my emotional will
for my dearest

from

my emotional will
I found mother's old tape player, popped in the tape and pressed PLAY.

And crackling through the speakers was my mother's voice again. Her familiar voice told me things she had never shared before – like what Life had taught her – and what she had tried to teach her own children. She shared the experiences she had that made her who she was. And the values she had lived by. She gave advice, shared her favorite recipes (for her daughters-in-law), sang a verse of her favorite song (beautifully out-of-tune!) and, yes, she nagged. She ended with a short message of love… and hope… for each of us.

These were not things she had spoken of before. I could hear the warmth in her voice as she told us why each of us was special to her. And how we brought her great joy.

Then, all too soon, my mother died. She was only 72. And I stopped hearing her voice.

Over the years I grew to love the sound of her voice, especially the nagging because I knew it came from her care and concern for me.

Months after her passing, I was going through her things when I found a small package wrapped in newspaper. My name was written on it. Inside there was a cassette tape.

I grew up hearing my mother's voice. Giving advice, being encouraging, scolding, reminding, soothing and laughing. And, of course, nagging.

About the length of my hair, my clothes, about coming home late, about not doing my homework, about the girls I dated, about the unhealthy food I ate, about not going to Aunty Su's grandson's wedding, about settling down myself, about having kids, just about everything.

Then, all too soon, my mother died. She was only 72. And I stopped hearing her voice.

Over the years I grew to love the sound of her voice, especially the nagging because I knew it came from her care and concern for me.

I must admit as I sat in her room, on her bed, with the scent of the jasmine perfume she wore still lingering… I cried as I did when she died. But this time they were tears of healing. And I once again felt Mother's comforting presence.

Later that day, I played the tape again for the rest of the family. We cried, we laughed and we listened.

Next week it will be 10 years since Mother passed away. And I can still hear her voice.
This song/food perks me up every time…

The happiest moment in my life has been…

The words we say to our loved ones can be a profound gift. These words that describe our values, thoughts and memories are priceless.

Whether you leave them as a personal message, memento or anything else you’d like to give the people you love, it will undoubtedly be something they cherish forever.

I wouldn’t have gotten through the lowest points of my life if not for…

Did you know this? The most important thing in the world to me is…
This is something I learnt, and I want to share it with you...

My fondest memories of us is...

What I love most about you/Father/Mother...

I don't know if I have told you before, but I'm sorry for...

My wish for your future is...

Finally, I think it is time I said some things to you I may not have said before. Better late than never, right? So here goes...
Grieve not,
nor speak of me with tears,
but laugh and talk of me
as if I were beside you there.

Isla Paschal Richardson

To request a copy of an emotional will,
write to talk@lifebeforedeath.com
or download it at www.lifebeforedeath.com