

Mother's Day – Sentiment Not Profit

Life With Cancer

Tri-City Herald May 13th, 2012

How did Mother's Day begin? Well you would be forgiven for thinking it was a business ploy to sell off all the cute fluffy toys that didn't get sold on Valentines and Easter. But in essence, Mother's Day goes back as far as ancient Greece and Roman times, as a day of appreciation. The most modern version of the day started in England as Mothering Sunday, a day when workers were allowed time to visit their mothers, as well as attending church. In America, the early English settlers often disapproved of secular holidays and the idea never really took off, until Anna Jarvis lobbied for an official mother's day to honor her mother's death in 1905. She devoted her entire life to its foundation, and in the end was reputed to have regretted it. She was arrested at a mother's day festival trying to stop women selling flowers. She wanted it to be a day of sentiment not profit.



Mother's Day may not have turned out how Anna Jarvis imagined it, but it is a celebration of mothers, honoring the women who give unconditionally to their families, without asking for anything in return, well maybe except for an iPad, a Vitamixer, chocolates, flowers, chocolates again, and countless other presents that would make me a cool, but not so slim, mom.

Hang on though! Like thousands of other women, I'm a Cancer Mom, and whether your children are 2 or 42, that changes everything, immeasurably so if you haven't been lucky enough to see your children grow up yet. My children don't know me as anything else than a Mommy with cancer. They don't fully understand the consequences, but I certainly do.

It changes my outlook on Mother's Day, of every day. I treasure every single moment of seeing them grow, the first sassy comment, the first interest in clothes, nail polish, boys! I don't accept the sass; I just smile quietly behind a stern face, because I was there to see it. And I pray every day that I will see more, much more. After all, who wants their Dad to explain puberty to them? Yuck!

Having cancer gives me both the blessing of mindfulness of my children's journey into adulthood, as well as a realization that I have a responsibility to pass on my "wisdom" now: that they control whether every day is precious; that listening and patience can take away much of the pettiness that fills our lives; but most importantly that life is what you make of it, and what you give back to others.

And then there's my duty to tell them now how important they are to me. I want them to know, and remember, that I am so grateful for their hard work, kindness and the love they show for their family

and others. I want them to know that they are beautiful in mind, spirit and body. But mostly that I'm just so very proud of them, and that my heart isn't big enough to capture all the love they give to me.

As a busy mom, it's so easy to concentrate on the everyday petty nuisances, with children old and young, and forget to tell them how much you love them. But that's my blessing, knowing that I have to squeeze forty or fifty years of parenting into a much smaller time frame. It means I make every day count. And on the one day when every mother's unconditional love is celebrated everywhere? Well the cards, the flowers, the gifts may just be the outward sign of appreciation, but what I love the most about Mother's Day is when they stop their busy lives and spend a wonderful day with me. Honoring your mothers with your time was how Mother's Day got started. As a Cancer Mom, I'll take that any day over an iPad.

Kay Kerbyson lives with her family in West Richland. She is a local and national cancer advocate, and Founder/President of Ovarian Cancer Together Inc, a non-profit organization supporting and networking women across the state. More information can be found at her website www.ovariancancertogether.org or my email at Kay@ovariancancertogether.org