



MY SISTER ELKE

I was always a kid who marched to the beat of a different drummer, Always. I was the odd ball who never fit in. (I still don't but now it's something I embrace!)

A free thinker, I believed in things like parallel universes long before James Ray brought them to the public's attention.

Those early years were a difficult journey for me made somewhat easier by a big sister who shared the same philosophies.

Elke introduced me to Transcendental Meditation, the music of Bob Dylan, and Vietnam among other things.

For a while she lived in an Artist's Colony in Portland, Maine in the late sixties. I admired her for the tenacity it took to move far away from home and embark on her own journey of self discovery. That fall, for my birthday, she sent me a pair of sterling silver earrings made by a Silversmith friend of hers. As a visual artist myself, the coolness factor of that was immeasurable. That was nearly 40 years ago and I still have and wear those earrings. They remain a talisman of the enduring love and respect I have for the woman who embraced my differences mentoring me into my individuality.

Elke taught me that it was okay to think outside of the box and even though I would later become caught up in a traditional housewife/mother role that, by society's standards, forbade such wild eyed nonsense, I held firmly, if only in my heart, to the principles that we each as individuals and as human beings have the right to pursue our passions, to embrace our differences, and to be proud of them.

The ideas and concepts my sister introduced me to in my formative years would serve to shape the person I was to become. It is the foundation of who I am today. When I work mentoring other women, I am sometimes reminded of my sister's patience and resolve to share her wisdom so that I would become an independent woman capable of positively impacting the lives of so many others as I do now.

March 4th is my sister's birthday. She is 59 years old this year. I haven't seen or spoken to her in over 15 years. A falling out, precipitated by an assortment of circumstances, has left us strangers. I'm not

even sure where she lives these days. What I am sure of, is that this woman who took the time to nurture my spirit, is always in my heart. And it is there she continues to live.

March is Women's History Month. I encourage you to take the time to reach out to a woman of any age and encourage her spirit. Nurture her. Mentor her. Embrace her uniqueness and share yours. Together we can work to change lives. Together we can positively impact the world one woman at a time. Reach out and mentor a woman today. You just never know where it will take her.

You have just read a FNO-OSN (Friday Night Opus – On A Saturday Night), the column by Diana Taylor, Top Dog at Pug At The Beach.

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