

DISCOVERY CHANNEL MOM

*Selected from the collection
"The Mommy Monologues"*

By Sharon Dunn

Cast: 1 w

Length: 3 pages of dialogue (834 words)

Performance time: About 4 minutes

The Story

She calls herself the Discovery Channel Mom, on a mission to get through the sometimes dangerous caverns of her twelve-year-old daughter's room. As tough as it is to navigate through her daughter's mess, it's just as tough to navigate through these turbulent years. Yet, she can glimpse at the adult her daughter will soon become.

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Props: Pile of folded clothes, T-shirt, shoes, candy wrappers, posters, stuffed animals.

(AT RISE: A WOMAN enters holding a pile of folded cloths. T-shirt, shoes, candy wrappers, posters, and stuffed animals are strewn over the stage.)

Today I am a mom on an adventure. Call me a thrill-seeker, but I will explore the wild, the unknown, and sometimes dangerous caverns of my twelve-year-old daughter's room. That's me, Discovery Channel Mom. I know it makes your palms sweaty and your heart beat faster even to think about it. My mission is to navigate the perilous terrain of her floor ... *(Looks down at all the stuff.)* not that you can actually see the floor. I must get these neatly folded clothes into her drawer. Not an easy task and not for the faint of heart.

(Looks around at the mess again.) The secret is to take a deep breath and tell myself that no matter how strong the impulse, I must not clean up. She has to learn to take responsibility for her things and she won't learn that if I do it for her. *(Shaking.)* I really want to pick up those candy wrappers. *(Deep breath.)* I must be strong, at least as strong as the smell in this room. How can someone live like this day after day? *(Picks a shirt up off the floor.)* She saved her baby-sitting money for this. Now, I find it on the floor.

(Exasperated moan.) Maintain focus. Maintain focus. My job is to get these clothes into that drawer. *(Steps over a stuffed animal.)* I know this is all about allowing her to become independent little by little. But it is hard to do. *(Looks at the shirt again, shaking HER head.)* She wanted this shirt because every other girl at school had one like it. That's very important when you are twelve, to express your independence by dressing like everyone else. I want to give her some freedoms so she has confidence when she's older. The hard part is knowing when to place limits and when to let go and allow her to make mistakes. *(Sits down.)*

She asked to get her belly button pierced. I said, "No." Well, the minute you say no, the big drama starts: "Everybody else gets to do it. You're so mean. I wish you weren't my mother. I hate you." I stand there, trying not to shout, while she stabs with her verbal arrows. Then of course, to end the play, there is the loud and dramatic slamming of the door in my face.

Sometimes the pain of having to hear those words and not retaliate is unbearable. Eventually, she comes out of her room, tears streaming, eyes red. "Can I at least get my ears pierced?" she says between sobs. I tell her, yes, but she has to let me go with her to a hygienic place, not let her friends stick a needle through her ear.

I took her to a store in the mall. I helped her pick out some earrings. I kept raving about this pair of little red sapphires. How pretty they were. She noticed that my ears aren't pierced. *(Leans back in the chair.)* The rest of it is a blur. The next thing I knew the clerk has the staple gun to my ear. We spent the rest of the afternoon holding up obnoxiously big, dangling earrings and pretending like we are way more glamorous than we are, and laughing.

We ate lunch together. And we talked. I didn't order her around, offer advice or give warnings, all the usual mom stuff. We just talked. Like two women spending an afternoon together. It was nice. I watched her sipping her drink, her new earrings glinting under the mall lights. She looked so pretty with her hair combed and pulled back from her face and in that moment, I realized that there will be many more days like this. That makes me happy and a little sad...a lot sad. There will come a time when I'll have to let go, I'll have to trust that I've given enough advice and nurturing and I'll have to let go.

(Touches the shirt to HER cheek.) She won't be my baby anymore. Maybe that's why we fight so much. This is hard for both of us. Sometimes she still wants to be my baby. But I can't let her stay dependent on me, looking for my protection. That would be cruel.

End of Freeview

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