

# The Long Commute Home

## The Beauty Lesson

Back around 1981, my Mom heard about a woman in West Newbury, Massachusetts who was selling makeup, as well as teaching small groups of woman how to apply this makeup. Now, at that time, I was around 20, my one sister, Maura, was around 17 and Mom was about 50. The women in our family have never been big on using makeup. Actually, Maura and I were too busy playing football, baseball, basketball and street hockey with our 7 brothers to think about such girlish things.

Well, my Mom decided that this would be a constructive girls' night out. So off we went to West Newbury. The woman teaching the class was very nice, from what I remember. There were about 6 people taking the class. We each had a little sitting area with a mirror, light and a tray full of eye shadows, eyeliners, lip sticks and the works.

The woman began by explaining the purpose of using a good foundation. It was important to match the foundation color to your skin tone. One item after another would be explained. The instructor would demonstrate how to apply the item and then it would be our turn to try to apply the makeup correctly to ourselves.

Mom, Maura and I were all sitting near each other. After we applied a particular item, we would look over at one another and say, "Let me see?" This would be followed by the gratuitous ooh's, aah's and giggles. It felt very unnatural for us as Tomboys to be "playing" with makeup. We had always felt that makeup was for the cheerleader types. This was a totally different experience, one that we were not very comfortable with. The other students in the class seemed to be old hands at applying makeup. They were mainly there to check out the new line of products that the instructor was selling.

Anyway, Mom, Maura and I continued listening, applying, oohing, aahing, and more than anything else...laughing because honestly, I know I sure felt silly. We got to the point where the instructor explained about eye shadow. She described the colors and how to smooth it on without caking it to your eyelid.

Once again, it was then our turn to give it a go. I put mine on, only to grimace at the blue gaudiness screaming back at me in the mirror. I hated it and knew I would not repeat this process voluntarily. I looked over at Maura and then at Mom for the gratuitous ooh's and aah's. This time though, when I looked at Mom, I broke into uncontrollable laughter.

Here was my mother, wanting to show her daughters how to look like ladies, and she had the blue eye shadow applied below her eye. She looked like she had just lost a boxing match.

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Well, Maura and I just couldn't stop laughing. In-between gulps of air, I explained to my mother, the folly of her makeup wizardry; and in total character of my Mom, she cracked up laughing along with us. I don't recall any sense of embarrassment or self-consciousness - just sheer and utter humor.

From my mother I learned that it is okay to laugh at oneself and to make an honest mistake. We are after all, fallible humans who need a good chuckle every now and then, especially if it is at ourselves.