

WHAT A MOTHER HOLDS DEAR

By Marina Phillips

Before having my son, I never would have believed the extra dimension being a mom gives to my life. From the day he was born, he has taught me things I never knew, and reminded me of things I had forgotten. He has brought me back to profound truths and simple common sense - and he has given a richness and depth to my everyday life that I hardly thought I could carry at first. To my complete surprise, I've found that I can.

How does a mother carry such a great love in her heart? I was taken aback at the utter hugeness of it. I wondered how it could all fit into my one, little body. This little baby person brought emotions as vast as space along with him. It took a lot of doing to get used to it and to figure out how to accommodate this new facet of my existence.

I've found that the way to cope is to tuck away certain treasures - to keep them in my heart and memory for always. Since the day he was born, I realized that the bottom line of having a child is that it is just one long series of letting go. His milestones and accomplishments have made me feel like I would burst with sheer pride and love for him. He is not that old yet, only six, and already I have so many treasures to hold dear.

Things like the first time he ever held up his head by himself. His dad had just come in the door and at his voice, my son lifted and turned his head with a big smile on his little face. My husband scooped him up and swung him around - he gurgled happily and enjoyed the ride!

His first steps came more slowly. He would fall backwards quite often and cry - frustrated and angry that he couldn't keep his balance. I gently told him to keep trying. When he finally managed to train his muscles to move the way he wanted them to, he had a look of such satisfaction on his face - I will never forget it!

His first words came rather slowly, too. He was a very quiet child for the longest time. When he finally did begin to talk, the floodgates opened, and his wonderful little voice has filled our home with laughter ever since. I remember the first time he ever threw his arms around my neck and said, "I love you, mommy!". My heart felt like it was going to burst.

Then there was the time when it was my birthday and we were at my mom's house for dinner in the evening. He piped up out of the blue and sang the most beautiful, innocent rendition of the 'Happy Birthday' song that I have ever heard. My eyes filled with tears and all I could do was hug him close. It was one of the loveliest birthday gifts I have ever received!

So, these are some of the things that I, as a mother, hold dear. The accomplishments as well as the failures. The smiles and the tears. The happiness and the occasional anger. The beauty and innocence of childhood that will soon turn into intelligence, resourcefulness and adult understanding. I so look forward to watching Joshua grow into the man he is destined to be.

This Mother's Day, I am making room for new treasures and preparing for a new helping of that huge love a new baby brings. My second child is due to arrive any day. Perhaps I am overly

sentimental, but I seem to be reviewing all the wonderful events of the last six years and wondering what new things will come to our family with the new addition. What will he or she look like? What will their little voice sound like and will he or she be as happy and healthy as our son has been? I'm sure all will be well. My son is very excited and is hoping for a baby sister.

I came across a Mother's Day quotation in my travels this week, "A Mother holds her children's hands for just a little while, but she holds their hearts forever." I feel privileged indeed to have twice been given such a lovely gift! Happy Mother's Day to Moms everywhere!

Have a wonderful week, all!