

One thing that i'm
afraid to lose



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Families come in all shapes, sizes and dynamics. When most of us think of our own families, all kinds of emotions can come to mind- some are positive while others are complicated. Luckily, I grew up in a small town where most of my family lived right down the block. Growing up, we would gather around my grandparents' table for a weekly dinner and the occasional board game. I spent many days and nights surrounded by loved ones, and the best (and worst) moments of my life always included them. For me, nothing could go wrong when I was surrounded by the people I loved.

Sometimes not being able to have those dinners with your family because they live across the country (or even in a different country) can be extremely difficult. If your family is somehow separated, there are no words to describe the pain it causes and the gap it creates. It's true, what they say, about family shaping who you are. But the word " family" can mean many things- family can be a sports team, a school club, or even a group of best friends. Sure, you can't pick 'em, but you can certainly make the most with who you've got.

There is no doubt that our families teach us a lot about the world. They are our first interactions and the foundation of who we will become. Their actions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors will shape our own. Among the most important lessons I've learned from my family were to always stay true to who I am and what I believe, to be a force of change, and- most importantly- to remember my roots.

They are the ones who teach us how to get a thick skin but keep a kind heart, to be confident without sacrificing humility, and how to handle every

change that we'll encounter with beauty, strength and grace. They're the first ones to poke fun at your ridiculous haircut from five years ago, but they're also the loudest supporters at talent shows and graduations. You share the coolest traditions around the holidays, and know how to have fun simply by being together. The annoying personal questions that surface whenever you're home from college are just another way to let you know they care, and by now they've made you a pro on the whole "tough love" concept. They treat your visits like it's the second coming of Christ, even if you've only been apart for a week.

No matter what goals we reach in life, it's always comforting to know that we have our families to lean on. As crazy as they can be they're our true partners in crime, and will always be our number one fans.