



rather than falling to the social peripheries she was the beating heart of the neighbourhood. It was just her way; she always held her own in a conversation with any native Greek speaker and revelled in sharing recipes, organising play dates, acting as a 24 hour emergency translation service and helping the kids of the area lobby the local council for playground updates. My mother was a breath of fresh air to my family and the neighbourhood. She challenged the Greek premise of pride in solitude of suffering and taught me the most important lesson in life, one not confined by the barriers of language, that every human relationship is unique but equally important and that who you are as a person is defined by how you commit to those relationships. There are so many stories of lives and relationships my mother has saved or changed for the better, many of them belonging to Greeks in our neighbourhood, but they are not my stories to share.

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toddlers in a supermarket do, as an immovable incarnation of rage and hysteria. Despite the language barrier that was the catalyst for my dummy-spit it is none the less something repeated around the country, and the globe for that matter, every minute of every day regardless of the cultural or linguistic background of the family involved. The clearest part of that memory though was the look on my mother's face when I told her that agouri wasn't the correct translation for cucumber (I was obviously at this point looking to

pick a fight). It was one of panic, as though I had challenged a basic world view upon which she had built her life.

I was a difficult child, and a difficult Greek child is probably the hardest of them all to raise. Despite the rare memories from my childhood that ended in tears or a tantrum I remember her as awe-inspiring and radiating an ethereal beauty. I didn't look like her and people still to this day mistake my Aussie friends for her child. Growing up in Marrickville nobody looked like her either however

The lesson that my relationship with my mother that you should take away from reading this is that multiculturalism and multilingual situations can be messy and unfair and confusing but ultimately their benefits to society are immeasurable. Multiculturalism is the greatest equaliser. My mother and I have equally shared the weight of the burden of how to best navigate this world together and because of it she is more than a mother, she is my equal and my best friend.