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## A First

Why am I so different tonight than I have been any night for the past ten years? It is because tonight for the first time in a decade, I am absolutely certain that my daughter is happy; not just happy but secure, excited and eager to get up in the morning. I know that she has shifted dramatically in the past four days to a place of high expectation and new verification that she is an adult in the real world, the world she sensed she belonged in. With every small affirmation; a lease in her name, growing control of her finances, freedom from constant observation, her own kitchen, she glows with new warmth and light. I didn't think these little steps would mean so much... how foolish of me. Would they not mean something to a newly released prisoner, or a recently freed hostage? She is no longer to be identified as Disabled, ADD, PDD or Spectrum Disorder at every turn to every one, but to breathe a little with the regular functioning world... such as it is. She is free to hang a painting, buy a queen size mattress, exercise taste and design, pour some wine, shop for bathroom fixtures, set a place at a new table, have people over. She can now decide where to put the computer desk and when to eat. She can take her time unsupervised at the supermarket. If she estimates wrongly on the calculator, she will have to put some food back and add better next time. Her voice has changed on the phone. It is lower, calmer and steadier. She is eager, not anxious. She has humor and has suddenly become philosophical.

Now when I, as a chronically forgetful senior, lose my wallet, drive in the wrong direction or despair at ever mastering my phone or solving a simple problem, I hear from her.....

"Don't worry Mom, we will work it out".