Mama’s Boy

I was trying to think of a way not to sound trite when I wrote this, but I just can’t: I love my mother.

August 1, 1995 By Richard Perez-Feria

My mom—overeducated, emotional, hilarious, workaholic—in a million subtle ways is such a part of what makes me me, that it would be ludicrous to claim otherwise.

Raised in the comfortable suburbs, I am now aware how grounded—indeed, ideal—my formative years really were: My parents were (and remain) happily married; my siblings and I were given everything we wanted; education was stressed and achievment in any field was emotionally rewarded. The few cracks that revealed themselves in this Cleveresque existence were quickly and honestly dealt with.

Through all of my desperately important adolescent aspirations, my mom (like so many of our moms) was enthusiastically there, ready to offer her patented no-nonsense counsel or lend a supportive shoulder. Though intellectually—and certainly politically—I’ve distanced myself considerably from my mother over the years, I will never outgrow listening to my mother, for she was the first person who introduced me to the singular power one possesses by simply, forcefully, consistently telling the truth.

It is with this legacy of truth that *POZ* turns its focus on the myrad issues that women face in regard to HIV: Treatment differences, mother-to-infant transmission, clinical trial accessibility, sexuality and on and on. Not least of which is the issue of women having the freedom to be women as so clearly exemplified by this issues cover story on Latina diva acress/lawyer/activist Ilka Tanya Payán.

Not unlike my mother, Payán is a passionate, three-dimensional woman: A proud Latina who is not scared to use her brains, flaunt her beauty or apply her savvy. And like so many of the full-blooded men and women POZ has featured in past issues and will continue to spotlight in the future, Ilka Tanya Payán, at her core, tells nothing but the truth.

Not bad for a diva. Or a mother.

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