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“I Believe” Speech

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Love In All Directions

I believe in unconditional love “no matter what.” The phrase “no matter what” is an expression my mom and I have been saying to each other for as long as I can remember.

Back when I was in high school, on mornings before a big test or any major event, when I walked out the front door of my house to head to school, I would ask my mom, “no matter what?” and she always responded “no matter what!” To me, whenever she said this she was reminding me that she would love me no matter the outcome of the task I was doing.

Before I left for my freshman year at Emory, my mom gifted me a gold compass necklace with our special phrase engraved on the back. With the compass around my neck, I left for college assured that even while I was hundreds of miles away from home, I'd always be reminded of her and feel loved no matter what direction I was to take.

To my surprise, when I read the introduction of this speech to my mom a few weeks ago, she told me that when she says “no matter what”, it never is about her always loving me regardless of how I did on a test. To her, it means that “no matter what,” I should always believe in myself, despite what the outcome is. I was shocked to hear that although my mom and I have always said the same phrase, “no matter what” had vastly different meanings to each of us.

I realized that it was okay to have different understandings of the phrase that meant so much to us. Our individual interpretations of the phrase fulfilled the need for constant assurance of the love that each of us have for each other. Beautifully, these three little words mean what we need them to mean-- when we need it.

I will always believe that the phrase “no matter what” refers to the love that my mom and I have for each other. Unconditional love between my mom and I is something that I believe is sacred and of utmost importance, above any other beliefs I maintain. I feel incredibly grateful for the relationship that I have with my mom, as I know that many people do not grow up with this same bond or support.

I have spent nearly 21 years of my life feeling this unconditional love and now, as a young adult, I have come to believe that verbalizing this love by saying “no matter what” or by wearing my compass necklace with the phrase written on the back, has helped me feel comfort whenever I take on a task I am unsure of or choose a new direction in life.

Our special ritual and my compass necklace reassure me that my mom is always with me in spirit, every step of the way, to love me unconditionally no matter what direction I take -- no matter what.