



***A MOTHER'S GIFT:
SEVEN THINGS GREAT MOTHERS
SPEAK INTO THEIR CHILDREN***

Many people feel that what we do for mothers on the second Sunday in May is the definitive indication of how we feel about them. Most believe that, if we cherish our mothers, we call, send a card, give a hug, buy a gift, or take her to lunch— perhaps do all of the above. Whatever your choices, we can agree on this: we hold dear the traditions of Mother's Day and what they mean to our families.

As a mother and grandmother, however, I want to present my personal twist on celebrating Mother's Day. My feeling is that, while I appreciate each gesture, I actually prefer to be the one who does the giving. And, I hope that I remember to give every day.

Face it. Your children and grandchildren don't always hear you when you talk to them. Someone once said: "Children may close their ears to advice, but they keep their eyes open to example." Examples are important, nevertheless, the voice of a mother's wisdom remains long after we've eaten the Mother's Day candy and all the flowers are faded.

Jennifer, an age 30-something mother who is rearing her eight-year old son, Shannon, as a single parent, agrees. Jenn prays with Shannon every morning when she drops him off at school. Then, she makes it a point to share one important message each day—an everyday thought, something he can really remember and apply. When I asked her what kinds of things she said to Shannon, these seven themes stood out.

Great mothers tell their children:

1. You are unique; no one who has ever lived can do what you can do.
2. Fear is toxic; most of what you fear is imagined.
3. You are a survivor; decide to make survival your choice.

4. Love, forgiveness and kindness are qualities that bless the giver more than the recipient.
5. Mistakes won't kill you; let them make you wiser and stronger.
6. Work is honorable and honorable work is good for you.
7. God still speaks in a still, small voice. Stop talking and listen.

As mothers, we bear so much of the weight of what goes on in the lives of our busy families. Often, providing our children with life's necessities totally consumes us...so much so that we are often too exhausted to invest something else they can always keep: our words. Your greatest gift to your child is what you speak, and not just on Mother's Day.

(What are your feelings about the impact of parents' words? I invite readers to email me at the address below.)

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