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**never underestimate the power of caring**

## ***Mother's Day***

*The doctors told me I would never walk, but my mother told me I would, so I believed my mother.*

Wilma Rudolph, Olympic gold medalist

Mother's Day is coming, and the day can stir up mixed feelings in moms. Most moms hope that their kids will do something to show their appreciation, but depending on their age, they don't always do this. Choose a way to celebrate that recharges Mom's batteries and inspires her to be a better parent.

### **Tips for . . .**

#### **All parents**

- Your kids are always watching you—and listening to you (even when they don't act like it). Wilma Rudolph had polio as a child and was told she would never walk. Her mother said otherwise and inspired Wilma not only to walk—but to become an athlete who won four Olympic medals. What kind of a role model are you?
- Adjust your expectations for Mother's Day. Instead of expecting something from others, do something special for yourself. If you're a dad, figure out a way to show appreciation to your kids' mom (along with the kids). If you're a stepparent or you don't have custody of your kids on Mother's Day, figure out a way to connect—even if it's through a phone call or e-mail.
- If your mom is still alive, figure out how to celebrate all the moms in your life without taking away from the mom in your household.

#### **Parents with children ages birth to 5**

- Create a keepsake that you would like to keep long term. Finger-paint with your child and have your child make a set of handprints for you. If you have a baby, use finger paints to make footprints of your baby's feet. Make sure to date the picture.
- Put away the to-do list and take a break. When your child naps on Mother's Day, join your child. If your child has outgrown naps, have a quiet time together. If you don't have custody of your child on this day, consider Mother's Day a "take-a-break" day and do something special for yourself.
- Give Mom a one- to four-hour break to take a walk alone, take a long bath, or read a book. Moms of young children rarely get uninterrupted time to do something for themselves.

### ***Parents with children ages 6 to 9***

- This is an ideal age to do a family activity together on Mother's Day. Go bumper bowling. Visit a zoo. Play a board game. See a movie together.
- Talk about what you admire best about your children. Then ask your children what they like about you. If you don't have custody of your children on this day, drop a note to your kids saying what you like about them.
- If you're a dad, consider making Mother's Day coupons with your kids for Mom to use during the year. Tasks could include clearing the table, loading the dishwasher, giving a backrub, or picking up toys in the living room.

### ***Parents with children ages 10 to 15***

- Relax your Mother's Day expectations at this age. Depending on your child's mood (and age), Mother's Day could be hysterically funny (because of the silly moods kids can get) or tense (because of their dark moods). Think big picture and go with the flow. Remember happier Mother's Days if it helps and remember that this stage doesn't last forever.
- Moms often like to take a break from their kids on Mother's Day at this age. That's normal. Allow for that to happen if that's what Mom would like best.
- Encourage kids to use their talents to celebrate Mom. Ask a budding artist to draw a picture. Have a musician play a song.

### ***Parents with children ages 16 to 18***

- Teenagers often like to go out to eat (and don't always have the money to do so). Consider celebrating Mother's Day by going to a restaurant. Teenagers are more likely to participate.
- Depending on the teenager, Mother's Day can feel more like a problem than a holiday (especially if you have a teenager who complains about why moms and dads each get an annual holiday and teenagers don't). Be patient. Invite teens to do something for Mother's Day, but don't force them. If you don't have custody of your child on this day or you're a stepparent, adjust your expectations. Some Mother's Days will be more memorable—and easier—than others.
- Let Mom sleep in and make her breakfast in bed. This often entails getting teenagers on board beforehand, since many teens can sleep much longer than Mom. Or serve an evening dessert picnic style in the living room.

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