was crying out of her one eye. So I told myself that I would grow up and become successful, because I hated my one-eyed mom and our desperate poverty.

Then I studied really hard. I left my mother and came to Seoul and studied, and got accepted in the Seoul University with all the confidence I had. Then, I got married. I bought a house of my own. Then I had kids, too. Now I'm living happily as a successful man. I like it here because it's a place that doesn't remind me of my mom.

This happiness was getting bigger and bigger, when someone unexpected came to see me "What?! Who's this?!" It was my mother... Still with her one eye. It felt as if the whole sky was falling apart on me. My little girl ran away, scared of my mom's eye.

And I asked her, "Who are you? I don't know you!!" as if I tried to make that real. I screamed at her "How dare you come to my house and scare my daughter! Get out of here now!!" And to this, my mother quietly answered, "oh, I'm so sorry. I may have gotten the wrong address," and she disappeared. Thank goodness, she doesn't recognize me. I was quite relieved. I told myself that I wasn't going to care, or think

about this for the rest of my life.

Then a wave of relief came upon me. One day, a letter regarding a school reunion came to my house. I lied to my wife saying that I was going on a business trip. After the reunion, I went down to the old shack, that I used to call a house, just out of curiosity there, I found my mother fallen on the cold ground. But I did not shed a single tear. She had a piece of paper in her hand; it was a letter to me.

She wrote:

My son,

I think my life has been long enough now and I won't visit Seoul anymore, but would it be too much to ask if I wanted you to come visit me once in a while? I miss you so much. And I was so glad when I heard you were coming for the reunion.

But I decided not to go to the school. For you.

I'm sorry that I only have one eye, and I was an embarrassment for you. You see, when you were very little, you got into an accident, and lost your eye. As a mother, I couldn't stand watching you having to grow up with only one eye... so I gave you mine.

I was so proud of my son that was seeing a whole new world for me, in my place, with that eye. I was never upset at you for anything you did.

The couple times that you were angry with me. I thought to myself, 'it's because he loves me.' I miss the times when you were still young around me.

I miss you so much. I love you. You mean the world to me."

Motherhood: All love begins and ends there.

– Robert Browning

Never Stop Dreaming

By John Kaikara, Buziga, Uganda.

“I remember as a young child, times were financially hard in our family. Mom worked really hard and never made enough. She would sometimes have to borrow money from people to make ends meet.

Still once a month, she would buy some chicken and she would roast it for us with a side serving of kachumbali.

She knew how special that meal was; it was our father’s favorite meal and the last thing we ate with him before he died.

There were times when the situation was so bad that we could barely afford to buy kerosene for the oil lamp. So we would sit outside our small house and look at the stars and share Dad’s favorite meal.

We did this every month; sharing stories, remembering Dad and dreaming about the future.

Mom dreamt too.

I was too young to understand the significance of the example she was setting before us by refusing to sacrifice her dreams. But, as I grew up, got married and had children, I came to understand the importance of never sacrificing a dream.

My mother didn’t let her circumstances stop her from dreaming.

She’s a proud owner of a great restaurant now. “



JUST A LITTLE MORE OF YOUR MAGIC

By Bonita , Uganda

It is impossible to put into words everything I should be thankful for.

When I think of my childhood, the first person that always comes to mind is you. I know raising us was not easy.

Between our stubborn fights and my bratty stage in life, sometimes I don't understand how you handled it.

To me, you're not only my mom; you're the strongest woman I know. You constantly showed us to find the good in life, even when it was even hard to find yourself.

I know being a single mom was difficult.

You made it look easy to balance a career, daughters, and being active in the community, even when I knew it wasn't.

Your selfless manner is one of the many reasons we will always look up to you.

Your unconditional love has made us understand what love truly is. When we were surrounded by the solitude of each other, every day, your unconditional love was all we needed.

You gave us double the love that we ever needed and deserved. It was more than making us feel loved; it was teaching us that even through the difficult situations, we are loved.

The will that you have to never give up was something that I aspire to have one day. Even on the days when all you wanted to do was take a nap after a long day at work, you put us before yourself.

You never gave up on the things that we needed and continued to give us more than we ever deserved. Even when we doubted ourselves, you never gave up on us.

You were at every school event and many more, and never gave up.

And your constant motivation gave us the confidence to accomplish many great tasks in life, and we wouldn't have done it if it weren't for you.

Growing up with a single parent is not the perfect storybook situation, but when it is a single mom like you, I do not need storybook.

The strength, unconditional love, and support that you gave us was more than any two parents could ever fulfill.

I never looked at having a single-parent as a disadvantage, because I get to brag about how awesome my one parent is. I can't tell you enough how much it means to us that you are always next to us with a smile on your face, encouraging us to be the best people we could possibly be.

As I get older, I realize that I should take time to thank you for the countless things you did in our lives. But when I think about it, a simple thank you is not enough.

It is more than a thank you. It's the words that I can't put together just knowing that you are in our lives.

When I know everything else in my life may not be constant, I know you always will be.

It is more than a thank you, my Mummy. It's more than saying "I love you with all my heart" because that's still not enough.

So here's to you mom, not only my mummy, but my selfless, compassionate, loving, and inspiring single mom.

There is something about you mummy, the way you keep trying, the way you don't give up.

A little more of you in the world, a little more of your magic.

Just a little more of you and we all be alright..

Happy mother's day My Mummy♥

"There is nothing as powerful as mother's love and nothing as healing as a child's soul."

Destined

By Katrina, Indiana

“I was chosen to be your mama,”

I tell my four-year-old daughter as my younger boys pull at my clothes.

She looks at me tearfully and asks,

“Why couldn’t I grow in your tummy like my brothers?”

“Well,” I tell her, choking back my own tears,

“The doctor said I couldn’t grow a baby in my tummy, so your daddy and I decided to adopt a baby. That baby was you.”

I hold my breath and wait for a more difficult question.

“Can I have some ice cream?” she asks.

“Yes!” I say,

Thankful for her innocence.

We are born of love; Love is our mother.



— *Rumi*

A SONG FROM HEART

By Emmanuel Otwom

I can't express how grateful I am that you are my mother.

I could never ask for a better person to be my mother because you and I are a perfect match. I know I'm poor at communication and emotion but here goes,

 _mama i love you, mama mama mama i love youu_ 

i hope you remember that song

You are the strongest person I know when you really put your mind to something.

You are the most innovative person.

You are fearless in the face of danger and at the same time extremely compassionate.

I'm pretty sure I wouldn't be the man I am today if someone else had raised me.

I love you.

Happy mother's day.

“Life began with waking up and loving my mother's face.”



Prayer Warrior

By Jennifer, Gayaza, Uganda

“I never had a mother while growing up.

I was raised by my grandmother and she is my mother, my friend and my prayer warrior.

A few years ago, I was in the delivery room and I had to have an emergency C-section.

I can't even begin to explain to you the fear I felt about being cut open-for both me and my child.

But I remember grasping my husband's hand and refusing to let go until he called my grandmother.

When we had her on loudspeaker, there's a certain sense of calm that enveloped me.

In that moment, I knew that I would be okay.

I was too out of it later on to remember all the details-my husband was too nervous he hang up on her- but later he said he'd heard her start to pray even before he hang up.

We would later find out that she prayed through the whole night and only stopped upon hearing news that I and my baby were okay.

If there's anything that got me through the most terrifying moment of my life-it was my grandmother's prayer.

If there's anything that will get me through life, it is the gift of prayer that my grandmother taught me.”

“God could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers. ...”



To The Love of My Life

By Barbara, Uganda.

Dear mommy,

There's no letter that's long enough to describe the love I have for you so I'll keep this short. I've always liked to think that you're away on an everlasting business trip. It gives me a sense of peace and safety, makes me feel like you're near. I can't begin to explain how much I miss you; it could take me a lifetime. Such a kind and golden hearted person you were, an inspiration to mankind; and even in your absence, you inspire me to be a better a person every day. You raised me so well mommy, thank you so much.

Mother's day is here and even though you aren't around to see this day, I just want to let you know that I love you so much and I celebrate and pray for you every day.

My soul mate, my heroine, my best friend, my love....I shall keep you in my heart, forever and always.

Cheers to you, mom!

Happy mother's day mommy!

"All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother. ..."

DATE WITH A WOMAN!

By Anonymous

After 10 years of marriage, my wife wanted me to take another woman out to dinner and a movie.

She said i love you but I know this other woman loves you too and would love to spend some time with you. The other Woman that my wife wanted me to take out was my mother who has been a widow for 19 years, but the demands of my work and my three children had made it possible to visit her only occasionally. That night I called to invite her to go out for dinner and a movie.

'What's wrong, are you well,' she asked?

My Mother is the type of woman who suspects that a late night call or a surprise invitation is a sign of bad news.

'I thought that it would be pleasant to be with you,' I responded. 'Just the two of us'

She thought about it for a moment, and then said,

'I would like that very much.'

That Friday after work, as I drove over to pick her up i was a bit nervous. When I arrived at her house, I noticed that she too seemed to be nervous about our date. She waited in the door with her shawl on. She had set her hair and was wearing the dress that she had worn to celebrate her last wedding anniversary. She smiled from a face that was as radiant as an angel's.

'I told my Friends that I was going to go out with My Son, and they were impressed,' she said, as she got into the car.

'They can't wait to hear about our meeting'.

We went to a Restaurant that, although not elegant, was very nice and cozy. My mother took my arm as if she were the first lady. After we sat down, I had to read the Menu. Half way through the entries, I lifted my eyes and saw Mom sitting there staring at me.

A nostalgic smile was on her lips.

'It was I who used to have to Read the Menu when you were young,' she said.

'Then it's time that you relax and let me return the favor,' I responded.

During the dinner, we had an agreeable conversation, nothing extra-ordinary, but catching up on recent events of each other's life. We talked so much that we missed the movie. As we arrived at her House later,

She said, 'I'll go out with you again, but only if you let me invite you.'

I agreed.

'How was your Dinner Date?' asked my wife when I got home.

'Very nice, much more so than I could have imagined,' I answered.

A few days later, my Mother died of a massive heart attack.

It happened so suddenly that I didn't have time to do anything for her. Sometime later, I received an envelope with a copy of a restaurant receipt from the same place Mother and I had dined.

An attached note said:

'I paid this Bill in Advance. I wasn't sure that I could be there; but nevertheless, I paid for two plates.

You will never know what that night meant to me. I Love You, My Son.'

At that moment, I understood the importance of saying in time: 'I LOVE YOU!' and to give our loved ones the time that they deserve.

Nothing in Life is more important than God, your family and friends.

Give them the time they deserve, because these things cannot be put off till 'some other time.'

In a child's eyes, a mother is a goddess. She can be glorious or terrible, benevolent or filled with wrath, but she commands love either way. I am convinced that this is the greatest power in the universe.

— N.K. Jemisin



Legacy Counts

By Jean Peace Mukisa, Ntinda, Uganda

“Even though she's no longer here, there isn't a day that goes by when I'm not thinking of my mom. My mom was a preacher and taught God's word for many, many years.

She was a daily example to me: her strength, her wisdom, her patience, her faith, her loyalty and her unconditional love!

Deborah Jean Peace was an amazing mom, grandma and great-grandma, and her legacy now lives on through her family.

I feel so blessed to have had her in my life!”

Acts of Courage

By Mugaba Rick, Zaana, Uganda

“Twenty five years ago, when my mom was 22, she became a widow and a mother within the same month.

The life she had imagined was stolen in a heartbeat.

She tried to move on, but was lost. She gave me to my father's family to be raised in them.

Some call her weak; others call her selfish.

I could be mad or bitter.

Instead, I'm grateful for the life I have and to have a mother who sacrificed our relationship to give me a chance at a better life.

She is courageous.

She is my mother.”



A SCARLET SYMBOL

By Priscilla, Wisconsin

“My mother was my best friend.

She loved cardinals, the male red ones.

When she got sick with pancreatic cancer and knew death was near, she told me to always look for the red cardinal—that would be her.

I never paid too much attention to that statement; I was too busy becoming an adult.

Twenty-five years later, every time I feel at my wits' end, there is a cardinal flying past me or in a nearby tree.

Is it coincidence, or my mother, all these years later, letting me know that everything will be OK?

I believe it's the latter.”

"I have an angel watching over me and I call her Mom..."



A JOB WELL DONE

By Anita Kabula, Nateete, Uganda

“One of the last things my mom told me before she died was that she loved me and was proud of me.

My mom had never shared those sentiments with me throughout my twenty eight years on this earth.

My mother was very tough and incredibly hard to please. Even after a law degree and various job promotions, I always seemed to fall short in her eyes. Or so I thought until her very last day on this earth.

I was kneeling by her bedside and after a bout of coughing; she leaned over and said, *"I did a good job. I wanted to raise children who would grow up to care about other people. It never mattered to me what you or your brother did for a living or how much money you made. That isn't success I don't think, not really. I wanted you to be good-hearted, to be sensitive, and to be kind. I did a good job .I am so proud of you Anita. Your brother too. Take care of each other."*

Slowly, I stretched out on the bed beside her.

I brought my hand up to her face and lightly traced circles on her hand.

"You did the best job, Momma." I said quietly, as the tears ran down my face.

Those last few words were the ultimate gift.

Happy Mother's Day, Mom. I love you - and I always will."

“May you find everything that your heart desires on this special day! “

The Journey to Freedom

By Sandra Nelson

For me, speaking was always tricky and hard while growing up.

I always felt the heavy expectation of having to convey the weird ideas in my mind quickly and eloquently for another person, which I always thought to be dangerous in a way because you are relying on the other person to interpret what you say in the way you want it to be interpreted. Writing on the other hand was easier, it was my escape, it gave me more control. My outlandish ideas were presented exactly the way I planned and wanted them to be conveyed.

But for a while; I had forgot that. I felt like life was passing me by while I was punching holes into my key board.

So I stopped writing, I folded up my key board; packed away my notebook; and gave up the one thing that had got me through some of the most terrifying moments of my life. I started rushing, and in the midst of that buzz; I got carried away into believing that I should spend more time out there. I threw myself into any and everything in an attempt to feel like everybody else; normal.

I was so busy living some “idea” that I forgot that about that shy little girl. The one hiding under the staircase, afraid of going to the children’s Sunday school alone. The one who’d discovered that there was this magical thing called writing”.

It didn’t take me long to realize that “normal” was not enough for me. And it never would be. I made the choice to stop listening to the noise around me, focus on my own sound and remind myself of the reason as to why I wrote.

In an attempt to rediscover myself; I leaped — and if anything fell, it was me.

I fell out of favor with some, because I decided to focus on myself. I fell off the radar, looking for myself in places where no one could reach me. I fell out of love with old ideas of myself and others that were holding me back. I fell hard for my dreams and my imagination, because I finally believed that they were mine for a reason.

I started the Conversations256 to share my passion for writing and to create a safe space to find our voices, start our own conversations and tell our own stories. I hope that I will help you find, honor and own your inner spark.

Mother's Day invites us to share our deepest love and appreciation with the woman who made our lives possible.

Today I celebrate mothers everywhere and the mothers to be.

With All My Love_S.

www.theConversation256.wordpress.com

