

They Don't Call! They Don't Write! But at Least they Have a Dog Blog

by Roz Warren

"I spent the best years of my life raising you, and now that you've grown, I never hear from you."

Sound familiar? That's the "Mom's Lament." Mothers have been kvetching at their grown-up kids like this since the beginning of time.

"You don't write! You never phone! I feel so out of touch!"

My mother laid this trip on me when I went off to college. I, in turn, laid it on my son. But I don't anymore.

Now Tom has a dog blog.

Raising my only child was a joy. I loved being an at-home mom. Spending hour after hour with a small child has its moments of tedium. But my bright, happy son was great company, and those were great years. Even when he became a teenager, and I was no longer the center of his universe, I was, at the very least, a far flung planet.

I took comfort in the fact that we still inhabited the same solar system.

As far as my teen was concerned, I was strictly on a need-to-know basis. He often behaved as if he were Superman and I were

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kryptonite; being in a room with me was close to intolerable. But as long as he was still under my roof, I was part of his life. I knew what he was up to. He got good grades. He was elected class vice president. He fell in love. He got his driver's license.

I may not have known what was in Tom's heart, but at least I knew when it was time to buy him new socks.

Then he went off to college and his life became a mystery. He reached out to me if there was a problem. But his father and I had raised such a strong, competent kid, that problems were few. I was thrilled that he was doing well. And I was lucky, compared with my friends whose kids were floundering.

But I missed being in touch.

Tom graduated, married his soul mate and started a business. Early on, they'd bought a dog together, a Bichon Frise they named Jack. Amy's folks already had a Bichon named Max. The kids were so crazy about Max and Jack that both dogs were featured in their wedding ceremony.

Jack was the ring-bearer. Max was the "flower dog."

So I wasn't exactly surprised when Tom and Amy began a blog, www.marriedwithbichons.com, about "the adventures of a young married couple and their Bichon Frises."

"Who on earth would want to read that?" scoffed one of my friends.

Plenty of people, as it turns out. People with Bichons enjoy reading about other people with Bichons.

But the truth is that even if it were a “Married with Bubkas” blog, I’d still check in every day. Once again, I can enjoy my son’s life as it unfolds. He and Amy update the site often. There are always plenty of photos.

A photo of your kid, happy, smiling and obviously thriving can make your day.

Their “adventures” are reassuringly low key. The kids and their dogs aren’t skydiving, climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro or fighting crime. They’re strolling a local nature trail, eating at an outdoor café, or week-ending at a dog-friendly Virginia hotel.

I don’t know how many folks follow Tom and Amy’s blog, but all four of their parents certainly do.

It’s what we do now, instead of posting their latest work of elementary school art on the fridge.

Mom would have loved my blog if I’d had one. And I would have, had Al Gore invented the internet in the 70s. When I went off to college, mom felt out of touch. She told me so. Frequently. Now that I know what that feels like, I regret relegating her to far-flung planet status for as long as I did. I’m glad that as I got older, I was comfortable bringing her back into my orbit. When she died, at age 59, far too young, I was fully present in her life.

I may not be fully present in Tom’s life, but now that he blogs, I can see, every day, that my son is happy and well. Of course, I’d like it even better if he phoned from time to time, just to chat. (There’s the Mom’s Lament kicking in again. I can’t help myself. It’s hardwired.) Perhaps that will come with time, when he’s a little older and not quite so busy. Maybe when he becomes a parent himself.

In the meantime, I no longer feel out of touch. I love checking the blog each day to see what the kids (and dogs) are up to. A photo of my son enjoying his life always puts a smile on my face.

I'm pretty sure that Tom didn't start blogging to make his mother happy. But, as is so often the case with our children, he did anyway.

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