

Is Motherhood for You?



Child psychology was my major in college along with Early Childhood Education as my minor. However, I do not consider myself an expert in the field of psychology, but I had a strong desire to be a good teacher and a good mother. I enjoyed every minute of raising my two children, a boy and a girl. I read every recommended book on the best-seller list on raising children, child behavior from birth to teen years, and all the health information available on feeding and childhood illnesses. I did this reading prior to having children and felt I would be well prepared when my first child arrived and then would have that experience to help when my second child arrived. Reading books on child rearing is one thing but the actual task is another!

Now, as a grandmother and senior citizen, I am seeing a change in how women and men approach parenthood. They are finding it more stressful than they originally thought. Being generations away from new parents, I can see how their lack of knowledge prior to giving birth has left many a new parent doubting their ability to raise their child with as little stress as possible. Also, some who succumb to social pressure to be parents may tend to oversimplify the issues involved. Crying babies, sleepless nights, poop in their diapers and fussy eaters is nothing new in what all babies have done for ages. This can be very frustrating to many a new parent. However, I would like to ask women contemplating motherhood some questions and give them some things to think about before they embark on this life changing journey:

- Ask yourself if you enjoy children, especially infants now and when you were growing up.
- Did you babysit when you were young? Did you enjoy those times or was it only the money that interested you?

- When you were a child did you enjoy playing with dolls, playing house, and always playing the mother role?
- Prior to getting pregnant and during your pregnancy are you reading all the literature on child bearing, care, and feeding?
- Have you talked to other mothers to hear their everyday experiences in raising their children?
- Is social pressure from friends, relatives, or co-workers on having a child affecting you?
- Do you enjoy cooking, cleaning house, being organized, and planning your awake hours to the fullest?
- Is your mate interested in having children? Will he be a help in parenting along side of you or would all the responsibility rest on your shoulders?
- Did your mother do the entire child rearing when you were growing up or did your Father help? Are you pleased with how your parents raised you and would you emulate them?
- Do you admire women who have children and work outside of the home? Do you think that is something you could easily do or do you see it as being a handicap to have a job and support a family?

These are just a few questions to ask yourself and to realize how much of your upbringing, your knowledge of children, mainly babies, will play a big part in your enjoyment of starting your family. It's not easy to raise a baby just as it was not easy to give birth, but once the baby arrives all the pain is forgotten. My prayer to a new mother is to be patient, loving, and to remember those days when it seems the baby would not stop crying, or not sleep throughout the night, or eat the healthy food you prepared for it. They always outgrow it. I remember when I had my first child who would not give up his pacifier and it seemed like ages before he was potty trained and I anxiously mentioned this to our pediatrician and his answer was: "Believe me he will not be using a pacifier when he goes to kindergarten and rest assure he will not be

carrying an attaché case and still not be potty trained". In time, all things pass!

For expectant mothers and those contemplating motherhood, I have some tips I will pass on in my next post. In the meantime, relax and enjoy this time to prepare.

July 4th – A Golden Anniversary & National Holiday for Me



It's the 4th of July! What a fabulous national holiday! Our flags are flying proudly, parades are being held in towns all over the U.S.A., the barbecue grills are being fired up, and children are waiting eagerly for nightfall to view the most fantastic fireworks imaginable.

However, this July 4th. 2010, George and I will be celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary.

Gosh, 50 years. It seems such a short time ago when we were young, naïve, and just out of college. I would be leaving my parents home for the first time to start a life with the man of my dreams and would be continuing my teaching career. George was completing his doctorate degree in chemistry and would be starting an exciting job with Exxon.

We were on our way!

Everyone is surprised to hear we have been married for 50 years. "How did you do it?" is the usual question. I guess it's surprising to this generation since they realize the divorce rate in America as of 2009 is >50%. We have become a society where extended families are a common phenomenon.

Falling in love is easy, making it last is hard!

Looking back on our marriage we both agree that certain factors helped make our marriage a lasting one. George especially feels that *communication* is the key part of our relationship. Sometimes the communication can be soft, or at times noisy, but it eventually cleared the air and led to compromise. Also, we never tried to change each other, and were supportive of whatever the other wanted to do. We accepted the faults...as well as the virtues. Patience was never one of my virtues, but it was one of George's, and that's why it worked.

We always enjoy each other's company from the time we met until this day, but we don't always like to do the same things or are attracted to the same people, thus we learned how to sacrifice. Our relationship is based on honesty, and openness, and we don't keep secrets. It was funny to hear my female friends wonder why I always told George *everything*. My Mother always said that secrets will "eventually catch up to you".

George has always been my best friend, my confidante, and my soul mate. If I had to do it over again, I would be saying the same vows to the same person. I thank God everyday for bringing him into my life and giving him the patience he needs to be married to a woman like me.

May God keep him healthy, happy and in my life for 50 more years. Happy Anniversary, George!

A Long and Happy Marriage – What's the Secret



I have been married for 48 years to the same man who I love just as much today as I did when I first met him. We met while in college and dated five years before our marriage. So, basically we have known each other 53 years. When younger people hear we are married for so long, the usual question is “what is the secret to staying married so long?”

The answer is simple: Similarities!!

Not in personalities or in likes and dislikes but similarities in upbringing, environment, religion and education. A couple may not have the same nationality or religion but their family heritage is similar in customs, rituals and beliefs. This gives the couple the ability to understand each other's personality traits when they are able to compare their beliefs and behavior to their upbringing.

Even something as simple as a comfort food recipe can bring a couple to compare their childhood memories of a dish Mom made and see the similarities. It's easier for a husband to understand eating Bacala on Christmas Eve when his Mother is also Italian.