

5 17-19 Mother's Day Memories

The recent honoring of mothers brought back so many memories. I am the fifth child of eight. My Catholic parents had four in a row, the first born while my father was saving lives in World War II, as a pilot. He returned, with no parenting skills, to meet his first born, and I know it was difficult for my mother to point that out and teach her husband, by example, what works and doesn't and what a one year old can and cannot do. To his credit, he did learn!

By the time I came along, my family had been traveling around the country while he was still in the service, fighting both in World War II and the Korean War. Wives and mothers deserve so much credit for what they accomplish during times such as those!

I have no idea what my mother might have had as a wedding shower or baby shower. I never asked her, and she never told me. She was married in a simple light blue dress and looked beautiful! It was war time and arrangements were simple.

It makes me wonder, "Do we need a war to keep things simple?"

My wedding shower was simple. It was in the living room of my soon to be mother-in-law. Aunts, neighbors and friends gave useful gifts such as a laundry basket filled with towels. Someone gave me the Betty Crocker cookbook, which I still have, and I enjoyed holding it up to my mother, a great cook, and looking for her approval. It was fun. It was simple. People felt good, knowing they were helping me to get started on my new life.

My baby shower was similar. It was at a friend's house, and my mother helped me to open gifts. The gifts were more abundant and larger than those at my wedding shower! Car seat, crib, play pen, etc., in addition to onesies, diapers and stuffed animals. A good time was had by all, as we say, and the baby-to-be-born had all he would need. People felt good they had helped, and I was grateful for their help.

What are wedding showers and baby showers like now?

They are, so often, out of control, and crazy expensive. Friends and family often feel obligated to comply and compete. I have heard so many stories of lost sleep and teary stress stories and even family divisions and break-ups over the ultimate shower.

Makes you wonder, doesn't it? I certainly wonder. I wonder about the wisdom of the extravagance, when the light needs to shine on the needs. A new marriage needs some things and that varies; they may or may not need a lawn mower or a washing machine. They always need towels, sheets and dishes. That is why a registry is helpful. The registry gives people a idea of not only the needs but also the preferences. Do they like white and grey or a different color scheme? The registry tells you that. A useful registry has a wide range of wishes: small and inexpensive, up to the large and expensive. It gives people options for those who need options.

What we don't need is stress, tears, anger, lost sleep and spending money that we either can't afford or could be better spent in more practical ways.

Beginning a new life in marriage and/or beginning a new life by giving birth is the perfect time to evaluate our goals, our values and our finances. Blending all three will result in a happier outcome, than competing with others or going into debt.

A happy outcome: isn't that the goal? Let's do the simple things required to achieve that.

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