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She called her father earlier before she left to let him know to be expecting her. As she took her luggage from the trunk her father stood in the door with the screen opened as he looked at her with his “happy to see my daughter smile”, he motioned for her to hurry up so he could have a hug. Paula carried her bags in each arm and sat them down on the kitchen floor as she entered through the door. Immediately she hugged her father like she had when she was a little girl. Her father gently pushed her away as to see why she was clinging to him so tightly. He looked at her and said, “Paula is everything okay? I know you aren’t one for talking about YOUR emotions and feelings, but it is ok, you can tell daddy what’s wrong.” Now every tear that Paula had held within was released and the tears rolled from her eyes like the water did over the cliff of a waterfall. She said, “Daddy, everything is such a mess and the only thing I have done is to do what you and Mama taught me how to do. I don’t know how to do anything else. Maybe I care too much. I try to help people from the bottom of my heart, with genuine kindness, but my help becomes the straw that broke the camel’s back. Things seem to backfire with huge explosions and it happens over and over again. I try to learn from what I did before and adjust my actions and that still doesn’t work. I have tried to pull myself away from a situation and that doesn’t work, I still get attacked. I don’t do anything at all and believe me, at times I don’t say a word, and that is wrong also. I’m damned if I do and I’m damned if I don’t. From a little girl the only thing I have ever wanted to do was to make you and Mama proud of me, and then as I grew older I did things to make myself feel proud. The only thing I know how to do is to achieve, because this is the only thing I was taught. I can’t accept being a failure, because in order to fail that means that I did not do my best, and with everything I do I must always put my best foot forward. To think this way, this means I can never fail. Daddy, I tried to teach Bianca the same thing, but somehow it appears she resents me for giving her those expectations. Without expectations what does a person have? How can somebody look to the future, how can you make yourself get up everyday and keep going if you aren’t expecting something in the end? As Paula’s father looked at her he wished that her mother was there to handle the situation. He attempted to find the words to answer her questions; the words to try to give her some direction.

Being the man that he was, he had been accustomed to just showing an action, not explaining why he did or didn’t do, but assuming that the person on the other end knew. He hadn’t been the best husband in the

world, but he thought of himself as a good father. Being there for his children to the best of his ability, providing stability in knowing they would always have a roof over their head, food on the table, clothes on their back and showing all of his children that nothing is free. In order to have anything you must pay for it. Paula's mother on the other hand was the teacher, the preacher, the friend and the strength behind his ability to be stable. Now with no one there, but the two of them, he was forced to do something he had not done before without having a drink. Having a drink or two gave him some liquor courage to speak things he normally would have kept within, but discussed with their mother for her to bring to their attention. Then he would enforce it.

Paula's father was unable to bare seeing his daughter that he created into a brilliant woman cry, he held her close in his arms and said, "Paula, sometimes the best advise, the most appropriate consoling words are those that are silent. I don't have the words to say to make you feel better, but I do have a shoulder for you to lean on, a heart that is big enough to love you for you and arms that reach wide enough to give you a hug." He stopped for a brief pause and continued, "Knowing you in the way that I do, I know this isn't enough and you need to hear words otherwise you may think Daddy doesn't love you the same anymore. Let me tell you this, just because I don't always say anything, just because another person doesn't always speak to tell you how they feel, doesn't mean that the person doesn't feel and doesn't care. You are a very different type of woman. In today's world the men are not like they were when I was growing up. It was accustomed for the man to take care of the house; this is the bills, the shelter and the food. It didn't always mean that the man treated his woman right or even his children for that matter, but he was expected to take care of home. See this was the only way of life that daddy knew. This is why I wanted to make sure that you could take care of yourself and I did my best to instill in you to always have the ability to take care of your own home. I knew that most men didn't treat their woman like she should've been treated and men definitely didn't talk to their woman nicely. Basically what daddy is saying is that during my lifetime the woman got treated very badly. I couldn't stand to see any man mistreat my little girl. I knew I wanted the best for you and I would give you anything, so therefore you should expect nothing less from the man you chose as your husband. What I instilled in you is what should be instilled in men, but you were a girl and are now a beautiful young woman. So in this world how you were molded caused you to take on responsibilities of a man. You have cut yourself off emotionally like a man, you can choose when and when not to be in a physical

relationship and you are so strong, and I will admit, you are stronger than most men and you are stronger than I have ever been. If it wasn't for your mother taking care of you kids and this house, there was no way I could've done it and worked. Now looking at you, you have done it all, so honey somewhere in your mind you have to accept the fact that what people see in you, predominantly these men, make them feel inferior."

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