

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.