

## Words for Mum, from Jeanne Bluett-Duncan

Mum has taught me many things. One of them was to speak for myself and not others. So even though it's tempting to say "we" as in my brother and sister, I won't as I will hear mum's voice correcting me saying "Jeanne speak in the first person". The second thing was to be realistic about life and to face/ accept the good, the bad and the ugly.

She was the most positive, strong minded, loving, generous, confident, non-judgemental and caring person I've ever known. Her passion for cooking, music, sewing, languages, people and thirst for knowledge is something I am in complete awe of and wish I could be just like her. Languages for example, she taught herself to speak English and Italian fluently. So well that the Italians thought she was Italian, most English couldn't tell she was French and the French thought she was English.

Despite all of these fantastic qualities of hers, no one is perfect as she could be a real pain at times. She could be quite vulnerable, take my dry sense of humour too seriously and just be really embarrassing and somehow it was nearly impossible to embarrass her! Now I did say "nearly". From my memory we embarrassed her... Twice! I'll give you an example. Mum, dad, Jonny and I went to the cinema to watch the new Beauty and the Beast film. Now, I'm a real sucker for Disney music and mum and dad really enjoy them too. In the film, when they were singing, I couldn't help myself and started humming along to the songs, though I was doing it quietly. Dad however, didn't have hearing aids back then and didn't realise that his "quiet" wasn't really quiet. I thought "oh god" but very quickly thought no, I'm going to take a leaf out of mum's book and not be embarrassed by this because he can sing, so it should be fine. The film finishes, we got up and the moment we left the cinema mum tells us how embarrassed she was, almost mortified that dad was singing in the cinema! Very valid but still I was surprised. If she didn't have these "not great" qualities then she wouldn't be my, one of a kind, special mum that I love.

As you heard from dad, mum didn't have the greatest childhood. One of her mottos was "Everything that happens to us in life is good". And what a perfect example. Because if she had a good childhood, she wouldn't have gone to England, wouldn't have met dad and none of us would be in this church right now. So I'm a very big believer in her motto and even though I'm so extremely heartbroken that she's gone, I know something good will come out of her death. I do not know what it will be, or when it will come, but I know something good will come out of all of this.