

~ by Barbie Rodriguez, blog contributor.

The other day a friend and I were talking about recent layoffs in the legal field.She commented she has been feeling like she is “walking on eggshells” for quite a while now.The comment really hit home for me, as I have felt that way ever since my Mom died.Back in 1994.My father never quite came back from her loss.He became ill in late 1996 and passed away in 1997.His death took the last remnant of normalcy in my life as I had always known it.Actually, I think I started walking on eggshells when my Mom was first diagnosed with breast cancer in late August of 1987.Her surgery took place the day the Pope celebrated Holy Mass here in Miami.She was not expected to make it to that Christmas.We were blessed with that Christmas and six more after that. Before Mom’s diagnosis, I lived in a secure little world.An ivory tower, if you will.Full of family, friends.Safe and secure.That all came tumbling down in a heartbeat.Blink of an eye.My mom, however, remained calm.She chose to live in the moment and be thankful for what we had been given.Her faith did not waver for even a second.She did not walk on eggshells, her path was firm and strong.She was always serene, even in the middle of horrible pain.She would just get her rosary and start praying.Slowly the pain would recede, at times.Others it held on with a tenacity almost as strong as my mother’s faith.My father and I, along with my Uncle Tello, Aunt Zaida, and two close friends, scattered her ashes one bright, sunny, spring morning in March of 1994.I remembered the sun shining so, so brightly as we scattered her ashes on the bay, at Our Lady of Charity (Cuba’s patron saint) chapel.My mom loved that place.She loved the water and she loved Our Lady of Charity and had asked her ashes be scattered on the water there.Three years and four months later, I stood at the same spot with my sister.Scattering our father’s ashes.Still walking on eggshells.

A lot changed in my life after my parents’ deaths.Some good and happy.Some … not so good.There were bitter disappointments and unexpected joys.My friends became my family.Slowly I regained my (somewhat wobbly) balance.Set up housekeeping in my first little cocoon.Me and my felines.Started drawing and painting again.Life was different, but still sweet.The panic attacks came out of nowhere.Again, I found myself walking on

eggshells.Once more, I slowly started to regain my balance.At times it seems like it was yesterday, others it feels like it was years and years ago when the panic attacks started.But, by the grace of God, they have receded and I have recently felt happier and more “me” than I had felt in a very long time.Hearing my friend use the “walking on eggshells” phrase brought it all back.I realized that every time I have felt safe and secure in my world, something has happened to throw it off balance.I think it’s called growing up.

We live in tumultuous times.Scandalous, even.Mediocrity is the norm.At times it seems like integrity and ethics have flown out the window, right along with family values.Sometimes it seems like humanity has lost itself.Politicians lie.Role models we admire and look up to, are found to have been leading double lives.Not practicing what they preached about for years.The public embraces them anyway, saying they are human and have a right to be happy.Never mind they lied to everyone.For years.Babies are left by the roadside.Animals are slaughtered.The environment is poisoned.Pare nts commit suicide after murdering their children.Genocide is the norm in some parts of the world and the rest of the world turns a blind eye to their brothers’ and sisters’ suffering.People are without jobs and losing their homes.It is a bleak world we wake up to each day.Yet, we are blessed to wake up in the morning.To have a job to go to.To have someone to come home to.To have friends to talk with.There is a lot of good left in the world.We just have to look for it.Sometimes really hard.But it is there.The beauty and the joy and the wonder.We must stand firm in our beliefs, even when those around us are set on seeing the bad side of things.We must stand firm.Someone I know regularly goes by my desk and grumbles “You are just too damn happy!” and stomps off.Mind you, this is someone who has an intact family unit, health, a sound financial situation.Has a great job.Yet they choose to see the sour side of life.Sometimes I feel like telling them, “Hey, listen, being happy is hard work.It’s much easier to suck on life’s lemons and walk around cursing at the world with pursed lips and squinchy eyes!”Finding something good in the every day is darn hard sometimes.

I realize, yeah, I have been, and still am, probably always will be, walking on eggshells, but it’s my faith, that strong, sure, secure, bet-your-life-on-it faith my parents and grandparents instilled in me from the cradle that has stopped those eggshells from cracking and me from

falling through.I'll keep walking.With God on my side, knowing I am His child, I can survive anything.I will get hurt and I may cry.I will be disappointed.I will have good times and bad.Valleys and mountaintops.But I know there is one thing I will always have.My faith.That, in and of itself, is unshakable.

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