

Motherhood

Daughters, mothers, grandmothers. Caryn Hacker-Buechel explores the transitional role of women and the magic of maternal love.

With outstretched trembling arms, he came into this world and his voice made its first wave, as if all of the earth was his ocean. In that fraction of time, I transformed from daughter to mother, and then back to daughter again. An instantaneous snapshot: the ebb and flow of heavenly gratitude and earthly wonderment, of maternal wisdom and girlish fear, of responsible maturity and the longing for childhood, and the knowing that my life and my ability to love would never be the same.

Motherhood, with all of its complexities and entwined depth, offers the possibility to love and nurture at great heights. Diana, Princess of Wales, stated that, "A mother's arms are more comforting than anyone else's." During her far-too-short life, she realized, appreciated and offered to her children the great value of a mother's love.

So important is this aspect of our humanness that patriarchal sociologist, Abraham Maslow, identified the need to feel "love and a sense of belonging" as the third tier in his hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, there are six levels of needs, in graduating importance, which must be met as a person climbs

the unseen sociological ladder toward self-actualization and enlightenment. Although he developed his theory in 1943, it holds its validity to this day.

The addition of a child, whether biological, adopted or fostered, offers the potential for the development of a life-changing experience; when someone else becomes so entwined and bonded with you that their future becomes (in many ways) more important than your own. Motherhood sets into motion a lifelong journey. A beginning point that has no true end, as you never stop being a parent and if you are lucky and wise, you never stop being parented.

"When I had my first child," stated Naples Sailing & Yacht Club's Linda Butler, "my mother said: 'Well honey, welcome to the club!'" Butler's mother was speaking of the heartfelt club of loving mothers. "I felt so special, like I joined a congregation of women and I was entrusted with this incredible responsibility and joy." Not only is Butler a principal at Constant Mountain, LLC, she is also notably the first woman in the history of the NSYC to hold the prestigious position of Rear Commodore, which will make her



the first female Commodore during the club's historical 50th Anniversary in 2014.

In the late 1800s, philosopher Khalil Gibran wrote that "The mother is everything—she is our consolation in sorrow, our hope in misery, and our strength in weakness. She is the source of love, mercy, sympathy and forgiveness. He who loses his mother loses a pure soul who blesses and guards him constantly." It is a tricky dance, at times, to balance the roles of daughter, wife, mother and possibly grandmother. In a perfect world, each role would blend gently and lightly into the next, as if creating the perfect layer cake. Life, however, sometimes makes these transitions a bit more difficult. At those more complicated times, it requires love and wisdom to never step away from the caring role of "mother," but possibly to alter the interpretation and ultimately, the outcome; like clay that can be molded. That, too, is part of mothering.

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Throughout the years, many theories have been explored regarding motherhood. Freud, Klein, Bowlby, Firestone, Dinnerstein and Chodorow challenged and explained the origins of motherhood. They debated issues relating to attachment through hormones, lactation and sexuality. They picked at this amazing relationship as a vulture at its last meal, their theories explaining, but not feeling, the beauty of maternal love. Diana Smith, RN, president of The Chelation Center of Naples stated, "I have one of the greatest mothers in the world! She taught me to love God and nature and to value honesty. She was never too busy to stop what she was doing and spend time with me. It is an honor to be her daughter!"

"She was always on my side," offered psychologist Jane Carter. "Whenever anybody said anything negative about me, she was always supportive and encouraging. She believed in my talents."

Yet, it was my own mother who possibly said it best. Eighty-one-year-old Evie explained that "...when I don't feel well or when things get heavy, I still want her; to give me strength or just to listen. You never stop looking for your mother's love. Never."

Happy Mother's Day!

Caryn Hacker-Buechel, ACSW, DCSW, began writing books and articles for growing minds during her 30-year career as a psychotherapist and motivational speaker.