

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.

Top Holiday Kitchen Gifts



The holidays will be here before we know it and this year I will give gifts that are used in the kitchen. It seems more and more people are cooking meals at home rather than going out to eat. This can be difficult for a cook who is not equipped with the right essentials.

Since I have been cooking for umpteen years, I have found some equipment that I cannot do without. Hopefully, this list will give you some ideas for those on your gift list. You can find many of these items in discount stores, or on sale, and even better on line. Searching the web gives you more opportunity to compare prices and many vendors offer free shipping.

Here are some of my favorites that I could not be without:

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KitchenAid Stand Mixer: This item comes in a variety of models, colors and price range. The mixer includes bowl, beaters, and dough hook. KitchenAid offers many additional accessories at added cost (good for those who

may already have the mixer) such as pasta maker, juicing and slicing attachments and, best of all, an ice cream maker.

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Cuisinart Food Processor: An 11-cup or 9-cup capacity food processor also comes in a variety of models, colors and price range. The stainless steel blades included with all models do an excellent job of slicing or shredding. My favorite is the dough blade, great for kneading dough for all your breads, pizzas and pasta. My Cuisinart processor is over twenty-five years old and still works like a gem. Couldn't be without it!

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Cuisinart Mini Food Processor: A 4 cup capacity that does an excellent job chopping and grinding. I use this for chopping veggies and grinding nuts. It also works

well to grind hard cheeses. The removable parts are dishwasher-safe.

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Knives: All cooks need a good set of kitchen knives and after many years of trying to keep a knife sharp or not chipping or breaking, my favorite are the Wusthof high carbon stainless-steel knives. These can be pricey, but you can just add a few knives at a time to start a collection. The complete set with block will store and keep knives protected right on your counter top for quick accessibility. I love the 9" steel sharpener included in the set which really keeps the knives sharp every time you cut. Don't put these knives in the dishwasher; always wash by hand in hot soapy water.

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Steak knives: Again, I recommend the Wusthop steak

knives. They make an excellent accompaniment to the Wusthof kitchen cutting set. The steak knives stay sharp and the handles are beautifully designed for comfortable handling.

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Waring Blender: A classic small appliance I have had for years that blends and mixes like new every time. A sturdy, heavy duty motor and easy to clean pitcher. Smoothies are so big now and this blender can crush ice and frozen fruit to make a delicious thick and smooth drink. It's also the perfect blender for bar drinks. A must in any kitchen!

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John Boos Chopping Block: In order to keep those special knives sharp you want to use a very good quality chopping block. I prefer John Boos maple wood board. It is strong and heavy and will endure all of your chopping, mincing, and dicing needs. Simply wash with hot soapy water and dry with a clean paper towel. It lies perfectly flat on your counter top and you can rest assure it will not move due to its solid construction.

Any one of these items will make your recipient a very happy cook. Happy shopping!

Potato and Pepper Frittata Meatless Recipe



A very versatile dish my Mother made on meatless Fridays was a potato, pepper and mushroom frittata. It is delicious hot or at room temperature and leftovers can be reheated in the microwave. Mom would often use eggs in place of meat or poultry as she knew eggs were high in protein and had always been labeled “nature’s most perfectly balanced food”. In fact, eggs have been the standard which all protein foods are measured.

I love making this frittata, as it can be made in advance, kept in a warm oven (150°F) and served within an hour. I serve this at luncheons or for brunch and we also enjoy this as an entree for dinner. When served on the same dish with a salad tossed with an olive oil and vinegar dressing, the dressing runs into the frittata and tastes delicious!

Ingredients:



- 1 large potato (Idaho or Russet), peeled and diced (2 cups)
- 1 small red bell pepper diced
- 1 small green bell pepper diced
- 1 cup button mushrooms sliced (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 8 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil finely chopped (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Cooking Directions:

Vegetables:



- In an 11 inch non-stick, oven-proof skillet, heat oil

over medium heat until hot.

- Add potatoes and cook, stir occasionally, until light brown about 15 minutes.
- Add peppers, stir occasionally, until cooked about 15 minutes.
- Add mushrooms (optional), stir occasionally, until cooked about 5 minutes.
- Season the vegetables with salt and pepper.
- Transfer the vegetable mixture to a bowl, set aside and let cool.

Final Preparation:



- Preheat Broiler
- Meanwhile in a large bowl, beat together eggs, salt, pepper and Parmesan cheese until smooth.
- Add vegetables to eggs and mix well.
- In the same skillet heat an additional 2 tablespoons olive oil, over medium heat.
- When hot, pour in the egg mixture.
- Use a wooden or rubber spatula to gently push egg mixture toward center to allow uncooked egg to run to bottom of pan.
- Once bottom is brown and eggs are semi-firm, place the skillet under the broiler for 30-60 seconds until the top is firm.

Alternative method if skillet is not oven-proof:

Once bottom of egg mixture is browned and semi-firm cover the skillet with a plate, invert skillet to release the omelet, and slide the flipped omelet back into the skillet. Cook 30-60 seconds till brown and firm.

Serving Directions:



Remove frittata to platter. Cut into 8 wedges. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Serve with a vinaigrette salad and sliced tomatoes.

Whatever Happened To Manners?



We live in the best country in the world; we are people of many talents, diversities, religions and nationalities. But the best of all, we are a nation of people who care for others. We are the first to help those in need. Remember all those who came to the aid of 9/11 victims? Not only firemen and policemen, but the man down the street, who rushed to give aid to a fleeing victim of the Twin Towers and the lady living in the nearby apartment building who saw the disaster and went out of her safe home to immediately help others. There are also those times in major disasters, such as hurricanes, fires, floods and mudslides, tornados, when we offer assistance in the form of money, food and clothing, and prayers to those who lost everything.

However, somewhere down the road we lost our everyday

consideration of others.

Either due to the stress we are under, especially in these days of economic unrest, or we are in such a hurry to get to wherever we're going that we forget to stop and think about how we are behaving. I myself am guilty of this and realize I need to take a deep breath and think of how the other person feels about my behavior. It all boils down to remembering what our mothers taught us as soon as we were able to speak. Do you remember hearing her say, "Did you say thank you, did you say, you're welcome, how about did you say, excuse me"? Not to mention her always telling you to say "Please". These words were the foundation of learning manners at a very young age.

I have mentioned in an earlier post how I enjoy [grocery shopping for taste and nutrition](#). You can learn a lot in the grocery store just by watching people:

- Look at those who have a cell phone glued to their ear. Who wants to hear their conversations? Not me, plus I could care less who is telling them what to buy on the other end of the phone.
- What about the person who is on line with a cart overflowing and you have just a few and the express lines are not opened and they don't think or care to say, "Please, go ahead of me"?
- My favorite, is the person who you might have accidentally bumped with your cart or you may have blocked their reach on a shelf and you say "Oh, excuse me I'm so sorry" only to get a glare and a stare.

This attitude doesn't put us in a happy mood. So what do we do, we say the heck with them and next time we will not be as polite. It's a vicious cycle!

Then you leave the store only to encounter rudeness in the parking lot:

- Again the person with the cell phone, trying to back out only to be engrossed on the phone and not watching what they are doing. Maybe they come too close to running over you or nicking your car. Do they roll down their window and say “I’m so sorry”? Of course not – they can’t interrupt their important phone conversation.
- Cell phones have caused more accidents and are so over-used that it has become a pet peeve of mine.

Too bad [Emily Post](#) (1873-1960) isn’t still around to write a book on Cell Phone Etiquette. Her classic book [“Etiquette”](#) is still very much on-target even today and is a great read. Anna Post, her great-great-granddaughter is carrying on the tradition of teaching etiquette to the masses on her [blog](#).

Now you are on the road headed home. Oh, have you ever encountered road rage? I have and I have also been guilty of it myself. I live in an area that has numerous 4 way stops. Do I need to say more? Again, know the rules, be courteous of those who make a mistake and please consider the safety of others. Forget the rage, it’s not healthy, it’s not safe to be driving in that frame of mind plus it doesn’t get you where you’re going any faster!

You are home now, thank goodness safe and sound, but a little disappointed in what you witnessed only to be disappointed again by finding no thanks, either in your mailbox or an email, for the gift, or note/card you sent expressing sympathy, happiness, congratulations or good wishes. This is another pet peeve of mine. Our busy lives have taken away our time to express our thanks to others. It is so simple to say “thank you”, but we keep forgetting how two simple words can bring a smile to someone’s face and brightness to their day. Maybe they wouldn’t be so gloomy and grumpy.

Remember what your mother always told you, “Treat others the way you want to be treated”, which after all, is just a variation on the Golden Rule.