

Even mothers need ‘mothering’ at times

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

Mothers need mothering, too. At what point does a person stop needing to be encouraged, supported, cared for? Each individual needs to feel mothered at times.

Mothering qualities are most associated with caring for children. During the youngest years, children are utterly dependent on a mother’s care for feeding and meeting basic needs. Whether that care comes through a man or woman, biological mother or a caregiver, is not so important. But the love motivating the care is.

True mothering is not just the physical tasks. It is the expression of the spiritual qualities which determines the quality of care. Mothering is affection, patience, gentleness, good humor. It shines through kindness, joyfulness, compassion. The person who cherishes children in these ways will be remembered as a mothering type.

Not that mothering is all love with no principle. The watchful mother protects children from harm, sets rules, teaches self-discipline. By requiring effort, expecting obedience, enforcing unselfishness, mothers mold a firm foundation on which children can build productive lives.

Mothering requires self-service. Raising children means putting aside personal goals and agendas. The needs of the child become primary.

So when do children outgrow wanting to be mothered? If by mothering is meant the spiritual qualities mentioned above, probably never. Don’t we still want those around us to be affectionate, patient with us, gentle when we fail, good-humored when we struggle? Don’t we want our spouse or boss or friends to be kind to us, joyful, compassionate? Don’t we still appreciate being protected from harm?

We never outgrow needing or wanting to be mothered. From the youngest babe to the most senior citizen, the true qualities of motherhood are cherished and appreciated.

In fact, isn't this what the world needs a little more of, mothering? If each one of us opened our eyes to the people around us silently crying out for a mother's understanding and met that need, what a blessing it would be. If each husband mothered his wife a little more, if each adult child mothered their parents, if each brother mothered his sister.

Mothering is something we all can do. True mothering is something we all love to receive. As Mother's Day comes and goes, let's resolve to express more of the mother qualities. Whether we are male or female, have children or not, expressing mother-love will sweeten our homes, smooth relationships, bring a little gentleness to our world.

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