

Sophia Paulitz

## I Believe in the Power of Film

Part of the essential drive of human nature is the need to connect. We are social creatures, and we need to relate to others in order to thrive and live in harmony. For my family, one source of connection is film. We can be fighting ruthlessly one minute then all curl up on the couch the next minute when a movie is turned on. Growing up, film was always more to me than movies played on the big screen. Film was images dancing across any screen that brought my family together. When my mother was diagnosed with cancer when I was seven years old, it was hard to find activities for my whole family to bond over without causing her pain. We turned to the movie screen as a way to spend time with our mother as she recovered from chemo. Our lives could be chaotic with four young girls running around the house, but we were always able to slow things down and relax over a movie together.

After my mother passed away, life became fairly lonely and it became harder to bring the family together. We once again turned to film. My little sisters began to bond over making iMovies on their iPads as they worked together to create dream-like universes of their own. My older sister and I connected as I helped her find photographs and videos to create a short film about the story of my mother's life. My entire family slowly became whole again as we united over the home-videos my mom left behind. We still loved Sunday nights curled up on the couch together, but soon film meant something more. Film was a way my family could spend time with each other. Film allowed us not only to connect with each other, but also to connect with my mother long after she was gone.

Last year, my father showed us a video my mother made when she was first diagnosed, telling us all about her life. I was not able to get to know my mother as deeply as I hoped to, but film allows me to remain connected to her even 6 years after her passing. I learn more about her every day through the films she left behind. I can still feel her spirit when I watch her dance across the screen, and I feel her spirit in me as I dance through life. I believe in the power of film to fulfill the human drive for connection.

Word Count: 425