



*Check back each week for MASK's Dad Dialed In and Minute with Mom series.*

Having grown up as the only girl in a family with three brothers, I always dreamed of having a sister. Surrounded by Legos, football and chaos—including coming home to find my Barbie's hair chopped off—I vowed to myself that when I grew up my life would be perfect.

Like Barbie's dream house, my life would be modern, organized and probably child-free. I wanted to be an independent businesswoman, free to travel the world and be

glamorous without crying babies at my hip and messing up my house. So that's what I did.

I moved to Arizona, became a make up artist, opened a spa and commuted to L.A. to

work with celebrities, who are regular fixtures on the red carpet. I married my Ken, built a magazine cover-worthy, modern dream home and morphed into a workaholic, building my beauty empire.

I wanted more, but was secretly scared to death of getting pregnant and, like my mom, raising another family of boys. When I did get pregnant, I resigned myself to the fact that I was having a boy and that I'd likely be the good mom in a home charged with testosterone and boyish chaos.

Then came my ultrasound and I heard the nurse whispering, "It's a girl!" I knew for sure there was a God. Finally, someone on my team! Someone to play Barbies with, dress up with and be on my side! The birth announcements were a leopard high heel shoe, announcing the new York diva's arrival, Elliana Capri.

Ellie is almost 10 now. She's a fashion designer (ripping up recycled clothes and

titling her first work as Rip the Beach), actor (stole the show in her school play),

competitive ballroom dancer, gifted writer, brilliant student, talented artist, vegetarian

and a hysterically funny, sweet girl. Mostly, she's my best friend.

I've been a very nontraditional mother and have always treated her like an adult, letting her make a lot of her own choices and decisions. She has communicated perfectly to me from as young as 9 months old, helping me with clothing and hair style decisions just by pointing. By 10 months, she knew which make up brush was for blush and which was for powder.

I attribute her maturity, perspective, ambitious drive and responsible nature to the fact

that I've always believed in her and encouraged her to trust her own instincts. In a world where parenting has never been more complicated, I believe in simple things: be honest with your kids, help them develop a real sense of empathy, and make them keen observers of everything so they can have real insights on their own.

We put the Barbie dream house up for short sale, Ken and I got a divorce and my beauty empire slumped. Today, Ellie and I are re-building our own new dream, developing new

products and business plans, and bending a few rules along the way. She's a savvy

little entrepreneur and, I must say, one with remarkable insights that inspire me.

Our motto is have fun, question authority and be the change you want to see in the

world!