

Mother's Day Madness - Day 8

Finding the "Happy" in Mother's Day

Have you ever wondered how Mother's Day got started? My friend Lisa, founder of the B.R.A.V.E. Society, inspired me to do the research. Here is an abbreviated version for you.

In the years before the Civil War (1861-65), Ann Reeves Jarvis of West Virginia helped start "Mothers' Day Work Clubs" to teach local women how to properly care for their children. (Remember, they didn't have the level of sanitation that we have today, nor did they have the benefit of modern medicine to fight disease, or all the wonderful things available to us today to help us care for our homes and families.) These clubs were later influential in promoting reconciliation following the Civil War when Ann organized "Mothers' Friendship Day" in 1868. Mothers gathered with former Union and Confederate soldiers to promote unification. What they were striving for was PEACE.



Another person of note in the history of Mother's Day was Julia Ward Howe. She was active in the abolitionist and suffragette movements. In 1870, she wrote the "Mother's Day Proclamation" which was a call to action asking mothers to unite in promoting world peace. In 1873, she campaigned for a "Mother's Peace Day" to be celebrated every June 2. There were others who also worked to promote a special day for mothers, including Juliet Calhoun Blakely, Mary Towles Sasseen and Frank Hering. Their emphasis was also on promoting peace.

These individuals lived during a time when the majority of women were likely to experience the death of at least one of their children, if not more. They lived during a time when their lives were directly affected by war. For many, life was a daily struggle. It's easy to understand why they would have yearned for a peaceful existence. I recently watched the movie, "Glory," starring Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Matthew Broderick. I thought it was a very good portrayal of the upheaval during the Civil War. It was anything but peaceful! A large percentage of mothers who saw their sons put on a uniform never got to see them alive again. I can completely understand their desire for peace in the world in which they lived, and I would imagine they were looking for inner peace as well.

Throughout our nation's history, our Presidents have acknowledged the role that their mothers played in their success. Abraham Lincoln referred to his mom as his "angel mother." Many of them have referred to their mother as a woman of prayer and had the assurance that, even if nobody else was praying for them, they could count on the prayers of their mother. President Woodrow Wilson lobbied Congress in 1914 for the second Sunday of May to be set aside as our country's official Mother's Day. In his first Mother's Day proclamation, Wilson stated that the holiday offered a chance to express our love and reverence for the mothers of our country. This focus was different than the earlier intent.

Living in our culture of free enterprise, it's understandable that entrepreneurs have capitalized on Mother's Day. They've made it easy for us to honor our mothers. All we have to do is stop off at the store, pick out a card, and drop it in the mail. But... that's much different than promoting PEACE... peace in our community, and peace within.

I'd encourage you to do something today that will make you happy. I love what Debra said she's going to do. Her son, Humphrey, would bring her a bouquet of flowers on Mother's Day. So today she is going to carry on Humphrey's tradition. She's going to buy herself a lovely bouquet of flowers! They will be beautiful and fragrant and colorful and wonderful! They will be a tribute to her son's thoughtfulness and the way he



showed his love and appreciation for his mom. Those flowers will make Debra smile and bring her joy throughout this day as they remind her of Humphrey and his thoughtfulness.

So, my hope for you is that you will find a measure of happiness and peace for your day, as well as for your future. I hope you'll be able to resolve the issues of sadness that envelop you because of having lost a child. I hope you'll seek after peace and joy for your future and not allow the sadness of your past to control you. I hope you will be able to find the "Happy" in Mother's Day.

Chris Harder with inspiration from Lisa-Ford Berry and Debra Murano
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