They were my wonder years. Nanay was Ms. Personality. This daughter of a prominent family of our locality did not bank on her name but worked hard as a young entrepreneur, enjoyed what she did and reaped the fruits of her cheerful industriousness. Yet, unknown then to her, her best fruits were yet to come.

And suddenly she was gone...gone too soon. Nanay’s untimely demise broke my heart. She was my rock. I was always with her from the earliest years. I could do child’s work alongside her from age five until I reached 12. One day she was brought to the hospital, and I waited at home for her to be back, until the fateful day.

My seven years of wonder was full of Nanay’s careful guidance and love. I started each day early, excited to be of help to her, my star. We ran one of the most popular market stalls in Pasay. And we went to neighboring towns where there were fiestas or fairs, to sell housewares. I was blessed with her great example of how to deal with different people—in our present day we call them clients, partners, suppliers, competitors, authorities—all with her unique charm of always making the other at ease, and eventually trusting on her dependability. She was that prime example, that the best asset is one’s self. And she was in the right business—sales.

We often commuted then, and I thoroughly enjoyed helping her. She was a busy body, never having an ounce of idleness in her. We always started our day early, and she was my best example of a punctual person, being ahead of schedule almost each time. The hard work that she did day in and day out did not show much wear and tear even as she ended the day. Her spirits were high, and I do not recall seeing her tired from work.

Nanay was a favorite sales person not only of her clients but of her peers alike—the best suki that I have ever observed to this day.
She was always ready to help and was a natural at what I may call, “honest selling.” Customers flocked to her because they later proved her to be dependable—what she promised, she delivered, no matter how ordinary. Her cheerful spirit was a great plus as well. Always with a smile and a kind word, she was a favorite among her peers and was a natural leader, borne out of being spontaneously helpful.

I often thought how great she was, as a child would look up to a parent. But as I matured into my young adulthood I realized that her strong faith in God made her the best she could be. She was able to attend Mass almost every day. I was often with her, and her quiet piousness built up my foundation of faith in God as well. I soon discovered that cheerful hard work and faith and love of God were all intertwined best examples from my mother.

I used to look for Nanay’s face in the pale moon, thinking she was looking at me, as I went about life’s tough struggles and triumphs. She had left me to care for my younger sister. And I had her as best example, once again. We were practically orphans as Tatay remarried and we were all to ourselves, with only the meager savings that Nanay left with us.

Those seemingly endless daily grinds with her in the past then worked its magic. I was able to go through my high school and earn a college degree and support my sister similarly by working through school. Now looking back, I was holding my sister hand in hand like my mother held my hand. I got into the printing business as a sales representative and because of Nanay’s ingrained “PR” example, I was able to gain many loyal printing accounts, among them big clients. And the business flourished and maintained its standing of quality leadership through its now thirty-two years of operations—CGKformaprint, Inc. was built on the tandem of my spouse’s technical expertise and my goodwill as a young sales executive in the highly competitive printing industry.

I always remember my mother when I recall each passing day and see God’s presence in daily living that makes that big difference in delivering what we say to our publics—be they internal or external. Coworkers do that extra mile, and clients give the extra trust and confidence, when we ourselves deliver what we promise. And how did I learn this? God delivered my best mentor, my mother.
I thank God for the special gift of my Nanay. Although she was just a short time with me, she has been my lifetime mentor. And I see her everywhere, on the face of the moon or in the bright sun.

Camil Kitane is an entrepreneur in the printing industry. CGKformaprint, Inc., of which she is owner and President, has been a unique player for over 30 years, as it remains entrenched in an industry known for short corporate life spans. Camil is a member of MAP (Management Association of the Philippines), PMAP (People Management Association of the Philippines), PISM (Philippine Institute for Supply Management), WBCP (Women’s Business Council Philippines), Zonta Club Makati Paseo de Roxas, and a Past President of the all-women Rotary Club of Makati Jose P. Rizal, awarded as Outstanding Rotary President of her district in 2001.