

From the Stacks
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Mothers are caregivers who sow seeds of character and resilience in their children. With care and attention, hopefully these youngsters will become well-rounded individuals who demonstrate kindness, empathy, respect, and perseverance. Mothers shape communities and societies by molding the hearts and minds of their children. Mothers make silent sacrifices for the well-being and happiness of their children, and the depth of a mother's love transcends personal desires.

Today, so many internet "therapists" point fingers at mothers calling them narcissists and encouraging estrangement. No perfect parent exists. Loving, kind, respectful, and supportive relationships do exist. My mother could be difficult at times, but most often, she was considerate, forward thinking, spirited, and kind. If I would have stifled communication with my mother, I think of all the joy and the lessons I would have missed.

Moma loved each of us five children unconditionally yet differently. She helped us all discover our interests with activities. Music and piano lessons or erector sets would occupy our time. We had a significant amount of outdoor time in the garden, gathering eggs, chopping cotton, mowing the yard, and other physically exhausting activities but quite possibly that was the point! When Moma knew I was interested in theater, I was provided opportunities to see Broadway touring shows at the Orpheum Theater and at The Fox Theater.

When I returned home from school, Moma instructed "put on play clothes". Now, I usually grumbled because I thought, "what is the big difference in clothing?" After church, we all had to get out of our church clothes before lunch. What made one set of clothes different from the other set? Why did Moma put on lipstick just to go to Raymond Carroll's Grocery Store? She taught me by example to dress appropriately especially when I am in public. And, I always wear lipstick!

Living outside of Senath, our family ate most meals at home. Eating at a restaurant meant we were traveling or shopping or it was a special occasion. Moma was a very good cook. My friend, Sally, would spend the night and always request chocolate gravy for breakfast. My sister, Carla, had a friend that would peak into the fridge for leftovers. Mrs. Palmer, who helped clean house every Monday morning, would tell Moma what she wanted to eat for lunch the next week. From chicken and dumplings to a platter of ham and biscuits with red-eye gravy, Moma's cooking pleased us all.

Moma taught us kids how to laugh. With Daddy driving to Memphis, Moma is snickering in the backseat and then she taps me on the shoulder. She grins and laughs. Silver

shines! She pulled the foil off the back of a gum wrapper and placed it on her teeth. Whatever restaurant we may have been eating, Moma would order a glass of iced tea. Pulling the wrapper halfway off and blowing the bottom end at us kids gave her much joy. I am just giddy when my sister, Sara, does this or my kids!

Probably the most important lesson Moma taught me is forgiveness. I gave Moma plenty of reasons to distance herself from me as a child and as an adult. She never did. When I apologized, she would tell me how much I was loved. I have failed in many ways as a mother but I have not failed in loving them too much. I hope my kids can laugh! May you laugh and celebrate May! Happy Mother's Day!