



Motherhood

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Motherhood is a simple joy. This post is a little longer than normal, but I wanted to share part of an essay I wrote two years ago for a magazine contest. It didn't get chosen so I'm recycling it and sharing it with you all. The question was, "When did you realize what the word love means?"

I've said three little words numerous times during my 45 years of life. Those words are, I love you. I never really understood their full meaning however, until I gave birth to my first child. A healthy baby boy who was the spitting image of his father as a baby. My "sweet boy" which was my nickname for him is now 17 years old, a few inches taller than his father and driving. My love for him hasn't changed since the day he was born. Three years later another miracle was born, my daughter. She came into this world with a different set of parenting rules, but I love her equally as much. Like most mothers I get agitated when they leave their wet towels on the floor, don't put their clean laundry away or leave a trail of empty soda cans on every end table. I feel like a nagging broken record and some days I imagine myself hopping on an airplane and jet setting to the Italian countryside for a month.

Motherhood has changed my life in numerous ways. I've been a stay at home mom for 17 years now. My younger self had aspirations of being a career woman in the Journalism field. I earned a BS in Journalism from the University of Kansas. After college I wound up working in event planning and sales, married my high school sweetheart, and after six years of marriage gave birth to my son. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to stay at home even though there were many days I felt working would have been much easier. I still have aspirations of accomplishing my dreams in life, but my love for my children surpasses anything I have ever felt before. My husband would argue that our miniature schnauzer runs a close second place in the hierarchy of the love chain. No matter how frustrated I may get at my children I love them unconditionally although at times it may seem like there are lots of conditions. There is a famous line in the movie *Love Story*. "Love means never having to say you're sorry." I have found that to be untrue. I have to apologize to my children at least twice a week for blowing up at them in a hormonal state and allowing numerous expletives to escape from my mouth.

I've heard it said before that love should never hurt, but it has been my experience that it does. When my children's hearts are broken, my heart feels their pain. Even though they are their own person, they have a part of my DNA. I feel it's my job to protect them, but I know that I can't be with them 24 hours a day nor do I want to. I have to trust that they will make good choices and when it is out of my control I pray that God will protect them. It hurts when my child is in pain and when he or she is struggling with school or just life in general.

I've never been the type of person who wants to relive their school years, but in some respects I do through my children. When I dropped them off for mother's day out for the first time, they cried when I left them. I understood the fear of being separated from your mother and being left with strangers. I felt anxious and nervous when my son played the guitar for the first time in his elementary school talent show and had only been taking lessons for three months. I worried that the other kids would laugh at him. I was panicked when my daughter was performing a cheer at a professional soccer game, and she was displayed front and center on the jumbotron. It was 100 degrees that day, and I kept pestering her to drink water for fear that she would get dehydrated. By the time she got out on the

field, I could tell she had to go to the bathroom. I was terrified sheâ€™d pee her pants every time her little legs jumped into the air. I now feel for my daughter as she navigates through the awkward middle school years. Her friends are changing, her body is changing and drama awaits around every corner. My son isnâ€™t quite as dramatic, but I feel for him because heâ€™s a little shy and at the age where many kids start to date. I understand the feelings of rejection and disappointment. I know my children will experience heartbreak at some point in their life and as much as I would like to, I canâ€™t control it. It is a part of the journey called life. We learn and grow from our life experiences and challenges. My heart knows these things, but my heart canâ€™t help but hurt when my children are hurting.

I hope I have given my children the wings they need to one day leave my cozy and sometimes emotional nest. The most important thing supporting those wings is LOVE and itâ€™s something that will always be there for them. Iâ€™ve learned my love for them comes in many different forms. It may be over protection, anxiousness, crying, worrying, nagging or yelling. It will be a test of my faith and my love for them when itâ€™s time to let them fly on their own.

To all of the Moms out there, I hope you have a wonderful Motherâ€™s Day filled with love!

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