

The woman I call Mom isn't actually my biological mother. Officially, she's not my adoptive mother either, but she might as well be. While my biological mother grew tired of making sandwiches and doing laundry for her twelve year old son, by the time I was seventeen, Mom was getting woken up in the middle of the night to see if she knew what mischief I might be making.

I wasn't always cool with Mom worrying about me. It's hard for a teenager to go through that period of 'knowing everything' under the best of circumstances, but to have the next door neighbor 'imposing' herself should have been almost impossible.

I feel like more than once, she told me, 'I'm not in the mood for any of your crap today' in just such a way as to convince me to tow the line.

And that's exactly what I've tried to do. Even through all of that teenage nonsense, I realized that if a complete and total stranger is going to try to take care of me – to look out for me, feed me dinner when I showed up unannounced, and worry over me when I didn't show up unannounced...

The least I could do was try to behave when she told me to.

I made the occasional transgression, but I really did try to behave for Mom.

I'm the first to admit, sitting up in the bucket of the loader tractor and waving at the local state patrol officer assigned to the stretch of highway near the farm was an unwise provocation. After all, she had really done nothing other than her job the night she stopped me.

Poking that particular bear wasn't a bright move on my part – Mom had every reason to tell me I wasn't acting in my own best interest.

After all, I still remember one time when she told me how proud she and her husband (my very best friend in the universe) were when I'd moved off and started a career and a life for myself.

So... Yeah... Mom is a very good reason to be happier in the world. Especially after this week, when I looked the possibility of losing her in the eye, I'm very comfortable saying I'm better off because Mom chose to share her life and love with me.

Definitely reason number one to be happier about the world right now.