

## **Sermon: Mothering Perfectly May 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**

There is this line, perhaps you have heard it.

“God can’t always be there and because of that he invented Mom’s!” Awwww!

Depending on your perspective, that kind of sentimentality is either the best, or the worst of Mother’s Day.

It initially strikes me as a pretty sappy sweet, even patriarchal line.

“God can’t always be there and because of that he invented Mom’s,” but, like Mother’s Day I love it, because regardless of how sappy it can be,

I know one thing; I know that it’s true.

God may, or may not run the universe,

but we do know that mom’s largely do run our world, ...always have,

Always will.

And a little moment each year to acknowledge that is fine by me.

Because beyond the internal biological capacities we are all blessed with.

The way our bones know how to grow,

and our hearts are built knowing how to pump

As we have discovered from tests with monkeys who have received nutrition but not nurturing,

The most important part of growing up is the nurturing we all receive.

And it is the nurturing we get early that matters most,

And largely, although not exclusively it is Mother’s that do that.

Amen.

Mothering something, from dependence to independence  
is the most important value-added thing humans ever do.

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Can I get an Amen. (Amen)

As my favorite Boston Sports caster says, that’s “Fact not an Opinion”

Here is another not so poetic fact not opinion from fellow UU Don McEvoy.

“The long-term stability, security, and peace any a human has achieved is built in large measure upon the foundation of love they have received,

and any individual’s ability to give and receive love is rooted strongly in that person’s earliest relationships. And, for most people, that earliest influence is their mother.”

“Fact not opinion.”

People enter the world, at the same time, nearly always the same moment they enter their relationship with their mother.

Ponder that for a moment.

Mother’s if you haven’t notice, matter. Matter Good, and matter bad

It that being the truth means that whether you had a healthy, dysfunctional, or so, so, relationship with your Mom  
It is a relationship worthy of its own day.

Look, there is a certain contrived quality to the day that will likely always be there,  
“Nearly Fact not opinion,” but  
When you stop and think about all the holidays in the course of a year,  
I challenge you to find a holiday more important to stop and acknowledge than “Mother’s Day”  
Ask yourself who had more impact on you.

Let’s try, ...good or bad in your life, what is worthier of attention, a moment of reflection.

Starting at the beginning of the year.  
For all his accomplishments, Martin Luther King. Or your Mom.

The combination of impact the Presidents Abraham Lincoln and George Washington had on your life, that makes up our mid Feb long weekend, ...or your mother  
St. Patrick, or your Mother?

Easy right? I’m not done.

Celebrating the day Jesus died and reportedly rose, or your Mom.

Those who died for our nation in battle or yah Ma’

The day dedicated to your relationship with your father.

The day America officially declared its independence.

The day we set aside to honor the contribution of workers,  
or your Momma

Christopher Columbus,

Halloween,

The family meal dedicated to gratitude and a remembrance of our European ancestors first encounter with the Natives.

That December holiday that marks Jesus birth and not coincidentally the return of the sun.

It is not a rhetorical question, but I suspect you get my point.

See, I would argue that you don’t have to even like your Mother for your relationship with her to be huge in your life.

I would argue that you don’t even have to have ever met your Mother for your relationship with “her” to be huge

Here is another beautiful line about the wonders of good parenting by UU Rev. Dr. Becky Edmiston-Lange

*“Before we were ourselves our Mother’s made us,  
made us with love and patience, discipline and tears,  
and as gracefully as dancers  
when the last sweet cadence nears,  
bit by bit stepped back to set us free*

*to sail upon our own seas.”*

Damn hard for me to get through that without tearing up.  
And that’s funny cause my mother and my relationship with her was/is not nearly as poetic.

See, I don’t have memories of my Mom reading to me, ...or of her whisking me off to piano lessons to make sure I didn’t miss my calling, in fact the first thing I think of when I think of something she taught me.

The first, but certainly not the most important thing is funny enough  
an appreciation of the hidden joys of uncooked brownie mix out of a silver bowl.  
If my memory serves me, My Mom only rarely went over homework with me,  
but I don’t care.

Read my lips

I really don’t care because through most of my childhood she was busy working at a machine shop 45 hours a week, (Saturday’s when she could get the overtime)

After school I didn’t like the Beaver come home to her in an apron with warm cookies on the stove,

...for that matter, ...neither likely did you,

I came home to an empty house with my brothers, which was fine, it really was, while we were not doing our homework,

reading anything other than wrestling magazines, or working on our jump shot,  
she was the only woman out on the banging, clanging floor machine room floor doing the best she could to stabilize life for her three kids after my father had left.

So, although I don’t first think about my Mom in poetic terms,  
when I think about my Mom,

I am inclined to think about priorities.

See in my life, my Mom was my number one priority.

And that is so fundamentally easy to say, because  
my brother’s and I were her number one priority.

And those roots she set down have allowed me my own time to grow my own wings.

And although she is not perfect, and I know that, and she does to.

She couldn’t manage her diet, and rarely pushed herself out of her comfort zone.

Nothing, would ever make me betray her,

and I knew that, and she did too. And still our relationship was not perfect.

She yelled at me for not being dressed up enough,

For telling her what I did, when she asked me what I did?

and for using my hands too much when “I was preaching.”

I had never really realized this until I sat down to write this, but I loved it that way.

Something about our collective imperfection makes us trust one another even more.

The imperfection and yet enduring quality of our relationship is really was its strength, really something of a relief.

I would treat her indifferently, rarely as tenderly, as I would like to think I had, and although I do tell her that I love her, more and more, and more than she me, mostly we just took each other for granted.

She probably took for granted that she has a son who lived at home, and did a lot around the house, and as we both aged, I came to appreciate more and more that I could take for granted that she was always around.

Isn't that just, beyond the Hallmark sweet moments you hope you get, what in life you really need.

When she needed me to drive her somewhere, she was perfectly capable of going on her own, mostly I indulged her, and on that little journey she would feel free to complain, constantly that I drove too close to the curb. When I need a ride, she refused. It was perfect.

For most of my life, she did my laundry, and I rarely thank her. So imperfect, it, ...was perfect.

In some way, I couldn't both be more grateful and couldn't take it more for granted.

She to me too.

We might even be a little co-dependent.

Read my lips, ...I don't care."

She was my Mom, and I her son and I suspect, I certainly don't know, but I suspect the average relationship you have with your Mom is likely as un-hallmark like mine was/is.

Our relationships with our Mom's, funny enough, regardless of whether or not we ever knew them are primitive, primary, and imperfect.

They are more often than not, too big to be perfect.

In my family, broken up by a divorce early in my brother's and my life, we have all been very cautious of making the permanent commitments being a mother, or in our case being a father demands,

So as someone very, very, cautious about adding permanent responsibilities to my life, The chaos mothers, and when doing their job well Father's add to their life has always amazed me.

They really should not have been together.

I see my parents, second cousins, but second cousins who although the same age, were separated by the Atlantic,

Sometime before my Father immigrated, essentially from the same area in Ireland my Mother's side of the family did two generations earlier.

They started to be pen pals, what exactly prompted that I do not know, I think it began when my Father began thinking about immigrating to the States.

what I do know is that after my Father arrived they were together as a couple pretty quickly.

It was comfortable, my Father new to the country,

My mother kind of shy,

They dated, realized they shared the same dreams of having a family, hell they were already family,

my father was sponsored to immigrate to the US by the woman who would turn from distant aunt to grandmother in law.

I see them sometimes in my mind as a young couple, in so many ways so good, in so many quiet hidden ways that would likely not have showed up not right.

What if they came to me to get married, would I  
had they been together for a solid few years certainly been willing to marry them  
And what if they came to me and I could see all that would be, me, my two brothers right behind me in order, they built a house together, my Mother was the book keeper for my Father's risky new business.

Truthfully, it was a mistake that my Parent's ever made it as long as they did,  
had they even began to use the strict criteria that I have used for partnering and breeding,  
had they been appropriately cautious enough,  
neither I or my brother's would be here,  
and I am kind of fond of both living and them.

See part of what I see Mother's, and Father's like them are doing when they make that choice,  
whether they know it or not is to invite in the opportunity for chaos into their lives.

They invited chaos into their lives, just like your parents, and your Mother did.  
And for just a moment, regardless of your relationship with your mom, I want you to be grateful for the most basic thing she did. She brought you life.

As I share some of what I have inherited from my Mom,  
I invite you to think about the wealth of perfect and imperfect you have inherited from your Parents.

People say my face is a little more my Mom.  
The gravity I feel to home, straight Janice.  
From my Mother's genes comes the increased chance that I will become diabetic,  
And from her I get emotional stability, and my love of people.  
The relationship modeling I got from her and my dad partnership I get a host of whoah, careful (like a horse rearing back on its hind legs in fear)

I believe my Father is more innately cunning and curious, and my mother kinder more thoughtful  
I like my Body and my mind, but What I realize is that none of them have handed me perfect legacies,  
and I wouldn't have it any other way.  
Any other way wouldn't be life,  
Any other way wouldn't be me. **Amen**