



From 'Me' to 'We'

Why every day is Mother's Day

By Kelli Wheeler

Before I had kids, one of my favorite things to do was sleep in on Sunday morning, read the paper in bed and, if it was football season, transfer from bed to couch to take in a few games. I guess I did the same if it wasn't football season too.

I distinctly remember when I gave that all up: 7:30 p.m. Friday, October 24, 1999. As I stared into the blue eyes of my newborn son, wondering what he must be thinking, I detected an answer. "It's all about me now, Mom."

And how.

On that fateful day, my life was turned upside down forever. And if that wasn't enough, I doubled the fun 17 months later with a girl. It is impossible to be a "me" person when a "we" is involved. Especially when the we is a helpless infant who needs constant love and attention.

I remember rolling over at 5 a.m. to the wails of a hungry newborn on the first Sunday after becoming Mom and

saying to my husband, "I won't be sleeping in again for another 18 years, will I?" Make that 18 years and 17 months.

Now when Mother's Day rolls around, my husband and kids know exactly what Mommy wants for her special day. They let me sleep in as late as I want, and when I wake up, the Sunday paper is at the foot of the bed. And since Mother's Day is not during football season, they offer me my next favorite indulgence: going to the movies—by myself. The gift of "me" time for a mother is priceless.

Seriously, though, for me Mother's Day is every day of the year. It is a perpetual gift that I feel so blessed to receive. Some days I wish I could wrap up each little giggle and look of wonderment in tiny packages to save forever. I would regift them to myself when my babies' voices turn deep with age and I've heard for the hundredth time, "Yeah, Mom, I know."

Every day brings new adventure, whether challenging or rewarding. Some days I sit back and envelop myself in their innocence and freedom

of responsibility, becoming a kid again myself. Other days, when the work of motherhood threatens to bring me down, I try to remind myself to enjoy the journey. Even the worst days will make the joyous ones seem that much brighter and will become part of our family history.

I believe children are little reminders of heaven to bring with us on our journey. They make us see past ourselves and help us reap the benefits of investing in someone else's happiness. How can it not be a gift from God when you realize someone else's happiness can become your own?

It is easy to see I love my children to pieces. And I know they know it. I asked them how they knew Mommy loved them. Whitney, 4, replied quickly, "Because you give me huggies and kissies." That's right: endless supply, lifetime guaranteed.

Logan, 5 1/2, had to think a little harder. Finally, he said, "Because you buy me stuff." Apparently you *can* put a price on love. I decided to ask a few of my smallest friends how they knew their mommies loved them or what Mommy did to make them feel special. I thought these little jewels of innocence are perfect examples of why every day is Mother's Day.

There were other kids in Logan's camp who thought shopping was a great example of love. Jessica, 5, knows her mommy loves her because "she kisses me." But the big smile appeared when she told me her Mommy makes her feel special by "going to the mall and buying me clothes."

Katherine B., 5, had the same idea, but started more profoundly:

"Because I'm important. And she buys me clothes."

Sometimes love just means allowing desires to be fulfilled. For Jonathan, 2 1/2, love from Mommy means "letting me ride the motorcycle." It's his favorite toy. For his brother Tommy, 4 1/2, it's because "she lets me play with David." That's his best friend.

Everybody knows mommies are special, but I think Sadie, 2 1/2, might be on to something: "Mommy makes magic." When I asked her how, she simply said, "Abracadabra." I need to talk to Sadie's mom about that. I'd love to learn how to abracadabra my messy house.

Hannah, our 5-year-old friend going on 30, thought I posed a silly question. Mommy loves her "because she says it to me." I was surprised when she didn't add the "Duh" that her look provided.

Many times, Mommy's just being there is enough. Said Ashlinn, 4, "She helps me with whatever I need help with."

I think, though, it was Katherine L., 5 1/2, who spoke the words that are etched on every mother's heart. Barely stopping long enough in her play to answer how she knew Mommy loved her, she looked me square in the eyes, shrugged her shoulders and said, "She just loves me."

Yep, 364 days a year, sometimes 365, 24/7, good days and bad, from the moment we laid eyes on you till we take our last breath. And then some.

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