

Topic: My sister.

Abstract: My father role as the older sibling and his responsibilities. Growing up in a family where both parents worked in a family business. My sister had to take the role of a mother figure as my father did. My sister became the “role model,” as her siblings we followed. Now as a mother of two girls, I want my older daughter to take that role as well; to become what my older sister was to me: a role model, and a second mother.

Key Words: Family, Sister, Mom, Dad, role model, siblings, responsibilities, obligations, parents, second Mother, My Daughters, Love.

Ethnic designation: *Mexicana*

Cultural category: Family structure: Older sibling

Mi Hermana/ My Sister

My dad is the oldest of 14 children. My sister is the oldest of four. I am the middle child. Growing up second has its pitfalls, but I was sure glad not to be burdened with the responsibilities my sister had. My sister had certain perks, but she also had more responsibilities. My mom was the seventh of twelve children. Even if she wasn't the oldest she understood the role of the oldest child. In my family the oldest child has more responsibilities, is expected to be a role model for the younger siblings.

My grandfather wasted away his paycheck on alcohol, and gambling, instead of on his wife or kids. So my father had to work. He had to skip school in order to provide for his siblings. He became a father figure to his siblings. At the age of eight my father worked in the fields like a

man. He had to grow up quick. My father is someone to look up to; with the many accomplishments he had with the very minimal education he received. My father taught himself to read and write. He speaks both Spanish and English. My father is not perfect, but I love him with all his imperfections. My father continued to provide for my grandma and his siblings until he married my mom and then provided less. Yet still this day he sends money to my grandma in Mexico.

My sister has always been held to certain standards, ones I wasn't held to. The biggest standards she was upheld to be being responsible and our role model. My sister understood that whatever she did we would look to her and follow. I can recall many memories and instances to this day how she was always a role model and very responsible. She had only been assigned responsibility, but she proved her power over us.

A memory I hold dear to my heart, is a time that in my eyes could have changed everything today. My sister was eleven. I was ten years old. One of my brothers was seven and my other brother was four. My dad had been drinking, as he always did during our visits to Mexico during the holidays. My mom was mad, and wanted to leave. My dad wanted to stay. My parents were arguing; all I remember now is my dad told my mom she could leave if she wanted, but we would stay there with him. My mom said she would leave, but would take us with her. Then the life turning question, my dad asked us what we wanted to do. I wanted to stay. I looked to my sister. My brothers looked to my sister. She said we would go with my mom, back home. We took each other's hand and went to get our stuff to put in the car. As we got ready to drive back home we noticed my dad in the car. We all left back home.

I didn't understand then, but I understand now what an impact that would have had on my parent's relationship. It was something my sister understood. All the years of my mom and dad raising my sister with high expectations and responsibilities made my sister who she is now. My sister never makes any decision without thinking ahead, and of the possible side effects that action can cause. My sister understood my dad was wrong, as we followed my sisters decision we unknowing empowered my mom. Even now she states that moment was when her life changed. She knew she had our support. But in my head and I know my brothers, we just followed my sisters example. She is our second mother.

As we continued to grow up my sister was also our mom. In command when my parents weren't there; this was most of the time. My parents opened a business and were always at work. My mom and dad worked long hours, from seven in the morning to ten sometime later at night. Which meant my sister got us ready to go to school, gave us breakfast, helped us with our homework etc. My sister was the one who stopped the fights between us siblings when we argued, not my mom. Even though my mom wasn't there, my sister always was. She was our mom/sister, even if she was just a year and a month and eight days older than me. She understood her role and embraced it.

We were measured to the bar raised my sister, and she knew that. She was an honor student, and a hard worker. Everything we did especially if it was bad we would hear, "why can't you be like your sister?" I admit growing up I got away with more because I wasn't the role model for my brothers, my sister was.

When my sister got her license at the age of sixteen, my parents got her a truck. They totally bling it out: rims, sound system, lower truck, and the works back in the year 2000. When I

got my license I didn't get a car, which made me hate my sister, but that was a perk my sister earned according to my parents. Eventually I had to change if I wanted a car. I had to earn it. I had to get my stuff together which meant get good grades, work and eventually after much begging got my car. My parents have not gotten either of my brothers a car, but that's another story I will tell later. That story is about the male vs. female role in my family. We are held to different standards and expected roles.

I love my sister, especially now. As a mother, I have two daughters. I am repeating the cycle. I want my younger daughter to have her older sister/mom like I had mine. I know a lot of things will not be identical as times are different now. But I want my daughters to have the same connection with each other I had with my sister. If I am ever gone or not available she will have her older sister, her second mother. I do hold my older daughter to higher standards. I am harder on her. I know she is only four, but this will be her life, in my family she will embrace it.