

head for the exclusive stores. This depleted my meager income in a hurry!

On the other hand, it was then that the self-discipline I had learned through her started to pay off. Once I realized what was happening, I had no difficulty putting myself on a strict budget.

What troubled me most about Mother's strictness was her attitude on dating. At the time, I thought it was terribly unfair that I wasn't allowed to go out as my classmates did. Often I was dejected because when I returned to school after a weekend of sitting at home, the other girls would all be talking about the dates they had had. I had no similar experiences to share.

For a while I was invited to parties or asked for a date. Always I had to say I was sorry, but I couldn't go. It wasn't long before I was no longer asked. They didn't understand that I simply wasn't permitted to go out. My friends thought I didn't want to! But I did—very much.

CONSEQUENTLY, my childhood was rather lonely. Mother didn't have much time for us because till she married executive Alfred Steele, she had to work to support us, and her thoroughness in preparing for a movie role left her little free time. She was sorry about it, and so were we, but we understood the necessity for it. In fact, when she arrived home after a long day at the studio and took time to ask us how we spent our day, we felt guilty about taking up the few moments she had to rest and relax.

I had hoped things would change after she married Mr. Steele, but they didn't.

True, she was no longer busy in pictures, but now she moved to New York and became involved in his work as well as in his private life. If anything, my existence became even lonelier.

After her marriage, Mother decided I would be better off at an academy in Pasadena, where she left instructions that I was not to leave the school during the entire semester. Since I was the only girl there on weekends, I spent my Saturdays and Sundays helping the nuns in the office. If it hadn't been for their kindness and understanding, I'd have felt I was in jail.

I was even confined to the school the summer after my graduation because Mother was away. I returned home three days before I was to leave for Carnegie Tech and found everything ready for my departure.

That was about the last time I was under Mother's supervision. When I got to college, I took advantage of my freedom to work—augmenting my \$50 a month allowance from Mother—and to date.

I rather suspect that she went to such extremes for two reasons: to compensate for our lack of a father and because she was afraid of spoiling us. If one has to go to extremes, I'd rather be prepared for life with extreme strictness than extreme leniency.



Today, a starlet in "Wild in the Country."

Because we lived in a goldfish bowl, however, newspaper stories of what went on in our family were so exaggerated that Mother often appeared cruel, which was certainly not the case. Take the time Chris supposedly "ran away" from home.

One evening Mother became terribly concerned when my brother wasn't home as it got dark. When she couldn't find him in the neighborhood, she asked some friends to help look for him. They eventually found him on the Santa Monica beach and brought him home. The press got hold of the story and made it sound as if Chris was fleeing from his "mean" mother, instead of having a normal boy's adventure.

In all, I learned a lot from the discipline she imposed on me.

For instance, I can turn down an exciting date in favor of a good night's sleep if I know I have to work the next day. And I don't have to be driven to study for my parts because of the habits Mother forced me to develop in my school years.

Five years or so ago, I never would have believed I'd be thankful for Mother's discipline—but I am. I hope my own children will be disciplined and, someday, will understand why.



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