Happy Mother’s Day: Mentors #5

The Pie has 17 pieces

We often use the expression “Motherhood and apple pie”. What does that really mean? Is the statement suggesting mothers bake apple pie to make everything better for their children, should know how to make apple pie or simply that a woman has the responsibility to distribute the pie? I wonder if the expression came about because this is a most wholesome visualization of maternal care.

No matter the intention of the compliment, I’m going to celebrate all possible interpretations. Women have the responsibility to distribute the pie. This may be a challenge for the individual to accomplish all the layers by herself, but, together the sisterhood can influence the image of motherhood to the degree where we are no longer seen as a trivial expression of caregiving.
We are more than Mama creating a home, we are the embodiment of the feminine energy engaged in shifting the power to true equity and inclusion. On Mother’s Day I want to recognize our collective skills to manage the “Pie”. The pie is nourishment (spiritual, financial, emotional, environmental, intellectual or physical), whatever your pie I wish you joy in the making. I also wish you will be compensated for the pie you so lovingly prepared.

Cheryl Hayles, VP International Relations, Canadian Federation of University Women

---

Thoughts on Mother's Day

Mother, mater, mere, madre, mutter  
Does it matter what we utter?  
Mum - mummy, Mom - mommy, Ma - mama, Maman, Muttie  
In song, "Mammy"; in literature "Marmee" - Little Women's mother  
In Canada, Mexico, Germany, Britain, France and Spain,  
US, Australia and many another domain,  
Mothers are celebrated often with carnations,  
But expressions of love take many formations -  
No matter how effusive or small  
Mothers are essential for all.  
Women hold up half the sky,  
But the other half must be engaged.  
Women and men together must join in  

To make equality for all a worldwide win.

Audrey Thomas, Member of the CFUW International Relations Committee

---

Your preferred Mother’s Day gift was a good report card. Thus, the last Sunday of May, we would entertain you with short sketches featuring our academic achieve-
ments for the year, with the promises of doing better next Mother’s Day. The concept of “Women economic empowerment” was unknown to you. Yet, in a society where the dream of most girls was to “get married and raise a family”, you had another dream for your nine girls: they will all attend university and learn a profession before getting married. To those who suspected “cultural schism”, you would argue with confidence: “None of my 9 girls will depend on a man to feed them”.

We relied on your unfailing support during study time and those nights when my sisters were getting ready to challenge the National exams. And when their names were listed with the successful candidates, you would say while gazing into the distance and with a smile of content: “One stair less to climb and one stone more to build the road ahead” as if you guessed that “road ahead” was a long one. Today I confess that the road ahead is long indeed. But, several women around the world who shared the same dream as yours, are enmeshed in a solidarity chain to advocate Education for all girls.

When you left us, you carried with you the last sketches. But to you and all those women who keep your dream alive I say, “Hats off for daring to dream and have a wonderful Mothers’ Day”.

Pour la fête des mères, ton cadeau de prédilection était un bon bulletin scolaire. Alors, le dernier dimanche de mai, nous te présentions des saynètes mimées sur nos réussites académiques avec la promesse de mieux faire à la prochaine fête des mères. Tu ignorais alors le concept de « l’autonomisation économique des femmes ». Pourtant, dans une société où le rêve de toute jeune fille était de « se marier et fonder une famille », tu nourrissais un autre rêve pour les tiennes : elles iraient toute à l’université apprendre une profession avant de se marier. À ceux qui soupçonnaient « schisme culturel », tu rétorquais avec conviction: « aucune de mes 9 filles ne dépendra d’un homme pour la nourrir ».

Nous comptions sur ton support indéfectible lors de nos études et des longues nuits où mes sœurs préparaient les examens nationaux. Et quand leurs noms figuraient sur la liste des lauréats, tu disais avec un sourire satisfait tout en fixant l’horizon : « un escalier de moins à monter, et une pierre de plus pour construire le chemin de l’avenir »; comme si tu deviniais que ce « chemin » pouvait être long. Aujourd’hui, je te confesse qu’en effet le chemin est long. Mais, plusieurs femmes à travers le monde partagent le même rêve que toi, elles sont emmaillées dans une chaîne de solidarité pour défendre le droit des filles à l’Éducation.
En nous quittant, tu as emporté les dernières saynètes. Mais à toi, et à toutes ces femmes qui font vivre ton rêve: je dis “Chapeau pour avoir osé rêver et Joyeuses Fête des Mères”.

Dr. Saôde Savary, Member of the CFUW International Relations Committee
Thank you for my great mother

Dear Mom,

Thank you for giving me birth,
Let me know how wonderful the world is;

Thank you for feeding me milk,
Let me grow as stronger as I can;

Thank you for teaching me words,
Let me know how to be good man;

Thank you for always encouraging me,
No matter how failure I was;

Thank you for always criticizing me,
Let me remember how modestly I should be;

Thank you for giving me chances to accept higher education,
Let me know how to choose for myself;

Thank you for everything you did for me,
Let me understand the meaning of life;

Happy mother's day, I am so proud of you, I love you, mother.

Yang, Ruiqian, Hong Kong Association of University Women

The toil of motherhood…

She will wake up early morning and make sure everyone dresses up well and ready for school. She never rests until all her kids are asleep. She suffers at the families’ financial downturn more than anyone else. To revive the financial decline of the family in order to pay her children’s school fees, she goes the extra mile to sell her expensive clothes and jewellery. For she believes her children’s education is much
more precious than the flaunting materialism. On one occasion, it was detestable to see how she was cheated in the process of selling such expensive items to cater for the family. But she puts her children first to the point of overlooking how little she was being offered. Yet this is not her only burden, three times she lost her unborn kids but she is still hopeful of the future for her ability to surmount all these life challenges is what distinguishes her from others as a mother. Certainly, her attribute as a mother is a special gift and the mystery behind it is unknown. She is a breadwinner, a house keeper, a teacher, a child bearer and above all a trusted friend…such distinguishing attributes describe every mother - Happy Mother’s Day.

Agyeiwaah, Elizabeth, Hong Kong Association of University Women

Mother…

A mother is a role model who has the inner strength to unselfishly nurture a child and pass on her wisdom with patience and kindness. In empowering that child to believe in itself and strive to become the best it can be, the child’s small failures are met with a loving and supportive attitude. A mother’s love is unconditional.

Valerie Hume, Member of the CFUW International Relations Committee