

**Topic:** My Parent's Story

**Abstract:** My parents were high school sweet hearts who fell in love at just sixteen years old. They did absolutely everything together; however, my dad dropped out of high school due to family problems. He joined the Peace Corps and was stationed in South America. My mom waited for his return, and when he came home, they got married. Unfortunately, as most good things come to an end, they filed for divorce when I was four years old, and it was finalized by the time I was six years old.

**Key Words:** my parents, dad, mom, love, familial relationships, brother, work ethic, jobs, money issues, divorce

### My Parent's Story

My parents were high school sweet-hearts; they met on their first day of their sophomore year at American High School in Fremont, California. They first met when they were both barely sixteen years old and they began dating immediately. They spent every day at school together and hung out on the weekends. According to my dad, his attraction to her was immediate, "as cliché as this saying is, it was love at first sight; I knew I'd marry her one day." However, my mom on the other hand thought my dad was the biggest class clown who didn't take anything in life overly serious. She was pretty sure that when he asked her out on their first date that it was a joke. But she still said yes. His humor and light hearted outlook on life is what she loved most about him. Four months after they began dating, my dad asked her to be his girl. From there on out, they spent every waking moment together.

As their child hood friends and family members recall, my parents were completely inseparable. You could see their love from a mile away. Whenever you saw one of them, everyone knew that the other one was somewhere near. They were so in love. They reportedly did every single thing that they could together. They used one another as an escape from reality. They were never caught without the other; no one ever saw them alone. From learning how to drive and playing on high school sports teams together, to attending football games and dances

together; they were attached at the hip. As their monthly anniversary celebrations turned into year milestones, they were by each other's side through everything. They always had each other. Every high school memory they have, they have with each other and each momentous occasion in their lives were experienced with each other. My mom always tells me the most ridiculous stories, situations, and scenarios they got themselves into. Sometimes the things she tells me are so hard to believe.

While my mother completed all four years of high school and graduated with a high school degree, my dad on the other hand only completed three years of high school and then dropped out. His home life was less than ideal for a high school student. His father demanded that he work a full time job. Eventually going to school and working full time became too overwhelming, and he figured something had to go. So at seventeen years old, my dad was without a high school diploma, working a full time job, knew that there had to be something more out there for him. He joined the Peace Corps where he was stationed in South America where he served a six month mission and helped to build irrigation systems in rural farming towns. It was hard labor that got my dad out of his house, but along with his family, he had to leave my mom behind.

Over the six month period, they communicated amongst each other by mail. They wrote letters back and forth and for six months, they kept their long distance relationship alive by being pen pals. When my dad came back from his six month mission, he moved back to California; however, he made a pit stop in Southern California. Even after being a member of the Peace Corps, he knew there was still much more to the world that he wanted to uncover before he settled down. While in Southern California, he lived out of his car and attended night classes at a

Junior College and he received his GED before he moved back to Northern California to be reunited with my mom.

In the spring of 1980, at just eighteen years old, my mom and dad got married. They both claim that they knew they were made for each other. They were still so in love even after my dad's mission that they knew this was real. That they had found their soul mates at sixteen years old. Reportedly, their wedding was a very small ceremony with their parents and siblings, grandparents and great grandparents. It wasn't a church wedding, or anything traditional. Their wedding was held somewhere up in the rolling hill near Fremont that over looked the bay area. My mom couldn't afford a wedding dress at that time so she wore an adorable and affordable alternative. A simple yet perfect two piece white skirt and a flowing top. Which knowing my mom, is so fitting of her to opt for something simple and classic than overdone and unaffordable. Supposedly their wedding was the type of wedding that love is so apparent that the lack of money wasn't a big deal at all. Everyone who attended their wedding ceremony, still to this day speak of how romantic and intimate it was.

Both of my parents had a rather rough upbringing and both admit that a less than perfect home life is a key factor in why they clung to each other so strong, so early in their lives. My mom said that he was the rock in her life that kept her grounded and focused when her home life was completely chaotic. My dad's dad was an alcoholic who divorced his mom when he was fourteen and stayed single for a long while after the messy divorce. Divorce is never easy at any age. While my grandpa was there physically for my dad, as in he was there when he got home from school, he was often drunk and not there mentally or emotionally. Ultimately, my grandpa was less than an active father who had little to do with raising my dad and uncle. My dad's mom on the other hand remarried quickly following the divorce. She remarried though almost too

quickly, as that marriage ended up becoming abusive. My dad was caught in the middle of more than a few physical altercations in attempts to protect his mom from his stepdad. He often came home to police presence resulting from domestic abuse calls being placed by the neighbors. My dad knew that he wanted to get out of that home life as soon as he could.

My mom on the other hand never knew her father. He had walked out on her, my uncle, aunt, and grandma when my mom was just five years old. Not knowing her father, my mom adopted a new fear. She was nervous that her children's father would walk out on her. She shared that fear with my dad long before they had married, and he reassured her that he would never become a man like that. So this had left my grandmother a single, working class mom who worked three jobs in order to provide for her three children the best she could. However, money is not enough to raise children properly. They lacked a parental and authoritative figure in their life. My grandma spent all of her time working; she was hardly ever around while the kids were growing up. My mom is the middle child of three kids. My aunt, the oldest child was held responsible by my grandma to raise the kids. She had to feed them dinner, take them to school, give them their baths and make sure their homework was done. Supposedly, according to my mom, my aunt still to this day holds a little bit of resentment towards my mom and uncle for having to step up to the plate as a motherly figure at such an early age. As they got older, they had their share of acting out which including throwing these massive, out of control house parties and experimenting with illegal drugs and underage drinking. Eventually my mom moved out because she couldn't handle the life she was set to live. She wanted more from life, she wanted to live her life with my father.

Once married, my mom and dad lived life like most typical newlyweds. My mom adopted my dad's last name; they joined their daily routines, combined bills, and looked to the

future with bright eyes and bushy tails. They were excited about what was to come and anxious about what the future held for them. The thought of evading their chaotic families, having children, and spending their lives together was just what they had needed at that time. They had married their best friend. Five years down the road, my parents learned they were expecting, a baby boy, my brother. Six years after my brother was born, I came along. However, that happy little family of four only lasted about four years. When I was four years old, my parents separated followed two years later by an official divorce.

My parents were high school sweet hearts. They were each other's escape from reality. Even though they didn't grow old with each other, they did grow up together. And I know for that, in addition to my brother and I, they are happy to have had one another in their lives.