

In Memoriam: Dr. Trinidad Echano Madrigal
By Sis Liza Urbano

I am Liza, the fourth of five siblings. I wish to tell a story about my sister, BE, which is short for baby.

THE EARLY YEARS

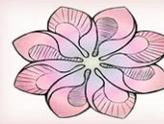
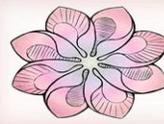
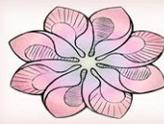
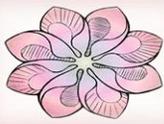
BE was the youngest of five surviving siblings, four girls and a boy. We grew up in Daet, a small rural town in Camarines Norte, Philippines, with Mang and Pang, our Mom and Dad. Pang worked in the city government and Mang worked as a schoolteacher. They raised us to be humble, hardworking, and put family and health first. Being the baby in the family, we spoiled BE with the best of everything. For example, Mang would serve a whole chicken for our meal and BE would always get the best, meaty pieces, while the rest of us got the bony parts. I always got the neck, but I still loved it.

BE was not as healthy as the rest of us. She suffered through childhood with various allergies, asthma, severe coughing episodes, and other debilitating symptoms. She required and needed lots of care and attention. My spoiled sister was always exempt from doing house chores, but was also spoiled with health challenges too. Seeing her battle the diseases each day, I'd wish to trade places with her. Her allergies were so bad that she could not eat eggs which she loved so much.

All of her suffering during childhood and later in life may have driven her to become a doctor, one who cured sickness and spared others from suffering. We came to see just how far-reaching her generous spirit would impact the people she sought to help.

BEST BUDDIES

As the two youngest siblings, BE and I grew up very close. We were best buddies. I was older by three years, but we celebrated our birthdays together since they were just seven days apart. BE looked up to me as her older sister and trusted me wholeheartedly. She obeyed whatever I told her to do without question. In her eyes, I was her "L.O.D.I.," which means IDOL in current Filipino lingo. Unfortunately, her complete trust in me backfired when I was about seven years old and she was four. In my brilliant attempt to make her look prettier than she was, which she really did not need, I got a hold of Pang's Gillette shaver and shaved her thick eyebrows thin. BE liked it, but Mang did not. I was busted by Mang BIG TIME! In fact, I thought I found more bony chicken parts on my plate for a week!



I also recall the time when we were visiting our grandparents and Pang proudly presented BE and me to sing a duet for them. Not wanting to perform, I pointed to BE to sing by herself, while she refused and pointed back at me. No duet happened that day. Instead, I pulled her hand and we both ran home. When my parents came home, Pang was upset that we disrespected our grandparents like that, so he took out his belt and each of us got a butt-whack. To my surprise, the pain was bearable. It didn't hurt much at all, so I whispered to BE to pretend to cry as loud as we could so that Pang wouldn't spank us any harder. She was so determined to put on a good show that she ended up crying real tears...my poor baby sister! I really enjoyed childhood with an obedient baby sister. On the same token, she really enjoyed being referred to as my baby sister even in our senior years.

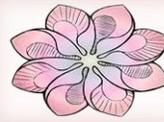
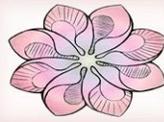
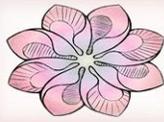
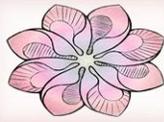
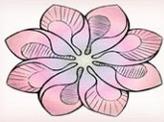
HUMILITY, GENEROSITY, AND PERSEVERANCE

BE was a very humble, smiling soul. When her three children, Fatima, Warren, and BJ, were all under the age of 8, she became a single parent to them. BE silently accepted her new role and used her medical profession to provide for their needs.

She traveled distances as far as Albay in Bicol to teach in the medical university or commute to Tarlac to care for patients in the Central Azucarera de Tarlac clinic. She religiously opened her private clinic to patients six days a week. Along with her duties as a physician at FEU hospital, she also taught in FEU's medical school. She clearly paid back the care and attention she received as a sickly child by one-hundred-fold while working double-time to care for her children.

Her impact in the medical community also opened a remarkable door of opportunity to serve as FEU's Head of Medicine, not an easy role by any means. Albeit with much hesitancy, she accepted the challenge and ultimately reached the pinnacle of her career and her lifelong mission to be of service to the community. Sadly, after suffering from a brain aneurysm, BE was forced to retire early in consideration of her patients' welfare. She once remarked that it would be unfair to her patients if she could not serve them 100% due to the effects of her illness.

Nevertheless, she continued to be a doctor to those who would still come for help. She accepted a few speaking lectures in FEU when requested, and she never stopped reading about physical and spiritual healing, which she would share with others during her retirement. She also kept herself in tune with positive thoughts through meditation and through her involvement with her Brahma Kumari community.



LATER YEARS

Sadly, in BE's later years, she slowly succumbed to dementia and other symptoms of aging. In that time, I grew to appreciate and love her even more as she navigated her world with greater limitations and roadblocks. I can only imagine what she went through, persevering in silence, behind her ever-sweet smile. Of course, she had her moments of release to deal with her inner pain, but those moments did not last very long. She would always lean on meditation and her spiritual practice to restore her inner peace and joy. In her trials, she would only seek our help when absolutely necessary, and with utmost humility.

My sister, Trining (BE) the doctor, lived an honest and humble life; focused on service, care, and meaningful connection just as Mang and Pang raised us. Money and riches were not her priority. Instead, she was proud and content with her life's real treasures: her three children and their partners, and her four handsome grandsons, Dylan, Fin, Yson, and Mason. They were her world, and she was generous in making sure that they knew it.

As written in God's plan, it is time for my baby sister's homecoming to enjoy a restful and joyful life with her Maker. And as she drew her last breath here on earth last September 19, 2021, I believe God welcomed her in heaven with the breath of eternal life.

We are not bidding you our goodbyes, my baby sister. Instead I say, "Till we meet again" in God's time. I love you very much.

Thank you.