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David Cassidy

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want my real mother shoved aside because of Shirley. My own mother is not in the limelight like Shirley and my father, and because of that she's been forgotten. I've been quiet long enough but now I'll talk.

"People seem to think it's more interesting to write about Shirley and me, and how Shirley supposedly brought me up! And that bothers me, because it's my mother who brought me up, and she's not getting the credit for it. It makes me sad, because I'm about the only thing she has. I'm all she has in the world.

"I wish you would let people know how much she has done for me," David pleaded. "She's really responsible for any success I have, and for the kind of person I am. More than anybody else, she molded me. She was the biggest influence on me.

"And that's not all," he added. "She has made so many sacrifices for me. In fact, she sacrificed her own career for me! She was starring on Broadway, and she gave it up, because her whole thing was to be a mother—just to be a mother."

David said he first became conscious of his mother's sacrifices for him when he was ten years old. "That's when we moved out here from New Jersey.

"We had been living in West Orange with my grandmother and my grandfather—very good people—but I wasn't experiencing enough. There are so many things you lose, spending your life in a small town like that.

"You might say that in opening up my world, she closed down her own world. Because at that time she had found quite a lot of success on Broadway, for the first time, replacing Gwen Verdon as the star of *New Girl in Town*, and she left for my sake.

"My mother didn't really have too much money, and it was very hard for us to get by in Los Angeles. We found a house, but she couldn't get a job for a while. It was a completely different place. When you leave New York to come out here you find you don't know anybody. The doors are very hard to knock down, you know?

"The same thing happened to me when I started in show business. But I was just a little more fortunate in the fact that when I started working, I kept working, and I didn't stop. She started working, and then she gave the whole thing up for me.

"Of course, she said that she wanted it that way. But I think it was simply more important to her that she give me what she felt I needed. And I did need it. . . .

"She did find some work out here eventually, but when I was eleven years old she just gave it up and married Elliot Silverstein." (Silverstein was a popular television director who was ambitious to get into movie production, and a few years after the marriage he won a job directing *Cat Ballou*, starring Jane Fonda and Lee Marvin. The picture won Marvin an Academy Award and insured Silverstein's success as a movie director.)

"It's not that she didn't want to work," David recalled. "She wanted a career, but her marriage and my welfare were more important to her. So she gave up her career.

"It was largely for me that she stopped working again. She was worried that she

wouldn't be around when I needed her, and that bothered her. So she gave it up. I know that was really hard for her, and now that I'm on my own it's hard for her to find work again. When you stay out of the business for several years, it's difficult to get involved again. She would like to, I think. But I wouldn't like her to, really.

"I think it's a crummy business for her, and I don't want her to be hurt. If you are not 'hot,' per se, you have to take a lot of rejection. There are a lot of unnecessarily cruel people in the business whom I've come up against.

"In fact, my mother was the one who warned me against them to begin with—when I wanted to get into show business while I was in school. She wanted me to wait until I was graduated—in fact, she insisted on it. She used to say, 'Wait until you're older, and you'll see that there are a lot of bad people in the business.' So I knew that I'd face a lot of rejection.

"I'm glad now that I wasn't allowed to try acting until I was graduated from high school. . . . I think about those kids on our show, being around the set all day, surrounded by adults. That's no fun. You miss a lot of your childhood that way. Who wants to cope with the problems of show business when you're a child? I have a hard time coping with it all now, but when I was younger I never could have dealt with it.

"Yet I wanted to run in and try it. But she said, 'Listen—you've got a lot of years ahead, you know. There's plenty of time.' She wanted me to grow up, and she insisted that I wait. I can never repay her for that, because I don't know where I'd be without her guidance. I just know I wouldn't be here now, because I couldn't have coped with the business when I was younger."

■ But although Evelyn wouldn't let David try show business as a full-time profession while he was in school, she wisely helped him to prepare for the career she knew he wanted to have some day.

"When I was about nine or so, she sent me to an acting school back in New Jersey," David remembers. "And she always encouraged me to sing, both at home and in our church choir. We even used to sing together at home, my mother and I, a long time ago . . . when I was very young."

He smiled at a sudden memory. "She even put me in one of her shows once, when I was ten. She was in summer stock, and she let me be in the chorus. I couldn't believe it, you know? It was the greatest thing! I was so proud to be doing something with the rest of the cast, and to be part of it all. And in that way she was letting me see what it was all about. . . ."

Now he was very serious again, as he leaned forward to make a point. "A lot of people think I got into show business because of my father, and being around him. But I wasn't really around him that much. He and my mother were divorced when I was six years old, and he had to travel a lot because of his career.

"No, the reason I got some kind of insight into show business was because of my mother—because of what I saw through her, and what she opened me up to. She made me aware of a lot of things, and by the time I went into the business myself I was very glad that she had enlightened me about it."

Through his mother, David explained, he was able to develop a philosophy that helped to keep him from being hurt as much as he would otherwise have been by the many rejections one encounters while trying to get ahead in show business.

"You're bound to take these rejections personally if you're not prepared for them, because it's you who are being rejected.

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