

Cristal Rios
English (College Writing)
My Memoir

I grew up in Brooklyn; where absent father's were normal but then later realized father's are essential. I remember growing up my dad was here and there. I could see that he cared for my siblings and I but his actions spoke louder. Holidays are normally times that my family and I reunite and share joy and laughs. Moments of hearing the excitement in their voices through laughter each person shared are voices and sounds that would forever rest in my heart. Seeing happy tears that streamed down faces that normally looked disappointed is a vision that would temporarily replace the detachment I felt with my dad. Spending time with my Dad and family allowed me to replace the broken promises he made with memories that would last a lifetime.

I remember my dad making a lot of unfulfilled promises. I wasn't attached to my Dad because we never really had that relationship. He would often feel my heart with words that were empty. The only times those feelings would go was during the holidays. The feelings of detachment would leave and the joy that was once there had come back for a moment every Christmas Day. With sounds of laughter and giggles from my siblings and I to the beautiful smell of ham and peppers being burned on a high heated pot. The empty air would fill up with Joy and excitement on Christmas Day.

I remember waiting all dressed up for a phone call from dad saying to come downstairs. But 12:00pm turned to 6:00pm with no phone call. The sun that was once glaring from the windows had gone down. The day had left as well as the excitement I had on receiving the phone call that was supposed to happen. My joy had left along with the sun that settled. Again, in my mind there was a battle between the sounds that came out of his mouth which were broken promises and of hope. Detachment became stronger as days and months went by without speaking to him. What was once abnormal became normal.

Hours had gone by and finally the phone had rung. With no hope left I heard a voice that was recognizable come from one of the other rooms yelling "Abby, it's your father." My sister already knew that dad made yet another promise and didn't keep it. Filled with tears, my sister answered. "Okay, I know, Love you too." At this point I already knew to switch into my pajamas. In an effort to comfort my sister I gave her a hug and said it's okay. Once again a promise that he didn't keep.

Normally around the holiday season I get super excited because I know for a fact that I am going to spend time with my dad and siblings. The excitement compares to a person being able to see after being blind for so long. I knew that each time during the holidays we would always see the side of dad that we've been hoping to see as kids. As Christmas Day approaches, with excitement I am packed with clothes that would allow me to stay forever. Christmas Day was here and I remember my dad asking me "Cristal, do you want something to eat?" His voice sounded very high pitched with a deep undertone to it. He always gets excited to

cook. He's a chef I would like to say. I responded with excitement "Yes, I'm hungry." Right away he walked into the kitchen and started cooking. The apartment that once smelled empty was filled with a smell that filled my stomach with warmth. With smoke coming from the kitchen I saw a tall figure come out with a plate in his hand. On the plate was the best-looking ham and cheese sandwich casserole. With hunger pains I began to devour the food that was now gone.

These moments with my dad are significant to me because it allows me to see the light that shines through a man that never fulfills promises. As a child I became hardened and unconnected with emotions because of the representation my dad showed us as kids. Broken promises allowed me to believe that I couldn't believe in any one. It allowed me to be independent as an adult now. Families are so important in children's lives because it later shows through adulthood.

I remember the excitement before opening gifts. The smiles on my sister's face were as bright as the sun. The colorful wrapping paper that came with everyone's name. The Christmas tree that looked like a little leaf on the top of a mountain of carefully wrapped gifts. I was excited like a kid with a sweet tooth in a candy store. Of course, all feelings of detachment left my body once my dad knew what to give each and every one of us. Feeling as if I spoke to him on the things that I liked and things that were on the top of my Christmas list. I ran to hug him. As I ran to hug him I felt like a baby being comforted by her dad.

Later on in years I grew to accept the faults my dad had. Understanding that not everyone is perfect. I grew to learn that his ways of sharing quality time or making up for lost times was through our Christmas Days. Although through many broken promises my dad made I've learned to forgive him and enjoy the loving moments that are embedded in my heart and mind. I've learned to love and accept my dad. The feelings of detachment later on disconnected from my emotions. Learning that people are here for a short time allowed me to love my dad unconditionally