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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

Beautiful Motherhood

Real Mothers

The Evolution of a Mother

Answers to Your Questions
Parenting secrets

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A partially deaf boy came home one day carrying a note from officials at school. The note suggested that the parents take the boy out of school, claiming he was "too stupid to learn."

The boy's mother read the note and said, "My son Tom isn't too stupid to learn. I'll teach him myself." And so she did.

When Tom died many years later, his country paid tribute to him by turning off the nation's lights for one full minute. They did this to honor the man who invented the first practical light bulb. But that was not his only discovery. Thomas Edison (1847-1931) also invented motion pictures, the record player, and went on to patent over 1,000 other ground breaking inventions.

Tom later said, "My mother was the making of me. She was so true and so sure of me, I felt that I had someone to live for—someone I must not disappoint. The memory of my mother will always be a blessing to me."

Not all children become world changers as Thomas Edison did, but we can be sure that every child that has been raised by a godly and loving mother has the potential to be an influence for good in his or her own unique way. Edison's mother certainly proved the adage true, "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," but in some way each mother does that as well.

With the stories and articles in this issue of *Motivated* we would like to pay tribute to and encourage mothers—mothers who see the good and possibilities in their children that others cannot see; mothers who sacrifice of their time and strength each day to care for and pour love into their children; mothers who have the courage to give up their hopes and dreams to see them realized in their little ones; mothers who, in a world where simply being a mother is becoming less and less popular, are determined to make mothering their "career."

May God bless you, dear mothers! You truly are heroes of the greatest kind!

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

No Charge

By Shirley Ceasar

My young son came into the kitchen this evening while I was preparing dinner, and he handed me a piece of paper he'd been writing on. So, after wiping my hands on my apron, I read it, and this is what it said:

For mowing the grass, \$5.

For making my own bed this week, \$1.

For going to the store \$0.50.

For playing with baby brother while you went shopping, \$0.25.

For taking out the trash, \$1.

For getting a good report card, \$5.

And for raking the yard, \$2.

Well, I looked at him standing there expectantly, and a thousand memories flashed through my mind. So, I picked up the paper, and turning it over, this is what I wrote:

For the nine months I carried you, growing inside me, No Charge.

For the nights I sat up with you, doctored you, prayed for you, No charge.

For the time and the tears, and the cost through the years, No Charge.

For the nights filled with dread, and the worries ahead, No Charge.

For advice and the knowledge, and the cost of your college, No Charge.

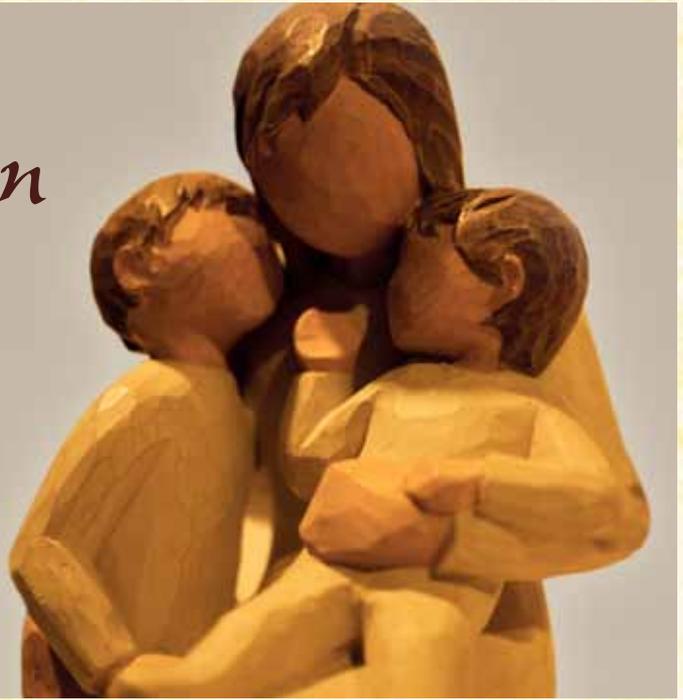
For the toys, food, and clothes, and for wiping your nose, No Charge.

Son, when you add it all up, the full cost of my love is, No Charge.

When he finished reading, he had great big tears in his eyes. He looked up at me and said, "Mama, I sure do love you." Then he took the pen and in great big letters he wrote, PAID IN FULL. ●

The *Evolution* of a *Mother*

By Maria Doehler



When my husband Sam and I had only one child, I thought I had a handle on parenting. I needed to adapt and bend and give up some of my independence, but not too much of it. I was absolutely on top of Cade’s appearance. He never wore dirty, stained, or soiled clothes. Cade was very “portable,” and we toted him with us wherever we went. When something needed to get done, we calmly set out to do it and got it done. I knew things would get harder as we had more children, but I wasn’t worried; I was pretty good at this.

Brooke arrived next. Brooke was an angel of a baby, waking only to gurgle and coo, and putting herself back to sleep. I had gained less weight during that pregnancy, so I was back in shape in no time. If I could ace it with two, I reasoned, I could handle anything. I was at the top of my game.

Enter Zara. Exit all parenting confidence. It’s not that Zara was difficult on her own, but suddenly “spontaneous” meant 45 minutes later. I often had kids crying in three different parts of the house. Doing anything as a family required the painstaking planning and execution of a mission to the moon. We began hearing comments like, “Just watching you wears me out!” But babies aren’t babies forever (before you know it they’re toddlers!), and we learned to work with it. We learned that we didn’t have to be perfect, and neither did our kids.

At this point I think I started to better understand that being a mother goes far beyond giving birth and caring for my children physically. It means living my life through my children—not by imposing my ideas and dreams on them, but by rejoicing at and taking pride in their triumphs. Everywhere we went, people would tell us, “Enjoy them while you have them. They will grow up so quickly!” That truth



started to sink in.

Our fourth child, Emma, is every bit as special as her brother and sisters. Spontaneous now means at least an hour. We still have to plan everything, of course, but we only plan one activity a day, max. We have lots of play clothes and just a few “special” clothes. Once when Zara got blue marker on Cade’s

shirt just as we were finally ready to go out, I found myself thinking, “Well, at least it’s on a blue shirt. It almost matches.”

To those who watch us when we go out, we must seem somewhat of a spectacle, but judging from their smiles, we’re a happy spectacle that people seem to enjoy. I’m continuing to learn about love in ways that are slowly changing the most stubborn parts of my nature. Each child and each day reshapes me a little more, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. It’s fun to be a family! ●

Beautiful Motherhood

By Saskia Smith

To children, no one in the whole world is more beautiful than their own loving mothers. Young children don’t think of their mothers in terms of fashion sense, great taste in jewelry, or perfect hair and nails. They also don’t notice the well-worn

hands or gray hairs. Their little minds are oblivious to those things that tend to skew adults’ perceptions and expectations regarding beauty, so they’re actually better judges of what makes a woman truly beautiful.

Where do children find beauty?—In the eyes that convey pride in their achievements, in the lips that encourage and instruct, in the kisses that make small hurts bearable, in the soothing voice that puts them back to sleep after a bad dream, in the wrap-around love of a soft warm hug.

Where does such beauty come from?—With motherhood comes self-sacrifice, but from self-sacrifice comes humility, from humility comes grace, and from grace comes true beauty. A mother embodies life, love, and purity in the giving of herself to her children, and in these she is a reflection of divine love.

This is why I believe that nothing is more beautiful than motherhood. ●





The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world

By David Fontaine

There's a lot more to motherhood than just having a baby. It takes a real mother to raise and care for children and do all the work that is involved—and it's a full-time job. Motherhood is probably one of the hardest jobs in the whole world, yet one that is seldom appreciated enough. People who have never done it can't possibly appreciate what a big job it is. It takes great faith and a whole lot of plain hard work.

Up until a couple of generations ago, most women believed that their calling in life was to be a wife, mother, and homemaker. They gave themselves to it, and began learning it at an early age by helping their mothers do all the things

they would one day need to know.

In some parts of the world this is still the case, but in many modern countries today, girls grow up into adulthood without learning that kind of responsibility. Young women may receive little or no preparation for motherhood and homemaking before they get married and have children and they soon find they don't know how to care for either, much less do the housekeeping and cooking. Marriage and having a family was a romantic dream of some kind, apparently with no work attached.

But real life is a drastically different picture. Even with all the conveniences of modern living that are available in

some parts of the world to take much of the pain out of housekeeping, children are still a full-time job.

To fulfill the job of a mother takes strength, wisdom, patience, faith, insight, administrative ability, and courage. It takes a lot of fight to be a mother. It also takes a lot of supernatural love, that's for sure!

What an important job a mother has.

Motherhood is just about the greatest calling in the world. The world of tomorrow is what the mothers of today make it, according to the way they raise their children. Of



course, taking care of a baby may not always seem very important, but we should never minimize it. Who knows what an impact that child may have on the lives of many others one day.

My mother undoubtedly had the greatest influence of anybody over my life. Even though she couldn't be with me all the time, I was constantly conscious of her presence, her love, and how she felt about things. Others had a great influence over me too, of course, like my grandfather and my father, my teachers and caregivers.

Children are influenced by a

combination of a lot of people and a lot of things—parents, caretakers, teachers, uncles and aunts, and friends they admire, books, and so on. Nowadays kids can also be greatly influenced by what they are exposed to on television and in movies. Throughout my childhood, there were wonderful, dedicated people who helped mold my character and make me what I would become, who read to us

and told us stories, and taught us to have faith.

At the same time it cannot be stressed sufficiently how important a mother's job is and how important children are

to the future.

The thing that makes a mother so wonderful is her self-sacrificial spirit that is willing to give of her time and strength and even her own health, if necessary, for the sake of her children. God will bless mothers for all they give of themselves for their children.

A proverb says, "Train your children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it." When they are grown, your children will be so thankful that they had a real mother. What a job! ●



A PARENT'S PRAYER

By Abigail Van Buren (1918-)

O God, make me a better parent. Teach me to understand my children, to listen patiently to what they have to say, and to answer all their questions kindly. Keep me from interrupting them or contradicting them. Make me as courteous to them as I would have them be to me. Forbid that I should ever laugh at their mistakes, or resort to shame or ridicule when they displease me. May I never punish them for my own selfish satisfaction or to show my power.

Let me not tempt my child to lie or steal. And guide me hour by hour that I may demonstrate by all I say and do that honesty produces happiness.

Reduce, I pray, the meanness in me. And when I am out of sorts, help me, O God, to hold my tongue.

May I ever be mindful that my children are children and I should not expect of them the judgment of adults.

Let me not rob them of the opportunity to wait on themselves and to make decisions.

Bless me with the bigness to grant them all their reasonable requests, and the courage to deny them privileges I know will do them harm. Make me fair and just and kind. And fit me, O God, to be loved and respected and imitated by my children. Amen. ●

“THE FAMILY CIRCUS”

By Bil Keane

In the nearly 30 years that I’ve drawn the syndicated cartoon “The Family Circus,” I’ve learned a lot about love. I’ve found it in my own family, and frequently what I’ve observed has provided the basis for a cartoon with Billy, Dolly, Jeffy, or PJ. But I make no secret about it—when it comes to love, my greatest inspiration, and the model for “Mommy,” has been my own wife, Thel.

We have five children (and now four grandchildren), and when they were younger, people often wondered how Thel managed with so many. I often wondered too. Whether she was soothing the hurt of a scraped knee, sitting in the audience at a school play, or helping with homework at the kitchen table, Thel was always there for us. And the more she did for us, the more she seemed to have to give us.

That was how I came upon one of the paradoxical laws of love. Real love doesn’t come in limited, finite amounts. It can’t be used up so there is no more. Instead, in a manner that defies physics, the more love we give, the more we’re able to give. Like enthusiasm that fosters enthusiasm, kindness that inspires kindness, cheerfulness that inevitably spreads, love increases when it’s given away.

I tried to put all that in one of my cartoons. There is Mommy, a full bag of groceries in one hand, her purse in the other, and Billy, Dolly, Jeffy, and PJ tugging at her knees. The woman at the left asks the question, “How do you divide your love among four children?” And Mommy’s answer, real words to grow on: “I don’t divide it. I multiply it.” ●





Answers to Your Questions

Parenting secrets

Q:

I love my children and want to be a good parent, but I feel very incapable. Is there a secret to raising happy, well-adjusted children?

A:

It's no secret, but, yes, there is a key: Love! It would be impossible to cover the topic of parental love thoroughly in this short column, but here is a brief list of some of the most important ways that parents can show their children love—and they're all within our easy reach.

- 1. Teach them faith.** It will help them to not only make it through childhood, but also to become happy, productive adults.
- 2. Give them time.** As much as children may need and appreciate the material things we provide, they'd rather have us!
- 3. Teach them by example.** Don't try to be perfect, but be someone children can look up to and trust. We should try to be what we want our children to be.
- 4. Give them training**—a clear standard of right and wrong. Children are happiest and feel most secure and confident when they know what's expected of them. Set clear boundaries and rules as to what children are allowed to do, and set reasonable consequences for crossing the bounds or breaking the rules.

5. Promote honest, open communication. Give them undivided attention when they're trying to communicate. Be a good listener. Show sincere interest. Try to see things from their point of view.

6. Give them praise and encouragement. All children thrive on praise. It's more important to praise children for good behavior than it is to scold them for bad behavior. Always try to accentuate the positive.

7. Have faith in them for what they can become. Recognize and see their potential.

8. Express love. Children need reassurances. We should put our love into words and actions.



Roses for Mama

By C.W. McCall, Source Unknown

A man stopped at a flower shop to order some flowers to be sent long-distance to his mother who lived two hundred miles away. As he got out of his car he noticed a young girl sitting on the curb sobbing. He asked her what was wrong and she replied, "I wanted to buy a red rose for my mother. But I only have seventy-five cents, and a rose costs two dollars."

The man smiled and said, "Come on in with me. I'll buy you a rose." He bought the little girl her rose and ordered his own mother's flowers. As they were leaving he offered the girl a ride home. She said, "Yes, please! You can take me to my mother." She directed him to a cemetery, where she placed the rose on a freshly dug grave.

The man returned to the flower shop, cancelled the long-distance delivery, picked up a bouquet, and drove the two hundred miles to his mother's house. ●





That Wonderful Thing Called

Mother

Heaven lives at the feet of mothers.
—*The Hadith*

The best medicine in the world is a
mother's kiss. —*Anonymous*

Mama was my greatest teacher—a
teacher of compassion, love, and
fearlessness. If love is sweet as a flower,
then my mother is that sweet flower of
love. —*Stevie Wonder, famous blind singer*

To a child's ear, "mother" is magic in any
language. —*Arlene Benedict*

Youth fades, love droops, the leaves of
friendship fall; a mother's secret hope
outlives them all. —*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

A mother is the truest friend we have
when trials, heavy and sudden, fall upon
us; when adversity takes the place of
prosperity, when friends who rejoice
with us in our sunshine desert us, when
troubles thicken around us, still she will

cling to us, and endeavor by her kind
precepts and counsels to dissipate the
clouds of darkness, and cause peace to
return to our hearts. —*Washington Irving*

The mother's heart is the child's
schoolroom. —*Henry Ward Beecher,*
famous writer and public speaker

The mother is a school
If you prepare her properly,
You will prepare an entire people of good
character.

The mother is the first teacher,
The most important of them,
And the best of them. —*An Arab poet*

A little girl, when asked where her home
was, replied, "where mother is."
—*Keith L. Brooks*

All mothers are working mothers.
—*Author unknown*