and she doesn't hesitate to let others know the "good news" or to lend a helping hand. About a year ago, when we were living in Toronto, Canada, my mother was driving me home from swim practice and we saw a lady pushing her car out of the middle of the highway. My mother pulled over and walked over to help the lady push her car to the side of the road. After the car was on the side of the road, my mother gave the woman a long hug, and said the words, "God bless you," in the woman's ear. Dad is also a strong Catholic, but he tends to keep it to himself, like he does a lot of his feelings. Mom isn't shy in sharing how she feels, in a polite way. Mom is always up to the challenge of making us attend church, but on the odd Sunday, when she isn't up for it, my dad steps in and gets us moving.

I see my parents as being the epitome of difference, but they have been able to reconcile their differences and raise two good kids. Despite many differences in the way they were brought up and in their own personalities, they have been able to compromise on their own beliefs and build a successful marriage and family. To marry a person is an accomplishment in itself, but to be able to love them more than when they entered the marriage is honorable. On many occasions, both my parents have stated how their love for each other has grown. My parents have formed a strong bond that is sensitive to the other person's feelings, and have learned to see the good intentions demonstrated by each other. My mother learned how to be a good wife from her mother, and my father learned what not to do from his father, and by accepting each other's humanity and compromising on their differences they have built a beautiful relationship.

EQUAL CHILDREN
by
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[Assignment: Write a paper that makes a point about gender. Structure your essay as a narrative, description, or comparison.]

As a general rule, parents try to raise male and female children differently. Society wants girls to be taught to do indoor chores, such as setting the table and vacuuming. Boys, on the other hand, are to be taught to do manual labor, such as mowing the lawn and taking out the garbage. Generally, girls are the ones that parents hand everything to.
However, my parents decided that my brother and I should be raised the same and not by the different gender rules for boys and girls.

My brother, Kevin, is two years older than I am. Even though he is older, my parents believe that we should do the same type of chores around the house. For example, in one week my brother and I will alternate washing dishes, vacuuming, and taking out the garbage. They also make us clean our own rooms. Kevin and I moan and complain about doing the chores that we had to do, but we always managed to get them done. Sometimes Kevin and I would help each other out with doing the chores. For example, if Kevin had to go somewhere and it was his night to do the dishes, I would usually help him out and he would do the same for me. Being required to do the same chores instilled in Kevin and me the non-traditional idea that boys and girls can do the same things.

A few of my friends with older brothers are completely spoiled. Usually the girls do not have to have jobs and the parents pay for all of their bills, but the boys do not get anything unless they pay for it themselves. In my family, this is not the case at all. I am the one who has had a job since the last two years of high school, while my brother did not work at all. My parents would always give Kevin a twenty dollar a week allowance. Ten dollars was for gas and the other ten dollars was spending money for anything he wanted to do. I found this to be very unfair because my parents never gave me an allowance. I would even ask them, "Why is it that I do not receive an allowance?" And they would reply, "Because you have a job for your spending money and your brother does not." Finally Kevin landed a job working at the Olive Garden making really good tips. My parents cut off his allowance since he got a job. Now I understand the reason my parents gave Kevin spending money. It is because they wanted Kevin and me to have equal opportunities in life.

When boys and girls start dating, usually they are treated differently. My parents did not set a certain age when Kevin could start dating. He started dating when he was a freshman in high school, so therefore I started dating when I was a freshman in high school. My parents put boundaries on Kevin's dating. They would ask him who he was going out with (they did not have to necessarily meet his dates), and they would want him home by midnight. My parents applied the same rules to me when I was a freshman in high school. Of course, these rules keep being altered as Kevin and I get older.

Having an older brother is difficult because it means that he gets to do everything before I get to do it. I would get angry because he was the first to start driving, the first to be allowed to drive to distant places, and the first to go to college. During high school I resented my brother a lot because he is the older one. Now that I have grown up I do not resent my brother anymore because I realize that it was only fair and that this was just another way my parents kept Kevin and me equal in the things that we are allowed to do.

Another way my parents kept Kevin and me equal was by giving us the same opportunities when we turned sixteen. My parents felt it would be easier on them and us if we had a car of our own. So when
each of us turned sixteen our parents bought us a car. They did want us to learn responsibility so we had to pay for part of our cars on our own.

By being raised the same as my brother, I feel I have a better view on life. I do think that parents cannot escape society's stereotypes. I think parents, now and in the future, will always have a tendency to want to protect their daughters from harm more than their sons. I am aware that stereotypes will always be within our society, but hopefully parents will be able to treat their children basically equally. I feel my parents did a great job of treating my brother and me as equally as they could.

THOSE UNFAIR PARENTS

by
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[Assignment: Examine relationships within your family, comparing and contrasting them with each other. This analysis might rest along gender lines or age lines or time lines. With such a topic you might also explore the way your family relationships and/or roles have changed through time or how they remained the same.]

In general, it seems as if parents are over-protective and a little too strict with their first-born child. The oldest child is, more or less, the guinea pig of the parents. With their new parental power, Mom and Dad try out their rules and responsibilities with this first child, and, unfortunately for this kid, these regulations are somewhat on the strict side. Then, as the second and third child come along, these once severe parental policies appear to loosen up and even become non-existent. Unfortunately for me, my family demonstrates this concept perfectly. I am nineteen years old with two younger sisters, Candice, sixteen, and Carly, ten. Although some responsibilities and freedoms have been the same for all three of us, in general it seems as if I had it the roughest with my parents' rules and curfews, and life just got easier for my sisters.

The first example of this unequal treatment that I can remember is the big ear-piercing situation. My parents made the biggest fuss about me getting my ears pierced, and I had to beg and plead with them for over a year before they actually gave in to me. They acted like it was a big step in life, and I had to be more "grown-up" to wear earrings. To them it was a responsibility, but to me it was just a fashion statement. I wanted my