

FOREWORD

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A YEAR AFTER I GRADUATED from college and was settling into the working world—such as accepting that spring break and summer vacation no longer existed—a funny thing happened: my friends started calling me for career advice. Whenever they had questions about work, from dealing with a difficult boss to how to ask for a promotion, they sought me out and asked my opinion. And it was more than needing someone to vent to or bounce around ideas with: they saw me as an authority on professional development matters. But why? It's not as though I had been working longer or had more experience.

And then it hit me. Of course! I had over 30+ years of business experience behind me. Or in other words, I had my mother.

I can't remember a time when Mom didn't work. She's a lifelong career woman. Sure, there were periods in my life when I resented her for it, like when other kids' moms attended field trips or picked them up after school. But as I grew older and began to understand all the skills I'd learned from her and their application in my own professional life, it made up for the missed soccer practices in spades.

I first felt Mom's influence when I was fairly young. In preschool, when all the other kids said they wanted to be ballerinas or princesses when they grew up, I wanted to be a vice president. Of what, I didn't know. But my mom was one, so I was determined to be one too.

Mom and I didn't play house or store, we played "the interview game," and by 11-years-old, I had honed my skills. I didn't have a resume or any work experience, but I could calmly and rationally answer questions about my strengths, weaknesses, and "if I were an animal, what I would be?" better than some recent college graduates.

In middle school, I built book reports in PowerPoint with full slide animation. And by high school, I had mastered the art of the pitch because every sleepover party during my childhood required a business plan presentation. By the time I entered the corporate world, I was ready.

Being raised by a strong female business leader who passed on important lessons through her own experiences armed me with useful and transferable skills. For example, when I'd get in trouble as a kid, I learned "Sorry, but..." doesn't work because the "but" essentially negates the apology. No one likes to be wrong or admit they messed up, but knowing how to properly apologize and own up to your mistakes is an important trait.

I also learned from Mom how to navigate sticky social situations. In school, I was bullied and sometimes had trouble fitting in. So, when I got my first job and experienced cliques in the workplace, Mom told me "work is not high school." Once again, she was right.

Today, I'm a successful business woman in my own right, and I'm not only applying what I've learned from my mother but also gaining my own experiences, and sometimes teaching Mom a thing or two! I've also realized it's not all roses when it comes to having a mother mentor. Sometimes, I'll call after a bad day at work looking for a little nurturing, and instead I'll get a speech about how I could have handled the situation better or what I could do differently in the future. While I appreciate Mom's advice, there are times when I just want her to tell me everything will be all right. But overall, I wouldn't have it any other way.

I encouraged my mother to share her stories and lessons so that others could benefit from her experiences as I have, and that's how Mom.B.A was conceived. Regardless of whether you are just starting out, whether you are ready for the next level, or even whether you are the parent of a young professional, you can learn from my mother's perspectives on leadership, professional growth, and work/life integration. Mom and I have had so many talks about these topics at our kitchen table and in the car, and I'm glad to lend her to you. By the time you finish reading Mom.B.A, you won't need a CEO for a mom. You'll have the business wisdom of 30 years to call on—guidance I'm sure will serve you well now and in the years to come.

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