



Mother's Day: Different Types of Mothers

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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When I was a child we would wear an artificial carnation to church on Mother's Day. Red or pink meant that one's mother was alive whereas white indicated that the person's mother had passed.

Since then, I have been thinking about how many different kinds of mothers we recognize in society:

1. Birth mother - The woman who conceived and gave birth to you.
2. Adoptive mother - The person who legally or formally took on the caregiving responsibilities for you.
3. Social mother - A woman who informally took on the role of a parent by your choice, by hers or by both.
4. Step-mother - Your father's partner who may or may not have adopted you and may or may not be your caregiver.
5. Foster mother - A woman who is appointed, usually by a government agency, to care for you when your mother was unable to do so.
6. Surrogate mother - The woman who carried you in her womb until you were born - at which time others took on responsibility to raise you.
7. Donor mother - The woman who provided a biological egg which was then fertilized and planted in another womb to grow.
8. Grandmother - One generation above your parent.
9. Great-grandmother - Two generations above your parents.
10. Childless mothers - Women whose child(ren) have died.

We all have had at least one mother and some have more than one. I remember asking a foster child "How do you get along with your mother?" He replied "Do you mean my real mother, my step-mother, my foster mother or the woman who lives with my dad?"

Our experiences with and feelings towards each person who has been in a mother role is unique. Some people do not have any memories because of her premature death. Others might not have positive memories to cherish. Others may view their relationship with their mother as the closest they have had with anyone.

My mother died in 1995. She was a career woman who taught school for 35 years and was dubbed "Queen of the Blackboards" by the media. One of the things that most upset her was bullying and she did everything possible to top it. Mom was a popular speaker, kind friend and good sport. She taught my sister and me that everyone is special and no one should ever be discriminated against. She valued family, honesty, charity and accountability. She didn't know how to play an instrument, swim or sew but made sure that I had opportunities to learn how to do all of these things. Everyone smiled when mom entered the room and this was usually followed within minutes by laughter.

What do you think about on Mother's Day? Do you focus on the negatives? If you asked my three children they would likely state that I am sometimes annoying. But they also tell others about my strengths and I am thankful that their perceptions are realistic and include both sides of the coin.

Try making a list of things that you appreciate about your mother. Begin with "She gave me life". And if you only have that one thing - that's enough!

If you are a mother, think about the things that you can do in the next year to help your children. Begin with "Love them and believe they can do well in life".

Happy Mother's Day!