

# EASE YOUR MOTHER'S HEART



The *Mother's Day* Gift  
That Creates *Happiness*  
All Year Long

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**FRANKIE JACKSON**

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ISBN: 978-1-60458-167-6

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## *INTRODUCTION*

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Throughout time, in every culture, we are commanded by a higher power to honor and appreciate our Mothers. This is a spiritual directive from the highest source of love. You and I have two things in common: we have Mothers, and we have an intrinsic desire to make our Mothers happy. Sometimes we lose sight of this when time, energy, and misunderstanding get in the way. Based on experience, surveying many Mothers, research, and reading many books on happiness, I am proud to bring you this unique but simple book. This book provides 100 simple ideas that will contribute to making your Mother happy by showing you how to honor and appreciate her every day. The relationship with your Mother is extremely complex. How do you know how to make her happy when happiness is not easy to define and it cannot be bought? An intangible thing, a feeling, happiness is developed over time. It is a combination of events that are ongoing, day after day, with consistency and effort. Happiness only exists in the absence of fear and negative emotions. It involves you caring, complimenting, and going out of your way.

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In the simplest terms, to make her happy means to be observant and anticipate her needs before she is even aware of them or before she asks. At the same time, be sincere. Make it your joy to give of yourself. Give what is expected, then give a little more. When you make the effort to give your Mother more, she feels special, appreciated, and valued. It creates an inner calmness within her.

Why is it that we care so much about making our Mothers happy? It is because our human psyche longs to maintain a special bond with our Mother. Recognize that honoring her begins with you. She does not have to earn that honor. As her child, it is your duty to honor her on a daily basis.

This book is for all children, young and not-so-young, who want to make their Mother happy. Your Mother is important to you, or you wouldn't have picked up this book. There are thousands of ways to create happiness. I've selected 100 practical ways that you can start using today. Recognize how important it is to make your Mother happy. Ease her heart by putting these ideas into action. Make every day Mother's Day for your Mother. Watch her level of happiness increase as your relationship with her changes for the better!

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# 1.

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## *EASE YOUR MOTHER'S HEART*

The simplest way to make your Mother happy is to ease her heart by creating peace of mind and a feeling of tranquility. You do this by removing all mental stress, anxiety, and heartache in her life where you are concerned. You inspire her with an open heart that is overwhelmed with feelings of reverence and admiration. This state of being is called *heartsease*. This state comes into being when you help her achieve inner peace by creating an internal calmness, where worries and problems cease and feelings of happiness prevail. The result is that her heart is light, and she feels honored and appreciated at all times.

The opposite of *heartsease* is heartache. This is when you make your Mother unhappy by contributing to feelings of grief, emotional pain, and stress that cause heaviness in her heart. Some call this a broken heart or heartache. Though only symbolic, the experience is real. Heartache is just as real as the pain of a broken bone or any other type of physical injury. Hurt feelings affect the same region of the brain as that which controls physical pain.

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The Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC) is the part of the brain that registers and responds to physical pain. When the brain senses emotional stress, it causes the feeling of pain. Here are some examples, showing the differences between feelings of heartache and heartsease.

<b>Heartache</b>	<b>Heartsease</b>
Tightness in chest	Peaceful and relaxed
Intense anxiety	Inner calmness
Loss of interest	Enthusiastic
Feelings of loneliness	Security in friendship
Loss of sleep	Energetic
Great sadness	Awesome happiness
Sporadic crying	Regular laughter
Low self-esteem	High self-worth
Stiffness in throat	Easy breathing
Hurt feelings	Feelings of honor
Hopeless	Appreciated

The first thing you can do to make your Mother happy is to recognize the importance of creating a *heartsease* state of being within her. Observe her. Distinguish any feelings that create heartache and focus on removing them. Happiness is little bits of living. Unhappiness is little bits of death. Help make all of her living moments happy.

## 2.

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### *ASK, WHAT IS THE BEST I CAN DO TODAY?*

Most of us are busy and overextended. Consciously or subconsciously, we may say to ourselves, “I need to spend time with my Mother, but what is the least I can do to help relieve my guilt?” This is an attitude of a minimalist – one who holds minimal expectations and offers no more than what is required. Often, this is merely a habit that forms in the mind, and is easy to break with concentrated effort. Even if you don’t have a lot of time, let your Mother know that you want to spend time with her. Let her know you are thinking about her. Sometimes just telling her this will make all the difference in the world.

Today, ask yourself, “What is the most that I can do today for my Mother?” Asking yourself this question will positively change your relationship. It may not be exactly what you feel you need to give, but it is the “most” that you can give at this moment in time. If at all possible, stretch yourself. Go above and beyond what you think you can give. Make the question “What is the best I can do today?” a permanent place in your inner dialogue.

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### 3.

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## *GIVE HER YOUR BLESSING*

No one can judge if another person has had a good life, a good vacation, a good holiday season, or a good day. How your Mother perceives her life and the consequences of her choices is a great predictor of how happy she is. You can't change the events of her life, but you can give her your blessing. You can also encourage her to count her blessings.

A blessing is the act of extending something positive to her in thought, word, or action. Examples include offering her something refreshing to drink or delicious to eat, saying encouraging words, or simply smiling or giving heartfelt thoughts.

A kind word that is unexpected reminds her that life is full of small blessings and that she should take the time to notice them. Encourage her to express appreciation for the many blessings that she may take for granted, such as her health, children, freedom, and the ability to shape the future or help another. Your opinion probably means more to her than anyone else's. Judge her life in a positive way. Give her the benefit of the doubt. Bless her in your thoughts, words, and actions.

*If you spend your energy judging your Mother,  
you have little energy left to bless her.*

## 4.

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### *BE COMMANDED BY A HIGHER POWER*

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In all religions and faiths of the world, we are fundamentally commanded to honor our Mothers. This is a universal commandment. Kindness to Mothers is considered secondary only to the worship of any God or spiritual power. Most religions and faiths believe that the entire universe emanates from the Mother. In all spiritual traditions, Mothers are regarded as having the highest position in society. She is the living goddess who is responsible for our existence.

Religions encourage us to treat our Mothers with the utmost respect and to look after them far into their elderly years. You will not find any spiritual texts that suggest placing burdensome Mothers in the hands of strangers to take care of her needs. Our culture has twisted the traditional value of old age into something dishonorable. In all religions, old age is not a *problem*, it's a *blessing*. For thousands of years to be called an "old woman" was a high honor. Nowadays it's an insult. The way a child cares for his or her Mother is a measurement of character.

Here are some "higher power" excerpts from the world's greatest religions:

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"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."  
Fifth Commandment of the Ten Commandments in  
Exodus – **Judiasm**

"Thy Lord has decreed...that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your lifetime, do not say to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor." **Islam**

"Show honor to your parents and pay homage to them. This will cause blessings to descend upon you from the clouds of the bounty of your Lord..." **Baha'i Faith**

"Those who wish to be born in [the Pure Land] of Buddha... should act filially towards their parents and support them, and should serve and respect their teachers and elders." **Buddhism**

"There are three partners in man, God, father, and mother. When a man honors his father and mother, God says, "I regard it as though I had dwelt among them and they had honored me." **Judaism**

"Let your mother be to you like unto a god." **Hinduism**

"God promises blessings to those that honor their parents ... so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on earth." **Christianity**

## 5.

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### *HELP HER AGE GRACEFULLY*

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Have you ever considered that human beings are the only species *that takes care of its aging*? All animals take care of their young. None take care of their old. We start aging the moment we are born and the process doesn't stop until we take our last breath. Aging is more than a biological process. It is a social, religious, and psychological experience. Along the way, you can help your Mother age gracefully by seeing her in a new light as her life progresses and her body changes.

For your Mother, aging occupies looking back at her past experiences and looking ahead to her decreasing future. It involves changing family roles and responsibilities. It entails greater appreciation of life, relationships, health, and independence.

As adult children, we have many images of our Mothers aging, ranging from sympathy to frustration, to admiring the lessons she can teach us. We all have an idealized image of our Mothers living to a healthy old age with vigor and vitality until death. The reality is that often we see our Mothers as

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an unhappy image of decline, dependence, dementia, and deterioration.

Dealing with this image may be our greatest challenge as adult children. Consider how old she is today, and realize how many years she has left. Put this in perspective: according to the National Center for Health Statistics, the U.S. average life expectancy for women is 80 years. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reports that the average age for women to be admitted into nursing homes is 81.

As she ages, be reminded that she is a gift to younger people. She should live among the current generation, not separate from them, since they can benefit from her moral example. Be committed to bringing out her best character traits, such as:

- ◆ Courage to age with dignity,
- ◆ Wisdom to share with others,
- ◆ Humor to see life's lighter side, and
- ◆ Strength to support future generations.

Help her embrace aging and death with a care-free heart. Remember that your Mother is always your Mother, no matter how old she is.

## 6.

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### *ASK HER HOW HER DAY WENT*

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Whether it is a special occasion or a regular day, it's nice to have someone ask how your day went. Asking your Mother this small question in a pleasant tone of voice goes a long way in making her feel special. Think about the times when she asked you how your day went. Didn't it make you feel like she cared about what is going on in your life? Ask about her day when:

- She's returning from a vacation – ask for details about the trip by calling soon after she returns.
- She has a doctor's appointment and is having some tests run – ask if she got the results back.
- She gave a party at her home – ask if everyone had a good time.
- She has been looking forward to a special day or event - ask her to tell you about it.
- Either of you stopped by for a visit on any given day – ask her if she has been having a good day. If she says yes, ask her to tell you about it. If she says no, ask her what you can do to help.

Asking her about her day will make her day. It's a simple way to show that you care.

## 7.

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### *BE COURTEOUS*

When you are courteous to your Mother, you are graciously considerate of her. You are deliberate in how you treat her. You regard her feelings and needs with careful thought. Being courteous shows good manners and politeness. This single act will make your relationship better.

Be assured that the quickest way to make your Mother unhappy is to be discourteous, especially in public. Examples include being impolite, rude, or making negative comments.

Courtesy can be little things like opening the door, saying “thank you” or “you’re welcome.” Kind words have a positive effect on the health of your relationship. When you are well-intentioned and courteous, her internal security flourishes. This creates an atmosphere of trust. Get in the habit of always being respectful and courteous to your Mother. If you make a mistake and act discourteous in any way, apologize as quickly as you can.

*Little courtesies make the greatest impact  
on a heart longing for appreciation.*

## 8.

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### ***DON'T MAKE HER FEEL GUILTY***

Don't ever consider making your Mother feel guilty. Guilt is a waste of energy. Guilt will upset her, and it may even deteriorate her health. It will eat away at her and will cause her additional stress. Rules that other people create are the primary causes of guilt. If she feels that things have gone wrong in her life, she may believe that she has failed or that she caused the problem. Remind her that most situations are out of her control. There is little value in encouraging her to blame herself.

Remind her that blame is all about the past. Forgiveness and learning from a situation is all about building the future. In your conversations with her, help her to achieve the status of being guilt-free. Under no circumstance, bring up anything about the past that would make her feel guilty. Remind her of all the positive things that have occurred in her life. Affirm to her that she was and still is a fabulous Mother. Reinforce emotions that will make her feel like her life has been a success.

*The heart will never be peaceful as long  
as the mind feels guilty.*

## 9.

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### *DEVELOP COMMON INTERESTS*

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If you don't have a common interest with your Mother, the bond between you two is just based on circumstance. Depending on your age difference and where you are emotionally in your relationship with her, you may need to be creative. Use your imagination and find a common interest and then work to develop it.

Think about something extravagant, like scuba diving. What about scrapbooking, garden clubbing, or touring historic homes? What about following the games of a hometown football team? The options are endless. A common interest increases the likelihood of a lasting relationship that is more fun and fulfilling. It keeps your relationship alive. If there is an issue that arises, a common interest will give you a reason to communicate. It makes it easier. Most of all, you will make your Mother happy because she will feel included in your life.

*Common interests are like bridges. They carry you over the valley until you reach the next peak.*



## 10.

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### *GIVE HER GIFTS*

We all like to receive gifts, especially Mothers. A gift lets her know you care and that you are thinking about her. When you notice something that she wants and you give it to her, it gives her a sense of being valued. A gift makes her feel good.

There are many types of gifts -- a kind word, a compliment, or something tangible. A gift doesn't mean that you need to spend money. She might be delighted with a wildflower you've picked, or a note you've signed with X's and O's. An inexpensive gift could be a refrigerator magnet, a postcard from your recent vacation, or a photograph that you took and framed. A more costly gift would be jewelry, perfume, or clothing. The ideas for gifts are endless!

Remember, a gift is something that you give her voluntarily, without expecting anything in return. Giving a gift is an act of generosity, honor, and loyalty. It is a pure form of gratitude. At the same time, a gift means nothing to her unless you are willing to give a portion of yourself, your time. Also, gifts normally do not create long-term happiness. Make her happy by first giving your time, love, and attention, then give gifts, and lots of them!

## 11.

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### ***KEEP HER BUSY***

It is better for your Mother to have too much to do – a positive sign of abundance -- than not enough to do. If her schedule is open and she has nothing to do, she may become bored and stagnant. Idleness can lead to physical and mental deterioration. Help her be actively and attentively engaged in work, service, or a pastime. Inspire her to be full of activity with something worthwhile.

You know what her skills and talents are. If she is a good cook, suggest that she serve food at a “Meals on Wheels” volunteer program. If she has special training, find something in that particular area that can keep her busy. Talk to her about her daily schedule. Make suggestions of innovative things she can do. If she needs your support, like driving her where she needs to go, offer to take her.

Remind her of her strengths. Help her find things that she is interested in. The busier she is, the better she will feel about herself. The better she feels about herself, the happier she will be. Lend a hand and do whatever is necessary to keep her busy.

*Inspire her to live life to its fullest everyday by staying busy  
with an attitude of service and fulfillment.*

## 12.

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### *BE DEPENDABLE*

Being dependable is the most basic way to define your worth to your Mother. If you are not dependable, she will not trust you or feel loved. The lack of dependability, more than any other, will make her anxious and unhappy.

When your Mother needs your help, don't let her down. Whether it is showing up for a family dinner, a retirement party, or helping around her home, be fully present. She may need your help in other areas such as financial and benefits planning. Becoming involved in retirement options, insurance, Social Security is impersonal and often dehumanizing. Whether she needs your help filling out paperwork or a ride to an appointment, do it with joy. She probably feels bad having to depend on you for your help. Turn that situation around by thanking her for allowing you to support her.

Dependability requires you to fully commit yourself. Make sure you create a reputation of being totally dependable and reliable in whatever she needs you to do.

## 13.

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### *ENCOURAGE MANY AVENUES OF JOY*

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Joy is an emotion of great happiness. It is something or someone that provides a source of happiness. Your Mother's contentment must come from many sources of joy. Discourage her from focusing on one thing because if that person or thing fades away, it could be heartbreaking for her. True joy is not a passing emotional feeling that makes her happy one moment and unhappy the next. True joy is an unwavering constant in her life that comes from many things.

Encourage her to build her hopes and joys around many possibilities. Find ways to bring relationships into her life such as other children, nieces, nephews, and old friends. Mothers who are happy have many people and things in her life that matter to her.

You know your Mother best. Think about what brings her joy? Recall a time when you felt that she was joyful. Analyze what caused this joy and find more ways to create it more often.

*Joy is when your Mother's heart smiles.*

*Joy is what makes her happy to be alive.*

## 14.

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### *CALL TO CHECK IN*

Calling to check in gives your Mother peace of mind. It doesn't matter if you are on vacation, out for the evening or weekend, or just working during the day. It doesn't matter if you are 21, 31, 41, 51 or older, when you call to say, "I was just checking in to let you know I made it home," or "I was just checking in to see how you are doing" makes her feel important, relieves her from worry, and makes her happy.

Worry is poison to heartsease. When you don't call and check in, you will be a source of nagging concern and she will feel anxious. To reach a heartsease state of being, your Mother must clear her mind of worries. If you are not checking in with her regularly, you can bet she is worried about you!

When you do call to check in and you feel that she is worried about you, relieve her of any emotional stress. Assure her that she has nothing to worry about as far as you are concerned. You are careful. You love her and you are always thinking about her.

*Worry makes the heart heavy and turns the hair gray.*

## 15.

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### *TREAT HER WITH RESPECT*

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Most of us are taught at an early age to respect our Mothers. But what exactly does this mean? The word *respect* is ambiguous as it relates to your Mother. Respect can be thought of as a profound awe that humbles and uplifts us. When you respect her, you experience her value as a person. You treat her with respect because she is worth valuing. You make a vow never to raise your voice to her because she is to be highly admired and praised at all times.

The level of respect that a person shows toward his or her Mother is the highest form of respect that a person can give. Therefore, how can you respect someone who does not respect their own Mother?

Treat her with respect simply because she is your Mother, period. After all, she gave you the gift of life! Make a promise that you will always honor and respect her as your Mother.

*Without a profound sense of respect,  
what is to differentiate her as your Mother?*

## 16.

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### *CATER TO EMOTIONAL NEEDS*

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Everyone has basic emotional needs, especially Mothers. But each Mother differs in what it will take to fulfill her needs, just as some of us require more or less water, food, or sleep than others. One Mother may crave more independence, while another needs more security. When you cater to her specific emotional needs, you are particularly attentive to her as an individual. Here are some common emotional needs of Mothers:

Accepted	Fulfilled	Productive
Acknowledged	Heard	Purposeful
Admired	Helpful	Recognized
Appreciated	Important	Respected
Approved of	In control	Safe and secure
Capable	Included	Supported
Competent	Listened to	Treated fairly
Confident	Loved	Understood
Forgiven	Needed	Valued
Free	Noticed	Worthy

Emotional needs are expressed as feelings. A full range of these feelings are important to a happy life. These feelings are the internal compass that gives meaning to her experience as a Mother. Over time, her needs will change. Give her whatever she needs, at the right moment, to fill her heart with joy.

## 17.

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### *LAUGH TOGETHER*

The ability to laugh is a basic source of satisfaction in life. Laughter is good for mental and physical health. Research has proven that laughter strengthens the body's ability to fight disease and stress, as well as lowering blood pressure and increasing energy levels. Have you ever felt tired and then had a good laugh? Laughter is a natural pick-me-up. Best of all, laughter creates bonds with others. There is something about laughing with another person, especially one that you love, that gives us a sense of connectedness. In the laughter, we can share in the joy of being human. Laughter lessens the tension. It's hard to feel unhappy, tense, or anxious when you are laughing.

Remember that laughter is contagious. Find opportunities to make your Mother laugh. Talk about family memories that you know will make her laugh. Observe simple things that are funny. Watch comical movies. Notice when she laughs. Make note of the conditions that make her laugh, and create opportunities to bring about more laughter. When she laughs you laugh. Don't evaluate whether something is humorous or not. Just respond to it and laugh. Share in the laughter, because being sad is no laughing matter!

*A laugh is a heart bursting with joy.*

## 18.

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### *CARRY ON MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS*

The degree of meaning that you experience in your life is a direct result of the intensity of your conversations. Meaningful dialogue with your Mother will sustain and enliven your relationship. Making time for stimulating, thoughtful conversation is a great way to connect at a deeper level. Every time you talk, you reveal a part of yourself.

If you are at a loss for words, why not initiate a thought-provoking question. Eleanor Roosevelt once quoted, “Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.” Why focus on small talk? It’s boring. Break through the superficialities like “I wonder if it’s going to rain this weekend,” or “What do you plan to cook for dinner?” Why not ask her questions about her values, beliefs, integrity, or choices? Questioning can be an opportunity for personal growth, a tool for deep reflection, and the start of stimulating ideas.

Here are some sample thought-provoking questions:

- 
- How do you describe yourself to others?
  - If you could change anything in the world, what would it be?
  - If you could choose your death, how would you die?
  - If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?
  - If you had to leave your home and could take only one thing, what would it be?
  - If you were to die today, what would you regret most?
  - If you woke up tomorrow and could be anyone in the world, who would it be?
  - What do you like best about your life?
  - What do you think the world will be like in 100 years?
  - What do you value most about your life?
  - What is your favorite memory?
  - What is your idea of fun?
  - Whom do you admire the most?
  - Whose death would be the most upsetting you?

Silence will break her heart. Don't let too much silence ever go by. Take the time to talk to her, really talk to her. Exchange points of views and enrich your relationship with meaningful conversation.

## 19.

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### ***STOP ANY AND ALL PUT-DOWNS***

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The quickest way to break your Mother's heart is to use negative put-down comments toward her. Put-downs can have devastating consequences by causing anxiety and stress. An example of a physical appearance put-down is telling her that her hair makes her look old. An emotional put-down may be to insinuate that she wasn't a good Mother, such as, "I never remember you reading me a book." An example of a derogatory put-down is poking fun at her if she makes a mistake. What about ridicule? This is a form of put-down that implies a deliberate, malicious belittling: "I remember our house being filthy while I was growing up." If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.

Don't underestimate casual teasing or insult jokes. What is often passed off as a joke or teasing is subconsciously a masked form of hostility. Any form of put-down has a spiteful effect. When you put her down in any way, you lower her self-esteem, make her feel isolated, hurt her feelings, and most of all, fill her heart with sadness.

*You will never earn the right to hurt your Mother's feelings.*

## 20.

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### *TEACH HER HOW TO USE A COMPUTER*

It doesn't matter how young, middle-aged, or old your Mother is, she can learn to use a computer, if she doesn't already know how. Computers can help bring people together through the use of e-mail and instant messaging. They provide immediate communication with friends and family, regardless of their location. With the explosion of video and digital cameras, computers make it very easy to share pictures and movies. Plus, Internet access provides unlimited opportunities for online shopping and researching information.

If you don't have the patience to teach your Mother how to use a computer, enroll her in a continuing education class, or hire a consultant to provide some training. If she has trouble seeing the monitor, buy her a very large monitor for her next birthday. Get her connected. Teaching her how to use a computer will open up the world at her fingertips. Plus, when you take time to help her learn how to use a computer, you are demonstrating that you care about her happiness and well-being.

*Giving your Mother the ability to connect to people and  
information sparks her creative mind.*

## 21.

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### *FORGET IT IF SHE FORGETS*

Ask anyone about aging and most are concerned about losing their mind. What could be worse than losing your memory? What if your Mother felt that she couldn't remember all of the precious times that she had with you? Think about how she must feel when she forgets something and you make an issue out of it.

Cut your Mother some slack if she forgets something that you have told her. Give her a gentle reminder. Give her the benefit of the doubt. Maybe you didn't tell her what you thought you had. Maybe she didn't hear you. It doesn't matter; there is no need to ridicule her. If another family member makes her feel forgetful, stand up for her. Make up an excuse or cover for her. When you come to her rescue, a sense of relief will lighten her heart.

Inspire her to challenge herself. Play games, like solitaire, scrabble or concentration. Find opportunities for her to interact with others. Help her stay informed about what is going on in the world. Buy her books or audio tapes. Help keep her mind sharp and overlook it if she forgets some minor point. Her mind may forget, but her heart always remembers.

## 22.

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### *MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT*

Eyes possess power. Your eyes can silently communicate either a negative or a positive message. Maintaining eye contact is one of the most powerful means of expression and communication. Eyes can even say, "I love you." This takes so little effort. Think about it. It's such a small, but meaningful thing you can do to show your Mother that you care. Consider this:

- When talking to your Mother, maintain a constant conversation with loving eye contact.
- Look directly into her eyes.
- When greeting her, smile and look straight at her.
- Wink at her, with an approving look and a smile. She will probably smile back at you. This small gesture will make her feel special.

See yourself as a mirror for your Mother. As you see her, so she sees you. Loving eyes send a loving message. Intimidating eyes generate unloving feelings that may inhibit communication. Make her feel like she is indeed the "apple of your eye."

*The path from the eye to the heart carries the signal of love.*

## 23.

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### *PAY ATTENTION TO HER*

A Cuban poet once said: “There is no love; there are only proofs of love.” An easy way to prove that you honor and appreciate your Mother is to pay attention to her. Give her the level of attention you would give to your best friend, neighbor, coworker, or to the President of the United States. Why should she be any less important than they are?

Paying attention makes her feel like you care about her. Take time to listen to what she has to say. Remain interested and nonjudgmental. Give her the freedom to express her feelings and views about topics, without fear of mockery. Ask open-ended questions and explore her feelings. Rather than responding with advice or opinions, listen for the feelings she is trying to communicate. Observe both her verbal and nonverbal communication. Try “mirroring back” what she has told you, so that she can affirm her thoughts.

Ignoring her can be detrimental to your relationship. This is called stonewalling and it is a destructive behavior. It may result in her giving up on communicating with you altogether. Remember to give her the time she needs. There is no substitute for paying attention to her!

## 24.

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### *SIT BY HER*

When you have a choice about where you sit, always choose to sit by your Mother. If you walk into a room where your Mother is sitting and there is an empty chair next to her, sit down quickly. Make eye contact with your Mother and smile, or pat her on the shoulder. If you are sitting down when she walks into the room, motion for her to sit by you. If there is not a chair next to you, find one, then move it next to where you are sitting. If there is not another chair in the room, find another place to sit with her.

If you are planning an event, make sure she is assigned to the best seat in the place and position yourself to sit by her. This is an outward display of your affection for her and makes her feel loved.

*No one else can take the place of your Mother.  
Make sure she is always placed, sitting by you.*



## 25.

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### *LOWER HER STRESS LEVELS*

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Stress is known to directly reduce the effectiveness of our immune systems. Most people don't think about stress as being an issue with our Mothers; older adults are supposed to be able to take it easy and relax. But many older adults suffer from stress due to:

- Financial troubles,
- Family problems,
- The feeling of not being in control,
- Health and disability difficulties,
- Housing dilemmas,
- Grief or loss, or
- Retirement options.

Have you ever seen someone under so much stress that they age right before your eyes? Have you looked at your Mom one day and thought, “Every time I see her, she looks older”? Long-term stress can definitely have negative effects on her physical health, and can lead to sleep problems, tense muscles, high blood pressure, and heart dis”ease”.

Help her manage her stress as best as you can. Many things are out of your control, but here are some simple things you can do:

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- The next time you visit with her, suggest you both go for a long walk.
  - As you are walking, take deep breaths and suggest that she try it. Point out the value of increasing circulation through deep breathing.
  - Talk to her about the importance of exercise. Ask her to go to the gym with you.
  - For the next gift you buy her, consider a massage.
  - Help find a hobby that she might enjoy.
  - Remind her that stress is how she interprets a problem or issue. Help her change her response.
  - During conversations, put a positive spin on the problems that you discuss. Help her maintain a positive attitude.

Stress hurts at any age. For Mothers especially, emotional stress is harmful to their health because their brains are wired to their heart! Don't be an obstacle or problem that causes additional stress in your Mother's life.

*Stress is like a glacier. You can only see the tip on the outside even though there is a huge chunk of ice below.*



## 26.

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### *INHERIT HER BEST ATTRIBUTES*

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All Mothers come from a family with a history of certain rules about what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. You actually inherited what you think you know to be true. From the time you were born, the attitudes and emotions of your family built the belief patterns that you were exposed to. Without even realizing it, that is why you find yourself doing things similar to your Mother, such as using the same facial expressions, thought processes, voice attributes, and gestures.

As you grow older, it is only natural to think about what you like about your family origin and what you feel you need to change. Think about your Mother's grandmother and Mother. Their challenges were totally different from yours. To move to the next generational level may require new belief patterns. As you gain a greater perspective, grow more self-confident, and become spiritually mature, you'll reach a point where you can keep her best attributes and do away with the rest. At the same time, you can honor your Mother's belief patterns and realize that she is coming from a different time and place as compared to you.

## 27.

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### *COOPERATE WITH HER*

Love involves cooperation, giving and taking in every situation. It would be impossible to expect that you and your Mother would agree on everything. If you don't understand her perspective, ask her to help you do so. Learn to compromise and find a solution you both can agree on. If things get heated between you, take time to let things cool down.

If you step over the line, apologize! When she is right, acknowledge it by saying, "I believe you are right," or "I see what you mean." When difficult issues arise, be willing to forgive, forget, laugh, and move on.

Bear in mind that most likely, there will be one major thing that you cannot agree on. It may be religion, your choice to work or get an education, or the way you discipline your children. It is OK to agree to disagree but do so with understanding and complete cooperation.

*The relationship with your Mother should be based on harmony. Harmony is achieved through **co-operation** with one another.*

## 28.

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### *ACCEPT HER FOR WHO SHE IS*

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If your desire is to create a harmonious relationship with your Mother, accepting her for who she is must be one of your top priorities, and, it may be the greatest gift you can give her.

A Mother with high self-esteem accepts herself as she is and will be more likely to let you know how she thinks and feels. A Mother with low self-esteem probably has a difficult time letting you know what she is thinking and feeling because she is afraid of being rejected.

At this point in her life, you probably can't raise the level of her self-esteem. However, you can communicate acceptance, which in turn creates feelings of emotional safety. When she feels safe, she will be able to relax and talk about herself without fear of you judging her. To build a close, meaningful relationship, you must communicate acceptance.

Three primary skills are involved:

1. The first is listening with understanding. Try to understand what she is saying because it shows you are interested in her.

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2. The second is expressing warmth and acceptance. Do not pass any judgment. If you feel you need to respond, let her know how you feel and what you think in a gentle way. This will encourage her to tell you more.
  3. The third is watching your words, even in the smallest of conversations. It is highly probable that you have different tastes in clothes, food, decorations, etc. Recognize that you are from different generations and have dissimilar opinions.

Here are some casual examples. If you are shopping with her, don't make her feel like she has bad taste by saying "That is really ugly," or, "I wouldn't put that in my house for any amount of money," or, "I can't believe you like that!" Just keep your words to yourself. It's just her opinion and what does it matter. It's not worth making her feel dejected.

Stop looking for the "ideal" Mother and accept her for who she is. Help build her self-esteem. Realize that she is doing the best she can. This acceptance will create peace within you and will make her feel more loved by you.

## 29.

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### *REPAIR YOUR RELATIONSHIP*

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Your maturity or immaturity, security or insecurity, and feelings of unconditional or conditional love will be exposed when you have to work through an issue with your Mother. Subconsciously or consciously, you two are connected by a genetic bond or deep association. Conflict arises because both of you love and care for each other so much. That is why the emotional intensity is so high.

A healthy relationship is based on the ability to share feelings, notice the differences between the two of you, and make observations. When you actively engage in working through problems without the need to be right, you will be repairing your relationship without even noticing. Never allow the relationship to deteriorate beyond repair. When a conflict occurs, immediately do these things:

- Ask her to tell you what is troubling her.
- Don't focus on her tone of voice; focus on what she is trying to communicate.
- Keep your words kind.
- Let her express her opinions.

- 
- Ask for her help in understanding her perspective.
  - Negotiate and find solutions that are a compromise.
  - Write down what you've done to contribute to the problem and what you want her to do differently. Share this with her, and then ask her to do the same.

It may be that you haven't communicated with your Mother in a long time: days, weeks, years, or even decades. Yet, when you think about her, the hurt is strong and your heart feels heavy. Regardless of who "caused the damage," you are not able to enjoy a relationship that was once important to you.

Whether you are suppressing the pain or dealing with it in your own way, you are allowing a flood of negativity to affect your life – even if subconsciously. If you are experiencing these feelings, you can only imagine how much heartache your Mother feels. Make yourself and your Mother happy by repairing your relationship today.



## 30.

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### ***REMEMBER TO SAY GOODBYE***

Most scholars believe that saying “goodbye” is derived from the phrase “God be with you.” When you separate from your Mother, remember to say goodbye. It is such a small thing that you can do to ease her heart. It doesn’t matter if you are leaving for a couple of hours, a day, a month, a year, or a vacation. Just say goodbye.

If she is not in the room when you leave, go and find her. If you are not physically with her, and you are leaving for more than a day or two, call her. Saying goodbye is a polite way to separate. After you say goodbye, tell her when you will be back or when you will see her again. Tell her that you love her, that you will miss her, and that you will be thinking of her.

This small act lets her know that she is a priority in your life. If the worst should happen while you are apart and you should never see one another again, you will remember your last words to her, “Goodbye Mother, I love you.”

*Always part with loving words. You may not meet again.*

## 31.

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### *OFFER TO PAY*

It's easy to find out what your true priorities are. What you value is validated by how you spend your money. If you are not willing to spend your money on your Mother, you are validating that she lacks value. Your Mother is very observant. She knows what you spend your money on -- clothes, jewelry, vacations, gifts, etc. When you are not willing to spend your money on her, she will feel like she is not a priority or that you do not value her.

It is doubtful that she expects you to spend a great deal of money on her. There are simple, inexpensive things you can do. The next time you go to lunch, tell the waiter to bring you the tab. If you take her to the movies, buy her ticket. If she buys your ticket, offer to buy the popcorn and drink. It makes her feel important when you offer to pay or actually do pick up the tab. Spend money on her because she is worthy. At least offer to pay occasionally so that she doesn't feel you always expect her to pay.

*You can tell what it is you value by looking at where you are willing to spend your money. Have you offered to pay or spent any money on your Mother lately?*

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*DISMISS DEROGATORY WORDS*

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A word that is derogatory implies disapproval. Examples of these words are dumb, pea-brain, weird, old-fashioned, idiot, feeble-minded, etc. Who would want to be called any of these names, even in a teasing manner? These words are hurtful and serve no purpose. Using these kinds of words in reference to your Mother can damage your relationship faster than anything else.

Do not underestimate how watchful she is. She hears everything you say. Your words are made up of “single characters.” These characters are what you are about and an expression of how you feel about her. Derogatory name-calling is demeaning, shameful, sarcastic, and intimidating. It is a form of emotional abuse that tears down confidence and self-esteem. If you call her a derogatory name, it may be an unsuccessful attempt to make yourself feel better by making her feel worse.

Even with the best intentions, you may slip up and say something derogatory to her. If this happens, ask her to forgive you. Apologize. Start over and remember to always use complimentary language. Dismiss the use of all derogatory words. Your word is the voice of your heart.

### 33.

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## *BRING AN END TO SCRUTINY*

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Motherhood is the greatest blessing in life. Mothers are a universal symbol of love and kindness. A Mother will live and die for her child, regardless of their age. This is an instinctive characteristic that only a Mother can understand.

Mothers bear an enormous responsibility. Every action and word is under the deepest scrutiny. Sometimes the pressure is almost too great. It's not easy being a positive role model all the time. To complicate matters, there are no hard and fast rules about what it takes to be an ideal Mother. There are rulebooks for most everything else, but you will be hard-pressed to find one on what it takes to be a good Mother. To make matters worse, there may be hormonal changes and psychological factors associated with being a Mother, that you may be unaware of or unable to comprehend. From the outside looking in, the whole concept of motherhood seems rosy and rewarding. Though there are many wonderful times, there is a great amount of emotional pain and heartache, because the love a Mother feels for her child is so great.

When your relationship is not going well, make sure you are not scrutinizing her and expecting too much.

## 34.

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### *HAVE HOPE*

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All Mothers want their children to have hope, regardless of that child's age. Having hope is a belief that a positive outcome is possible, even when there is a feeling to the contrary. Hope is an emotional state of being. Hope is the result of faith. You being hopeful will make your Mother happy.

Optimism and hope are similar. Optimism is more about the present. Hope is more about the future – tomorrow, two months, or two years from now. To have hope, you must set goals and look for the silver lining. Try to find something positive in any negative situation. That doesn't mean that you're glad the negative experience occurred. It means that within the negativity, you can learn something.

Hope is an important attribute that can improve your health and your Mother's health. People with little hope are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety. High-hope people believe they can adapt and be happy. They experience improved physical and psychological well-being.

It is heartbreaking for a Mother to believe her child is hopeless. Be hopeful. Encourage your Mother to be hopeful as well. Mothers want their children to have high hopes about their life.

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## 35.

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### *DISCOURAGE UPSETTING CONVERSATIONS*

You do not have power to control what your Mother thinks about. But in your conversations with her, you can discourage her from talking about things and people that upset her.

Occasionally she may need to vent or tell you about her feelings. This is healthy. You should feel honored that she feels comfortable enough to share her feelings with you. However, if her thoughts and conversations are excessively dominated by people and things that bother her, that is unhealthy.

If she starts a gloomy conversation, change the subject, or put a positive spin on the subject. Maybe she needs a different perspective. People, who regularly dwell on negative things and troubles in their life, are far less likely to feel contentment. Make sure you don't upset her with your problems during your conversations with her. This will only sadden her and make her unhappy. Of course, there will be times that you need to share your troubles with her. Just don't make it the focus of all of your conversations. Your Mother will be much happier if you encourage conversations about positive things and people.

## 36.

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### *WATCH YOUR SUBTLE EXPRESSIONS*

Subtle expressions communicate how you really feel. They include your tone of voice, your word choice, the look on your face, and your body language. Expressions are an indicator of your inner state of being. When you talk to your Mother, respond enthusiastically. Don't use a monotone voice. Stand up straight. Make eye contact. Look alive. Act as if you are glad to be talking to her.

It is estimated that only 7 percent of what we communicate is expressed in words, and 55 percent is expressed through gestures, facial expressions, and posture. The remaining 38 percent is expressed by your tone of voice. Think about it. During a conversation, you spend 30 percent-60 percent of the time looking at your Mother. That is why facial expressions are important.

Your tone of voice communicates the emotional meaning of what you are saying through enthusiasm, variation, and loudness. How you sound when you speak is an important indicator of how you feel. Think about your gestures, such as the motions of your arms, head, hand, etc.

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These motions help emphasize your words and enhance what you are feeling, and convey the true meaning of the conversation.

Your posture represents all of your body, including your back, shoulders, hands and arms location, head orientation, and feet placement. Your posture sends a message about your general mood and attitude, and validates your degree of commitment to the conversation.

Watch your subtle expressions, because they are a persuasive form of communication that reveals your true feelings. When you talk to your Mother, be naturally excited and enthusiastic. Communicating messages, “I’m here for you, I believe in you, and I love you no matter what” is the foundation of your Mother’s peace of mind. She will internalize your positive expressions and feel happy.

*How you say something is often more important than what you say.*



## 37.

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### *ASK HER FOR HELP*

When you ask your Mother for help, you are telling her that you need her. Mothers live for this moment, which provides many relationship building opportunities. Why don't we A-S-K more often? Ask is defined as an action that compels, accomplishes, empowers, drives, and motivates. Ask is not demanding. Ask is not attached to a yes or a no. Ask means simply to make a request with the hope and expectation of fulfillment.

Your relationship works better with your Mother when you are willing to ask for help when you need it. Never be ashamed to ask for help. Tell her what you are feeling and why you need help. Don't hint around. Ask for what you want. Give her the joy and honor of allowing her to help you. After all, isn't that what Mothers do best?

When your Mother helps you, it evokes a motherly instinct that she needs to fill from time to time. That feeling is priceless. It gives her a sense of purpose. It makes her feel worthy of you. That emotion is near and dear to her heart.

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*BE PROUD OF WHAT SHE HAS*

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Who cares how big your Mother's house is, or what kind of car she drives? Why would you be impressed with the clothes she wears or the amount of jewelry she has? When it comes to love, is her education really important? Is there an education about how to love well? The amount of "stuff" she has doesn't make her a better Mother. What's most important are her feelings and her emotional state.

One of the reasons she may not have a lot of expensive things is because she spent her money and energy on you. Maybe she sacrificed for your education so she didn't buy a larger house. Perhaps she chose family vacations over a new car. What if she's saving her money for your inheritance? Maybe she gave up her career or education so she could spend more time with her family. There are many things to consider when you start analyzing her "stuff." One of the easiest ways to make her happy is to be proud of what she has. Tell her that her home is comfortable. Compliment her on what she does have. Never act as if you are embarrassed of her. Remember how important she is to you and that her "stuff" really doesn't matter.

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***STOP DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS***

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When you ease your Mother's heart, you do not create any mental stress and anxiety for her. You behave in such way that brings her peace of mind. You become aware of when you are behaving in a destructive way and you stop it immediately. The following are examples of the three most destructive behaviors that will break her heart:

1. **Being critical** is the act of passing judgment, or finding fault, or verbalizing critical comments towards her.
2. **Showing contempt** is regarding her as being inferior or worthless. It also includes being willfully disobedient, disrespectful, or thinking negative thoughts about her.
3. **Stonewalling** is checking out emotionally, acting as if you don't care about her by refusing to listen, answer, respond, or cooperate with her.

Maintain an awareness of your behavior at all times. If any of these destructive behaviors surface in your interactions, end them. Your intrinsic desire is to make your Mother happy. Always be constructive and never destructive.

## 40.

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### *BE SELF-DISCIPLINED*

Self-discipline is the ability to get yourself to take action, regardless of your emotional state. This requires that you put in the time, when and where it is needed. You know you are self-disciplined when you make a conscious decision to do something and make a guarantee to yourself that you will follow through. Freedom is not the condition of being able to do whatever you want. It is having the opportunity to choose, and to do what is right. The foundation of freedom is character. The cornerstone of character is self-discipline. When you consciously choose to make your Mother happy, it will require self-discipline and willpower. Willpower is character in action. Our will is the source of our action. When we will to do well, we have good character. When we will to neglect our responsibilities, we have poor character.

Decide exactly how you want to honor your Mother. This gives you a reason for making the effort. Spend time with her. Be responsible. Make a conscious decision to make her happy. Bring her peace of mind. Be self-disciplined and exert your willpower to make it happen.

## 41.

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### *INTRODUCE HER*

Always introduce people to your Mother. Refer to her as her preferred name, such as “Mother.” No matter who the other person is or how important, begin: “Mother, I’d like you to meet .....” To make her feel extra special, add a comment directed to the person you are introducing her to such as, “I believe I have told you what a wonderful Mother she is and what she means to me.” Hopefully the other person will have heard you speak highly of your Mother in prior conversations and can add to your introduction.

Use the same judgment when she introduces you. Make her feel important by standing up to meet the other person for an introduction. Smile and shake hands. Acknowledge the other person with their name, for example, “How do you do, Bob?” Don’t sit down while either the other person or your Mother is still standing. A proper introduction will make a great first impression. This small gesture will make her proud and feel special.



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*CHOOSE TO LOVE HER*

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Our ability to make conscious decisions is what distinguishes us as human beings. We design our lives by the choices that we make. We build relationships by the amount of love that we choose to give. The relationship that we cultivate with our Mothers is our choice. Look into the future and think about your Mom. What type of relationship do you want now, 5 years, 10 years, or even 20 years from now? How do you want her to remember you as she goes through life? How do you want your children to remember you treating your Mother?

You choose the thoughts that you think. You choose to believe certain ideas about your Mother. Some say that we cannot choose our circumstances or improve our relationships. Think again. You have the power to choose, and if you are not content with your circumstances, you have the power to choose how you respond to those circumstances. You have a choice today. Choose to be appreciative. Choose to bring out the best in her. Believe in her. Try to understand her past experiences. Accept her for who she is. Make a conscious decision and choose to love her.

## 43.

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### *BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT LOVE MEANS*

Love is a difficult word to define in any relationship, especially the love between a Mother and child. Maybe it can be understood more easily by the effects it creates. For example, we cannot see the wind, but we can see its effects; branches bending, leaves moving, and the sound of air rushing. In your relationship with your Mother, you can feel the effects of her love, such as happiness, peace, understanding, and a desire to be helpful. Here are some general categories and definitions of love. Which ones can you relate to best?

- **Absolute love** - the unquestionable love a child feels for his or her Mother.
- **Conditional love** - the love you show your Mother if she acts in a certain way.
- **Obedient love** – when you do what she says without question because she is your Mother.
- **Logical love** - loving her when she fulfills your needs.
- **Unconditional love** - loving without restrictions, reservations, or conditions.
- **Unrequited love** – the love you give her that is not returned to you.
- **Unselfish love** - being completely devoted and self-sacrificing by placing her needs before yours.

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Are you clear about what love means to you in the context of your Mother? In a long-term relationship, love is an evolutionary process. The definition may change, depending on where you are in your personal growth, which probably has nothing to do with her. Think about the following stages, and consider where you are. Finish this sentence: “I am in the process of...”

1. **Overcoming fear** – This is the fear of being without her or not being needed by her. It may be the fear that she doesn’t love you.
2. **Releasing judgment** – This is accepting her for who she is. It means loving her unconditionally by wanting the best for her, regardless of your needs.
3. **Communicating with honesty** – This is when you can honestly communicate how and why you feel as you do. It means sharing your thoughts and feelings.
4. **Being intuitive** – This means communicating without words, or having an awareness of how she is feeling.
5. **Having total trust** – This means having complete faith that she loves you unconditionally and the bond between you two is so strong, it will never falter.

Be clear about what love means to you. The next time you tell your Mother that you love her, think about the context, the definition, and where you are in your personal growth. Don’t let your personal problems interfere with the love she needs to feel and receive from you.

## 44.

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### *LET HER PROTECT YOU*

It is natural for your Mother to want to keep you safe. Even though she knows you need to lead your own life, she doesn't want you to experience any harm. You may think she is a busybody or a worrywart. The truth is that she loves you so much, she wants to protect you. She wants to guard you from danger or injury. Why is she called your guardian during your childhood years?

If she tells you to lock the doors, respond by saying, "I will Mother." If she asks you to buckle up in the car, reply to her, "I promise to buckle up before the car starts." If she suggests to you to be sure and wear a coat when it's cold, say, "Thank you for reminding me." Make her happy by letting her protect you once in a while. You will be relieving a basic motherly concern.

*It is Mother's nature to protect her children from any harm.  
Honor her by letting her protect you.*



## 45.

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### ***MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE***

A simple way to make your Mother happy is to concentrate on having a positive attitude. Attitudes are contagious. If your Mom sees you with a positive attitude, it naturally encourages her to have a positive attitude. A positive attitude makes it easier to manage the daily affairs of life, which helps create feelings of happiness.

When you choose to spend time with your Mother, be in a good mood. Look at the brighter side of life. Be optimistic. Your happiness brings her happiness. When you have a good attitude, you radiate consideration of others, confidence, affection, friendliness, helpfulness, and kindness.

Maintain a positive attitude by being 100 percent committed. Learn what works for you and what doesn't. When you make it a core priority to maintain a positive attitude, everything else will follow, including making your Mother happy.

*Your attitude controls your life. You can improve the relationship with your Mother by changing your attitude.*

## 46.

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### *MAKE A CONNECTION*

Face it. Most likely the relationship your Mother is complex. The emotional intensity is unlike any other. It is an intricate energy that cannot be reproduced. As we grow older, we must find creative ways to stay connected to our Mothers. When the connection is broken, it is easy to feel helpless. You may not know what to say or do. These are the times that you have to work harder. Think about these simple ideas:

- Go sightseeing or visit a museum.
- Go shopping and stay overnight in a hotel.
- Join a health club and work out together.
- Make a holiday gift together.
- Make a scrapbook of a family vacation.
- Make a photo collage. Add inspiring words.
- Read a book together and share opinions.
- Take a class or go to church together.
- Attend a motivational lecture.
- Spend time at a service organization together.

Be imaginative. Have fun. Just the fact that you show the desire to want to connect with her will fill her heart with love.

## 47.

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### *DARE TO COMPARE HER TO ANOTHER*

The root of unhappiness often lies in how we compare ourselves or the circumstances in our lives, to others. Regardless of what comparisons we make, we still have the same life. So, why compare? Realize that your Mother is unique. She is blessed with distinct qualities. She has lived through a diverse set of circumstances. Her value as a person or a Mother has little to do with what she looks like, how many possessions she has, or what she has accomplished in her life. She is your one and only Mother. When you compare her to another, you are denying the talents, gifts, and love that she brings to you.

Take pride in her individuality. When you get the urge to compare her to another or to yourself, stop. Think about her special qualities. Note the positive differences and appreciate her distinctiveness. If you feel that she has made poor choices in her life, learn from them. Find ways to communicate to her that you appreciate who she is, just as she is. This will honor her in a special way and bring out her best.

## 48.

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### *CHANGE YOUR RESPONSE TOWARD HER*

Does your Mother maintain the attitude, “I know best?” Does she think that she knows everything? Does she believe that it always has to be “her way”? Does she acknowledge her mistakes or say, “I’m sorry”? Nothing is worse for a relationship than the “I am right and you are wrong” mind-set. This is the most common issue between a Mother and child.

Your limits are tested with this type of behavior. You must develop skills to learn how to interact with her in these situations. Look at the root cause of her actions. Maybe she is insecure. Maybe she feels better about herself when she gets her way. Maybe it is a power struggle or a respect issue. She probably feels that she is right simply because “she is the Mother” and you are not. Or, she has more experience than you and she is only trying to protect you. She is most likely treating you the way that her Mother treated her, thus reliving the behavior of past generations.

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Realize that you probably cannot change her. However, you can change how you respond to her. During controversial conversations, using non-critical language, tell her how you feel. Express your point of view. Let her know that you understand what she is saying, but that you see things differently.

Keep in mind that, by definition, a Mother is one who “exercises control and responsibility.” Honor her by making her feel like she is the primary person that the family looks to for direction. Look for low-impact decisions that she can be solely responsible for, such as planning a special event or selecting the dinner menu. For the high-impact decisions that affect your family or life, honor her by listening to what she has to say, then do what you think is best. Only if requested, respectfully express your opinion with confidence and kindness.

Over time, she will understand that things won’t always go “her way.” Tell her that you trust her judgment but you are responsible for the decisions that you make in your life. It is your responsibility to manage your choices as you feel best. Even if she disagrees, be respectful at all times and maintain an understanding attitude.

## 49.

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### *KNOW YOUR FLOWERS*

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Flowers are a silent language with a meaning of their own. The meanings of flowers have been used to express ideas, feelings, and messages for centuries. The word *floriography* is the assignment of meaning to flowers. The colors, numbers, and groups of flowers all have meanings. Here are some selected flowers with their meanings.

- ◆ Almond flowers – Hope
- ◆ Aster – Symbol of love
- ◆ Balm – Sympathy
- ◆ Basil – Best wishes
- ◆ Bell flower, white – Gratitude
- ◆ Borage – Courage
- ◆ Campanula – Gratitude
- ◆ Carnation, pink – I'll never forget you
- ◆ Chrysanthemum – Love
- ◆ Fern – Sincerity
- ◆ Forget-Me-Not – True love
- ◆ Gentian – Loveliness

◆ **Heartsease -- "I am always thinking of you."**

- ◆ Honeysuckle – Bonds of love
- ◆ Heather – Admiration
- ◆ Hyacinth – I am sorry, please forgive me

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- ◆ Jasmine – Grace
  - ◆ Lavender – Luck, devotion
  - ◆ Lily, Calla – Beauty
  - ◆ Marigold – Health, grief, or despair
  - ◆ Marjoram – Kindness, courtesy
  - ◆ Oregano – Joy
  - ◆ Orchid – Love, beauty, refinement
  - ◆ Pansy – Loving thoughts
  - ◆ Periwinkle – Happy memory
  - ◆ Phlox – Agreement
  - ◆ Rose, red – Love
  - ◆ Rose, pink – Grace, beauty
  - ◆ Rose, yellow – Friendship
  - ◆ Rosemary – Remembrance, constancy
  - ◆ Sage – Gratitude, domestic virtue
  - ◆ Snowdrop – Hope
  - ◆ Sweet Pea – Departure, tender memory
  - ◆ Violet – Loyalty, modesty, humility
  - ◆ Yew – Sorrow

The next time you give your Mother flowers, add extra thoughtfulness. Assemble a bouquet that expresses a meaningful thought. To be certain that she understands the gift, include a card that fully explains the meaning of the flower.

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*GROW HEARTSEASE*

Heartsease is a flowering plant, often called a pansy or viola. For centuries, it has been said that this flower will bring love and mend a broken heart, hence the name, heartsease. Try growing heartsease as a memento of your Mother's love. Let it be a reminder of how important it is for you to honor and appreciate her.

Heartsease will brighten up any garden with its simple purple, yellow, and white colorings. Heartsease will grow almost anywhere, and normally blooms in the spring. The seeds set freely, which ensures that the plant will come back year after year. It is a beautiful flower that will bloom just in time for Mother's Day!

For centuries, heartsease has been used to make love potions. It is reflected in a host of common names such as love-in-idleness, call-me-to-you, I-am-always-thinking-of-you, and jack-jump-up-and-kiss-me. This flower was a staple in medieval gardens. It was used in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* as the juice that Oberon squeezed into Titania's eyes to make her fall in love with Bottom.

The name of the pansy comes from the French word, *pensee*, meaning thought or memory. The Victorians made a science of the meaning of flowers. And in that traditional language, purple signifies memories, white means loving thoughts, and yellow indicates souvenirs. Hence, the Victorians named the pansy *heartsease*, since it was a flower given in happy times to ease the heartbreak of separation. The Greeks used the flower to help “moderate anger.”

The heartsease flower is edible. It looks beautiful in a salad or as a garnish. It can also be used as a nutritional supplement. The flower contains herbal properties that are anti-inflammatory and are useful in the treatment of arthritis and skin rashes. It is also used as a diuretic.

Grow heartsease in your garden or in your flowerpots. Make it a priority to keep this beautiful plant alive! Give her a bundle of heartsease every Mother’s Day. Be reminded of how important it is to *ease your Mother’s heart*.

Heartsease is the flower that says, “I am always thinking of you.” It’s a flower and that creates peace of mind and fills your Mother’s heart with joy.

## 51.

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### ***SPEAK WELL OF HER***

Always speak well of your Mother. Never slander her to other family members or her friends. Speaking negatively about her in any way is one of the greatest forms of disrespect; you do everyone a disservice, including yourself. Talking about her in a negative way is destructive. It is being critical of her. You harm her character and you taint how others perceive her. It is the worst form of rejection.

Love is the language that our heart uses to speak to one another about each other. Speaking ill about her is the fastest way to break her heart and hurt her feelings. Find opportunities to talk about her in a positive way. This could include when you are alone with her, when you are with others, and when she is not with you. Praise her! Speaking well of her will build her self-confidence and outwardly confirm your love for her.

*Insulting your Mother is a cowardly act  
used to seek silent revenge.*



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*DEDICATE YOUR TIME*

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Relationships flourish when you dedicate time to them. The happiest people are those with meaningful personal relationships. Ask yourself, how much time do I spend with my Mother? Do I squeeze in thirty minutes here and there once a week? Do I only see her on special occasions? When I do spend time, am I tired and emotionally occupied? If so, stop. Make your Mother a priority and spend quality time with her. Quality time is relaxed, carefree time. If you want one hour of quality time, schedule at least four hours. Somewhere in those four hours, you will find one hour of quality time. These are the times that you will remember – times filled with laughter, open communication, and sharing memories.

We live in a busy world. We manage our time so that it fits into a small box on our calendars. Remember, TIME equals LOVE. Giving your time must be an absolute priority. You can buy her all the gifts in the world, but if you don't dedicate quality time to her, you are signaling that you do not value her. If you don't dedicate your time to her, her heart will be filled with sadness regardless of what you do.

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***KEEP A CLEAR CONSCIENCE***

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As children, we have an inner sense about what is right or wrong. As we grow older, we understand that this sense is called *conscience*. Conscience expresses itself with a little voice within that is quick to tell us if we don't act in the right way. We can feel it deep down inside. Some call it a guilty conscience. By contrast, when we do the right things, we keep a clear conscience. There is a lot to be said for keeping a clear conscience. It reduces stress and makes us feel good about our decisions. A guilty conscience undermines our health and spirit.

Every minute of the day, our minds are faced with a constant stream of questions. What will I do? Where will I go? Who will I talk to? The choices that we make affect our consciousness. You could spend time with friends. You could watch television. You could shop alone. Or, you could call your Mother and just talk to her. You could take her to lunch. You could ask if she needs you to do something for her. These actions make her feel loved. These actions will make you feel better about yourself because you have an innate desire to make your Mother happy. Decisions to do things that you know will make your Mother happy will help develop a clear conscience where she is concerned.

## 54.

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### *LET HER BE IN CONTROL*

Your Mother feels happy to the degree that she feels in control of her life. Psychologists have conducted research in this field for over twenty-five years and have concluded that a sense of control is crucial to our health, well-being, and happiness. She needs to feel that she is not controlled by other people or circumstances, especially by her own children.

Let her make her own decisions. Give her choices. Make her feel like she is in control, despite the situation or even if she isn't. Don't restrict her in any way. She is an adult and most likely, at least eighteen years older than you. Make her feel that she personally determines the direction of her life.

*The greatest control that you're Mother possesses  
is the freedom to choose.*



## 55.

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### *INCREASE YOUR HEART ENERGY*

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Does your Mother feel a burst of energy when you walk into the room? Do you often compliment her and show gratitude? Do you accept her as she is and love her unconditionally? Do you believe that the more you love her, the more you will attract love from her? Are you enthusiastic about helping her if she needs you? If you answered yes, then you probably have a high level of heart energy as it relates to your Mother. This is the energy that impels you to reach out with kindness and nurture her with compassion.

Heart energy is a complex emotional feeling related to your stability and well-being. It is linked to the thymus, located in the chest around the heart and lungs, and is a part of the immune system. This emotion produces T cells that are responsible for fending off disease. When your energy is at its highest, your health is at its best.

If your energy becomes imbalanced, metaphorically, it may “break.” Have you ever heard of a bleeding heart? Observe yourself. Are you needy, over-attached, or co-dependent?

Do you say “I love you” just to hear it said back to you? Do you give only when you expect to receive? These are signs of imbalance. Rise above any insecurities and jealous energies. Know the difference between “I love you” from “I need you.” Be sure to separate your problems from others’ problems. Don’t allow another’s soap opera to become your life.

When your heart energy is low, take a deep breath. Use positive self-talk or an affirmation such as, “I am free to love in the present. I forgive and release any pains of my past. I give and receive love, freely and effortlessly.” To achieve balance, take time for yourself. Your energy is not unlimited. Don’t let yourself burn out.

As pure energy, you attract more of the same energy. You’ve heard the old saying, “Love begets love.” When you increase your heart energy and sustain it at the highest level, then it is much easier to openly reach out to your Mother with love, appreciation, and honor. The higher your heart energy, the more strength you will have to give to her.

## 56.

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### *LISTEN TO HER PAST*

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When you ask your Mother about her past, you are participating in her personal history. Listening to her past is like putting together pieces of a family puzzle. When you learn a fact or tidbit about her, realize that you can pass this information down to your children, grandchildren, or other family members. If she has old family photographs, take an afternoon to look through them with her. Ask about her first day of school, the birth of a sibling, a special holiday, or a favorite occasion.

Consider creating a life timeline for her. This could be an outline of her life that may include her birth, each time her family moved, special achievements, first date, wedding date, birth of children and grandchildren, death of loved ones, etc. It may include photographs in the order of the events that occurred. You could also think about creating a scrapbook about her or put together a “memory box” of special objects from her life so far. Think about videotaping her stories so you can capture her personal thoughts.

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Take her to visit the town where she grew up. Go to the places where she lived and the schools she attended. Learn an interesting story or fact about each. Visit the cemeteries where her parents or grandparents are buried. At the next family reunion or gathering, sit down and talk to the oldest relatives there. Ask them to tell you something interesting about your Mother.

When you do these things, you are showing that you care. You are confirming that her life has had value and you are interested in her. This is a simple way to make her happy.

*Happiness thrives when good memories are remembered.*

*Memories are the treasures buried in our hearts  
that can be opened at any time.*

*Memories are the chapters of your Mother's life.*



## 57.

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### *TREAT HER LIKE A LADY*

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When you treat your Mother like a lady, you behave toward her with utmost politeness. You treat her as the woman who is the head of her household, with proprietary rights and authority. You treat her with gracious devotion. To treat her like a lady is mostly common-sense. Here are some basic, simple reminders:

- Do not interrupt her when she is talking.
- Use good manners by being civil, kind and considerate.
- Go the extra effort to be well dressed and nicely groomed, depending on the occasion.
- Use appropriate, positive-oriented language.
- Let your Mother precede you when you are getting into a car or when you walk down an aisle.
- When walking next to her, add a special touch, put your hand on her shoulder to help guide her.
- Open the door to a car or to a building. Be conscientious if anything blocks her entrance.

Define her by who she is, not what she does. Help her be confident and secure in her identity. These things will make her feel like a lady and will fill her heart with joy.

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*EXTEND AN INVITATION*

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Keep in mind that your Mother wants to be invited to any social event or gathering that involves anyone from her family. Count on her feeling rejected and excluded if you make plans behind her back or intentionally do not invite her. This type of rejection will hurt her feelings. Because her relationship with you is important, she is particularly sensitive to rejection. The experience of rejection can lead to adverse feelings such as depression, loneliness, and a broken heart. It can also cause heightened sensitivity to future rejection.

Of course, there will be times when it is not appropriate to invite her. Be very careful. Don't try to keep that from her, because most likely she will find out, and that will make matters worse. Plus, you are setting a bad example to others by saying, "Be sure and don't tell Mother that we are doing..... without her." Be up-front with her. Explain the situation. Tell her that you will invite her next time and that your intention is not to exclude her in any way. However, if at all possible, your safest bet is to extend an invitation to her anyway.

## 59.

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### *DON'T BE CRITICAL*

In reference to your Mother, there is no such thing as constructive criticism. All criticism is painful and has the potential to harm your relationship. There is nothing to be gained from being critical. If you are finding fault with her, you may have unhealed issues within yourself. Ask yourself, am I looking into a mirror? Is she is an inner reflection of me on some level? Sure she is. She is your Mother.

It is easy to get caught in the trap of criticizing her and pointing out her faults, even if only in your thoughts. Consider that when you criticize her, perhaps subconsciously you may be trying to make yourself feel better, using her to blame for a situation in your life, or excusing your own faults. When you catch yourself being critical, stop and ask yourself why. Then remember how much more important she is to you than any fault, problem, or situation.

Criticism is different from a valid complaint, which is a specific request for a desired change using understanding, careful planning, and heartfelt words. Don't ever break her heart by criticizing her. Make suggestions only if it's legitimate but never criticize.

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***DON'T TAKE HER FOR GRANTED***

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Being a Mother is one of the most thankless jobs, and is taken for granted more often than any other. It's normal to some degree, to take your Mother for granted because she is dependable. It's kind of like breathing. You normally don't think about each breath you take. Your Mother is like that. It is just expected that she will take care of you. We usually don't think about her not being in our life.

When you take your Mother for granted, you fail to be grateful for her. You expect her to do things for you without showing your appreciation. You expect that she will always be there in your life. Don't wait until it's too late. We live in a busy, complicated world. Tell her how fabulous she is. Realize how lucky you are to have her in your life today, and express grateful appreciation for her every day. Make this a top priority in your daily life.



## 61.

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### *BALANCE THE DEGREE OF HONESTY*

When you are honest with your Mother, you are genuine, sincere, and truthful. When you are dishonest, you are deceptive, with the intention to withhold information, uphold your reputation, or avoid conflict. There are varying degrees of honesty. In the literal sense, honesty means including all of the facts: *the whole truth and nothing but the truth*. What about partial honesty, like being misleading? You don't outright lie, but you omit part of the facts, with the intention of making her believe an untruth. What about when you use cautious conversation by avoiding certain information by giving a half-answer or half-statement? Then, there is exaggeration, when the gist of the statement is true but the degree of the truth is not correct or is enhanced.

Telling the truth can hurt, and we all want to avoid pain at all costs. It can be a challenge to face the truth, knowing that we may hurt our Mothers. Only you can decide if being dishonest, misleading, or cautious is worth the consequences.

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Being dishonest will cause the relationship with your Mother to be stressful and complex, which may eventually lead to driving a wedge between you two. If she finds out about any sort of dishonesty, it will discredit other things you say, or cause you to continue to be dishonest to cover for other lies. You've probably heard the adage, "O, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!"

Being honest doesn't just mean telling the truth. It doesn't stop at avoiding the big lies and ignoring the small white ones. Let your Mother know she can trust you by the way you live your life and by the way you care for her. Be honest in all aspects of your life. Always balance the degree of honesty to the trustworthiness that she expects from you.

*An honest heart brings peace of mind into being.*



## 62.

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### *GIVE HER A TOAST*

A toast is a tradition that publicly honors someone. Consider giving your Mother a toast at an upcoming dinner or special occasion. There is nothing more admirable that you can do.

It is best to write your toast down in advance and practice saying it before the event. You may even create a cheat sheet with key points to jog your memory. As you are planning what to say, remember that honor is a quality shown as a public recognition for deeds. Speak from your heart. Talk about personal experiences. Focus on your thoughts and on what your Mother means to you. Keep the toast brief and simple, with an opening, a body, and a conclusion. The first sentence should mention the event or situation, and the reason for the toast. The body should include heartfelt sentiments. Your closing statement should summarize how much you appreciate her. To ensure a clear delivery of the toast, practice in advance. When you give the toast, stand and make eye contact with her. Speak slowly and with sincerity. With proper presentation, your toast will be delivered with memorable honor. Your toast may be one of the most proud times of her life.

## 63.

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### ***DO WHAT YOU SAY YOU ARE GOING TO DO***

There is nothing more discouraging to your Mother than you not doing what you say you are going to do. If you want to squelch her enthusiasm, don't follow through on your commitment. If you tell her that you are going to take her shopping or spend time with her, do it. She will be looking forward to spending time with you, and has probably cancelled all of her other plans and told everyone that she is going to be with you. If you tell her you are going to take her to an appointment, show up on time. Call in advance and let her know you are on your way. Be in a good mood so she doesn't feel like she is causing you trouble.

It is crucial that you affirm that you are going to do something, confirm it with her, and then do it. Affirm is an act of faith. Let her always have faith in you. Prove to her that she can always count on you.

*Commitment is worth a ton of promises.*



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*FORGIVE HER FOR ANY PAST  
MISTAKES*

Many of us grew up believing that Mothers are supposed to be perfect. The truth is that Mothers are normal women who grow up and have children. Some Mothers adapt better than others, some have an intrinsic ability to be more nurturing, and some struggle, due to various circumstances. Under the best or worst of conditions, Mothers make mistakes. They are fallible, just like anyone else.

Many adult children find peace in their relationships with their Mothers. Some adults, however, hold in their minds painful memories that emotionally sap the strength and energy from their spirit and their relationship with their Mothers. Luckily, we are living in a time where we understand that life is about forgiveness and growth. Life is an emerging process in which we learn from our mistakes as well as our Mother's mistakes. We don't have to be bound by the mistakes of the past. We owe it to ourselves to heal any anger that may be causing pain by making an effort to nurture our Mothers and help them heal. She may need your support more than you need hers. If the pain is too great, do some soul-searching but in the end, come to terms. Find a way to love her just as she is today.

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Love her unconditionally, unselfishly, and abundantly. Forgive her for past mistakes. Recognize that she was probably doing the best she could at the time. Realize that she is most likely aware of any mistake that she made in her past, and that is certainly causing her pain.

Think about what forgiveness means. Forgiveness is a gift that you give to yourself, and has nothing to do with another person. You are challenged to imagine a better future and to give up destructive thoughts about any situation. Whatever the pain or issue, forgiveness empowers you to survive it and grow from it. If you have experienced disappointments regarding your Mother, make today a new beginning. You have a choice about how you respond to her. Settle your differences and forgive her.

Each day is full of boundless opportunities. Help her move through each day without being judged. Give her the gift of your encouragement. There is no future in living in the past. And, you can never fully live in the present if you have not settled with the past. So forgive her for any past mistakes.

## 65.

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### *SHOW SPONTANEOUS ACTS OF AFFECTION*

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Have you ever walked up to your Mother unexpectedly, and given her a big hug? I am talking about physical contact, like a bear hug that lasts at least five seconds and ends with a tight squeeze. An unexpected hug is worth a million dollars to a Mother. There is something special about expressing yourself at impromptu times. How often do you show her that she is lovable by kissing her on the cheek? How about holding her hand when you are walking together? Try putting your hand on her shoulder. Tell her that you love her every day, or whenever you see or talk to her. The more you do this, the more you are sending her a valuable message that she is loved.

One of the things that she may miss most about you not being a child any more is that she cannot show impulsive affection to you as much now that you are an adult. Physically demonstrate affection towards her, because it makes her feel loved and warms her heart. When the act is spontaneous on your part, it becomes even more special.

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*GIVE HER YOUR UNDIVIDED  
ATTENTION*

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We will go to amazing lengths to fulfill our emotional needs. An emotional need is a craving that, when satisfied, leaves you feeling happy and your heart content. When it is unsatisfied, you are left feeling frustrated and discontent, and your heart feels heavy. Emotional needs are the only ones that require a concentrated investment on your part. For example, if you have a physical need, you can exercise and eat healthy foods. If you have an intellectual need, you can read a book. If you have a spiritual need, you can go to church, meditate, or sink into a deep state of relaxation. However, to have an emotional need fulfilled may take months or years. It may require help from another person.

One of your Mother's most important emotional needs is for you to give her your undivided attention. This means stopping whatever else you are doing and staying completely focused on her. This sends a strong message that she is worth your time and attention. Listen, and share experiences. When she talks to you, make her feel that she has something important to say. Be observant, and remember what she tells you. Don't be self-absorbed with other unimportant distracters.

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*BE THERE AS SHE GROWS OLD*

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There is a medical term for the fear of growing old. It's called Gerascophobia. The word is derived from the Greek "geras" (old age) and "phobos" (fear). Those who suffer with this condition have excessive anxiety about the loss of their looks and independence, the onset of disease, being alone, depression, or confinement in a nursing home. Symptoms include shortness of breath, irregular heartbeat, nausea, and overall feelings of dread. To some degree, we all carry this fear. And the media, with its preoccupation with youthful beauty, doesn't help matters. Like all fears, the fear of getting old is created by the unconscious mind as a protective mechanism. Ease your Mother's heart by letting her know that you will always be there to take care of her as she grows old or if she gets sick. As she ages, tell her you appreciate her gray hair and wrinkles. These represent wisdom. She is gorgeous in your eyes. Relieve her concerns about moving into a nursing home. Affirm that she is a priority to you and your family. Let her know you see her in your future. You will always take care of her. Fill her heart with love and relieve her fears about growing old.

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*FOSTER FRIENDSHIPS*

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As your Mother progresses through her life, inspire her to rekindle past relationships and expand her circle of friends. To help her experience life to the fullest, she needs to feel that she is part of something bigger. Research indicates that people who have good social networks live longer and are happier. Those that are socially connected are proven to have better health and more independence. Experts believe that social isolation may create stressful conditions that accelerate aging.

You can help her foster friendships by finding social activities that she might be interested in, such as lecture programs, community functions, or traveling with friends. Take advantage of services offered at community centers. You might help her plan a game-playing night with friends. Find volunteer programs for a cause that she believes in by contacting local nonprofit organizations. As a gift, buy a fitness center membership. Suggest that she take an adult education class. When you help her foster friendships, you are showing her that you are attentive to her social connectedness. What a simple way to show her that you care!

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*LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY*

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The relationship with your Mother is a life-long experience. The love that you share cannot be contingent upon some condition or requirement. Your bond must be based on unconditional love, such as wanting what is best for her, accepting her for who she is and not trying to change her, looking for ways to show that you care for and value her, and believing that your relationship will always change for the better. It is easy to be responsive in a positive way when you feel loved. Think about the times she surprised you with her actions and you felt appreciated. Or, think about what you would really like her to do. Here are some examples:

- She calls you for no reason, just to say, “I love you.”
- She cooks you favorite meal for no reason.
- She sends you a note saying, “I think you are the greatest and I appreciate all that you do for me.”
- She hugs you for no reason.
- You hear her talking to a friend in a positive way about you, recalling an instance when she truly appreciated you.

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Now, what about when she questions your judgment? When she forgets what you tell her? When she doesn't offer help, even though she knows you need her support? During these times, it is not as easy to love her. You may feel angry, hurt, sad, or unappreciated. Why? Because you are not getting anything in return – no affection, positive reception, or feelings of love. The big question is, can you still “love” her under these conditions?

Love is more than just warm feelings. Love is a decision that we make with our will, regardless of our feelings. When you love unconditionally, your relationship will grow, even through the difficult times. If you are keeping score as to how you have behaved toward each other, or if you base your love on conditional feelings, you could be limiting your chances for a healthy relationship. Remember that you are not supposed to expect anything from the person you love. To love unconditionally requires that you love without any expectations. Believe in the principle of giving more and demanding less. Love her unconditionally, always.

## 70.

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### *MAKE HER FEEL LIKE A QUEEN*

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A queen is personified as a woman who is considered the best or most important of her kind. She is the most powerful, female, supreme ruler of the family. She is called “your Mother.” To honor this relationship is one of the greatest pleasures and privileges. Honor is the highest standard of morality. Honor is not built on rewards; it is its own reward. We honor our Mothers because she is important and we respect her.

The next time you ponder what gift to give her, send a letter or call to express your feelings of honor and respect. This is a priceless gift. Anyone can buy a card that is generic and written by a stranger. Make your own card and include some of her traits that you most admire about her. Thank her for giving you life. Let her know how appreciative you are of her.

The Latin root for *joy* means jewel. Joy is the jewel in the crown of honor. You are a jewel in her heart. She deserves to feel like a queen wearing a crown of honor every day – just because she is your Mother!

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*DOCUMENT HER LIFE*

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Your Mother is the repository of valuable personal information about you and everyone on her side of the family. Make her feel special by preserving her memories. Document her life by creating a personal biography. Consider making a one-hour video documentary that is an all-encompassing portrait of her life. Include old pictures, favorite songs, and personal interviews. If you or your family members do not have the capability to compile a documentary, many companies provide this service for a reasonable cost.

A biography of your Mother's life will preserve your family history for future generations. We all want to be remembered. Think of this as a catalyst for bringing your family together. It is an ideal gift, plus, it's fun, interesting, and educational.

Best of all, it is an expression of your love, a demonstration that you treasure your Mother's life. Heaven is a sense of when we know we "got it right." Make her feel like she is in heaven and that her life was right. Giving her the opportunity to tell her life story in her words is a precious gift.

What do you think you can do to make your Mother happy as it relates to you personally? This may be difficult to describe since happiness cannot be found in material things, excitement, other people, or by any other means. Happiness is not success, pleasure, or fun. You may search the whole world over and not find it. Close your eyes and imagine a scene filled with happy people. Most of us envision people laughing, eating, vacationing, or partying. This is an illusion. Happiness is a journey. Along the way, there are obstacles to overcome. There is love to give and relationships to build. Happiness is simply a consequence of life's journey.

When you are happy with your life, you give your Mother peace of mind. Here are some common things Mothers say they want for their children:

1. I want my child to enjoy life and appreciate every day.
2. I want my child to be able to support his or her self.
3. I want my child to feel loved by those that he or she loves.

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4. I want my child to feel positive about his or her life.
  5. I want my child to feel successful, regardless of what he or she decides to do.
  6. I want my child to have a purpose.
  7. I want my child to have the ability to make positive change in his or her life.
  8. I want my child to have inner peace.
  9. I want my child to be responsible.
  10. I want my child to be happy.

Often we place too much importance on achievement, material things, external rewards, career status, or ability to make money. At the most basic level of our motivation, we often want to “make our Mother proud” or “make our Mother happy.” The truth is that your Mother just wants you to enjoy life, be responsible, and be happy.

Make it a habit to tell her that you are happy. Thread positive words into your conversations. Be enthusiastic about your life! Complaining only makes her worried and unhappy. Learn to enjoy life and realize your dreams. This is what all Mothers want for their children.

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*DESCRIBE HER AS A GENIUS*

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Albert Einstein wrote, “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.” Every Mother wants her child, regardless of age, to believe she is smart and an expert at something. By today’s standards, we often call a person a genius only if they achieve worldly recognition and success, or if they have an IQ of 140 or above. Maybe we judge our Mothers by the wrong criteria. Look up the word *genius*. It has many definitions. Is your Mother characterized by any of these attributes?

- Natural ability or capacity; strong inclination. She raised you successfully, didn’t she?
- The guardian spirit of a place or institution. Did she keep a warm, loving home?
- A person who strongly influences, for good, the character, conduct, or destiny of a person. Has she been a strong influence in your life?

Find something that she does exceptionally well. Compliment her. Use strong words such as genius when you describe her doing something distinctive. You will be surprised at how happy this will make her. She will feel worthy and her heart will be at ease.

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***NEVER DISPUTE HER WORD***

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When you dispute your Mother's word, you are telling her that you are right and she is wrong. This is disrespectful and hurtful. Supposing she says, "The last time we went out for dinner we shared a dessert." But you recall that you skipped dessert. You could argue about this, but who really cares if you shared a dessert or not? It is insignificant. Why say anything at all? Or, just say, "I don't recall sharing a dessert, but if we did, I bet it was good."

Disputing her word makes her feel like she doesn't know what she's talking about. It makes her feel stupid. It is an absolute heartbreaker! Plus, it's embarrassing for her, especially around others. It shows total disrespect. Be the bigger person, and even if she is wrong, don't tell her. Just let it go.

*A child that is honorable never disputes his Mother's word.*



## 75.

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### *CELEBRATE CHANGE*

Guide your Mother to notice the parts of her life that cause her the greatest stress and frustration. Help her realize what changes she can make that are in her control. Whether it is a relationship, the place where she is living, an investment, or how she spends her time, help her make a decision to make a change for the better. She may need your help depending on the circumstances. Offer your support. Take time to discuss her options. Assist her in researching any changes that she is considering

When she makes a change in her life, celebrate that change with her. Often just the act of making a decision to take action will lower her stress and increase her feeling of personal power, resulting in her being a happier person.

*You can't go back and erase the past but you can change today and start a new future.*



## 76.

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### *ANSWER AND RETURN CALLS*

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When your Mother calls you on the phone, pick up the call. Even if you are busy, answer the phone and tell her that you will call her back. Tell her what you are doing so she knows you are not avoiding her. If for some reason you can't answer the phone, return her call as quickly as possible.

When she feels like she cannot get in touch with you, she may feel helpless or sad. She may feel like she is too much trouble for you and not worth your time. Worst of all, it may make her feel like you don't care. As a priority, always answer and return her calls.

*If you only had one call to make, who would you call?*

*If your Mother only had one call to make, who would she call?*

*Answer and return your Mother's calls.*

*You never know what she has to say.*

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*HANDLE CONFLICTS GENTLY*

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You will not always agree with your Mother. There is a generation between you two, so it is only normal to have conflicting views. If you get into a discussion with her and there is a disagreement, stay neutral. Present your side in a fair and sensitive tone. Do not assert that your opinion is surely correct.

Take a controversial topic such as abortion. She may say, “I disagree that abortion is a viable option of birth control.” If you disagree, you could say that you do not favor her position but that you respect her opinion. Rather than argue about the subject, you could discuss the intellectual aspects of the issue. You could look at the moral and legalities of abortion, and at the options of a woman having to make a decision about abortion.

In any conflict, look at the real source of the issue. There may be a deeper argument that is not being discussed. When you handle conflicts with sensitivity, you take the high road. Search for a compromise, or agree to disagree. Remember that there’s not always a “right” or a “wrong” answer. Both points of view can be valid.

## 78.

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### *SAY THANK YOU*

More than anything else, saying thank you to your Mother shows appreciation. Say thank you for everything – a gift, a special favor, attendance at a family gathering, or just for her spending time with you. Occasionally, write her a personal thank you note. It takes time and thought to create a good one. Take the time – written communication lets her know you appreciate her as a person. Research indicates that when we express gratitude on a regular basis, we have better physical health, optimism, goal attainment, and well-being. Get in a habit and say thank you! Consider these ideas:

- When you say "Thank you," be specific. Tell her what it is you appreciate and why.
- Unexpectedly call her just to say "Thank you." Connecting verbally adds warmth to your appreciation, even if you reach voice mail.
- Present a small certificate or picture and get it framed. Include why you are thanking her.
- Give a single flower with a verbal "Thank you" or a short, personal note. Choose the type and color of flower with care and meaning.

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*TELL HER THAT YOU MISS HER*

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Your Mother wants to feel missed whenever you are away from her. Regardless of the time you are apart – a couple of days, or several weeks -- she wants her absence to be noticed. When you leave, she will have a feeling of longing. She will want you to be at home so you can spend time with her. This feeling, which is similar to homesickness, is more a state of mind than a physical condition. She may feel anxious or depressed.

Wanting to be missed is a natural stage that many Mothers go through when their children move to a different city or go away to college. But “out-of-town” doesn’t have to mean “out-of-touch.” Here are some simple things you can do to let her know that you miss her:

- **Write letters often.** Tell her everything that happened since the last time you wrote. Even if the letter is short, she will be happy to get it.
- **Send e-mails.** With the Internet, you can easily send e-mails and pictures. If she doesn’t have a computer, buy her one. Send her to a class if she doesn’t know how to use it.

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- **Send a journal.** If you don't have time to periodically send a letter, consider keeping a journal. Every so often, send her your journal. She is guaranteed to enjoy it.
  - **Call on the phone.** It's always nice to hear the voice of someone you love. Call her and tell her that you miss her.
  - **Make a tape or a video.** Tell her anything interesting that has happened, and then send it to her.
  - **Mail pictures.** If you can't be with her, sending pictures is the next best thing.
  - **Send a bouquet of flowers.** Choose the heartsease flower – the flower that says, “*I am always thinking of you.*”

Assure your Mother that you are only a phone call or an e-mail away. It is important that you always keep in touch. Tell her what you are doing. Let her know you love her. Remind her when you will see her next. Give her something to look forward to like an upcoming holiday or family gathering. Occasionally, end the conversation by telling her that you miss her.

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*INCREASE HER ENERGY LEVELS*

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The difference between the weak and strong is energy. Energy is what gets us up and moving. It's what makes us able to wake up in the morning, glad to be alive, and get ready to approach the day with vitality and enthusiasm. Energy is the life force that gives us health, stamina, and the vigor to be all that we can be each and every day. Have you ever called your Mother to ask how she is doing and her response is, "Well, I'm making it," or "I am as good as can be expected," or "Just watching TV." Do you procrastinate in calling her because she drains you of your energy? Do you sometimes not invite her over because her lack of energy makes you feel exhausted? These are common complaints from adult children.

Medical doctors and healthcare practitioners will confirm that the most frequent complaint from patients is, "I'm always tired." Most of the time, this "tired" state is due to an imbalance of energy. There are three interrelated types of energy: physical, emotional, and mental. Your Mother needs all three to maintain and increase her good health.

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- **Physical energy** is what she uses to do physical work, including tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry.
  - **Emotional energy** is what causes her to be enthusiastic. It spills over into all of her relationships, including yours. This is what makes her excited to be alive.
  - **Mental energy** is what she uses to solve problems, make decisions, or invest in personal development.

If you are causing your Mother anxiety or stress, you could be burning up her emotional energy. As a result, she may not be living up to her full potential. It has been estimated that one burst of negative emotion, such as anger or hurt feelings, can burn up to eight hours of physical energy. Emotional energy is what determines the quality of her relationships. If she is burning up her energy at the physical and emotional levels, she will have little mental energy left to improve her quality of life.

With your power of influence, you must do everything that you can to ease her heart by increasing her emotional energy. Consider her energy a precious resource that can increase her happiness. Do the best that you can to create a **heartsease** state of being so that a high level of energy is sustained.

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***MAKE A BIG DEAL OF HER  
BIRTHDAY***

Your Mother's birthday may be the only special occasion that she can call her own. Other occasions, such as Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and Thanksgiving are shared with everyone else. A birthday is a mile marker in time. It is a measure that indicates an important passage in her life. It indicates progress from the previous year and marks a time to start anew for another year. Make her birthday a special celebration!

Before her birthday, come up with a plan. Think of a gift that creates an extraordinary memory rather than something ordinary. Present her with a gift that is personalized, unique, and thoughtful. On her birthday, be the first to make contact with her. Call her on the phone or go see her just after she wakes up. Devote the entire day to her if you can. If it is a milestone birthday, such as her 60<sup>th</sup>, consider a vacation or a really big birthday party. Most of all, never forget her birthday. Remember that her birthday is her day. Make a big deal about it!

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*HELP HER TO BE HAPPY WITH  
WHO SHE IS*

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Self-acceptance is about being happy with who you are now. It is an agreement with yourself to validate and accept who you are at this moment, even though there are things that you would like to change in the future. Acceptance makes change easier. When your Mother accepts who she is right now, your relationship with her will be filled with new possibilities. Thread these messages into your conversations with her:

- Reinforce that she is capable of acting on her own best judgment, without feeling guilty or bad if others disapprove.
- Suggest that she not spend a great deal of time worrying about tomorrow or the past.
- Build her confidence to deal with problems, especially during troubled times.
- Make sure she feels equal to others, regardless of her accomplishments, abilities, or status.

Self-acceptance is at the core of her being. Help her be happy with herself and be happy that she is your Mother.

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***REMIND HER THAT SHE IS NOT A  
BURDEN***

No one wants to feel like a burden, especially your Mother. Her job all of your life has been to take care of you, not the other way around. Worrying about being a burden to others, especially her children, is a common and troubling concern for any Mother. This may be a self-perceived burden associated with the fear of suffering, choosing a hospital if she gets sick, dread of being dependent, or a loss of dignity. You must work extra hard to never make her feel like a burden. This is tough, because no matter what you say or do, we live in a society that equates productivity with worth. The word *old* means obsolete, whereas the word *new* means fully functioning.

Dependency is a scary thought for her. Losing control, such as not being able to drive herself to the doctor or cook breakfast, may make her feel like a burden. It's hard for her to maintain her sense of dignity and pride if she can no longer go to the restroom or bathe herself. Ease her heart by offering to pay her bills, look up information on the Internet, or find the address of an old friend.

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Your reaction when she asks for your help says a lot about how you feel. If you sigh, procrastinate, or act unenthusiastic, she perceives that she is being a burden to you. When you talk about how tired you are or how much work you have to do, you are sending a message to her that makes her feel guilty. Whatever you do, do it with a big heart that is open and willing to help.

Your Mother's responsibilities are still the same. She doesn't stop being your Mother just because she is, or may become, dependent on you. She still worries about your health and happiness. Let her know that it would be an honor to take care of her if she ever needed you. Let her know that if she becomes dependent on you or she needs your help, it would be a gift to care for her. Affirm to her that she would never be a burden. This is a way of saying "thank you" for all she has done for you. Be sure to reassure her often that she is not, and never will be, a burden to you.

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*REDUCE HER FEAR OF DEATH*

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It is natural to fear the unknown of death, but death is a natural fact of life. She probably has her own religious convictions but you can help her think of death as the end of her physical existence as we know it. Take a rose as an example. A rose withers and dies on the vine. We don't feel that it is unfair that the rose failed to stay alive forever. We understand that the rose served its purpose, by growing from a bud to a beautiful flower. Once the flower blooms, it falls to the ground and decays, and new life arises.

Be open about discussing death. Talk about it in your conversations. For example, remind her that death occurs when our jobs on earth are done. We may have wanted to do more, but when we have done what we were meant to do, we will move on. Let her know that she is serving her purpose every day; after all, she gave you life. You are a bud that is in the process of blooming (and possibly giving life to your own children). Bring out the positives about death. For example, death shows us what is not important. The approach of death helps us to release our accumulated material possessions and superficial relationships. It helps us to understand who we really

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are. Facing death forces us to come to grips with what is temporary, and to give that up. Tell her that your relationship with her is real; it is not superficial. Depending on which one of you dies first, you are not leaving the other. One of you is simply moving on before the other.

Tell her that she has done a great job in her life. Recall the many things that she has done for you and thank her. Repeat how much you love her. Help her overcome the fear of death by letting her know that you would miss her dearly if she moved on from this life.

*Isn't fear of the unknown  
always worse than actual reality?*



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*TELL HER SHE IS BEAUTIFUL*

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It doesn't matter how old she is, every woman wants to feel beautiful! As your Mother ages, her hair will most likely grow thin, wrinkles will appear, and her teeth will look worn out. She is aware of these changes because she looks in the mirror every day. She sees her current outer appearance and may not feel beautiful any more. She may even think that you are ashamed of her or that she looks old.

She needs to be reassured that she looks beautiful in your eyes. Occasionally, tell her that she is attractive or that she is stunning. She has earned every one of her wrinkles and gray hairs. Mark Twain put it best: "Wrinkles merely indicate where smiles have been."

She is the same person on the inside as she was when you were a young child. Let her know she will always be your beautiful Mother.



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*BRING HER INTO THE  
CONVERSATION*

Have you ever felt like you didn't fit in during a conversation? If so, you can probably relate to how your Mother may feel if everyone is talking around her and she has nothing to contribute. She will feel alienated and awkward. Think about when you were attempting to be in a conversation but you had nothing to add. Then a friend reached out to you and asked you a question so you could respond, or maybe changed the subject to a topic that you knew something about. Didn't you feel a sense of relief?

The goal in any conversation is to select a topic that everyone has interest in, including your Mother. When people have experiences in common, conversing is easy. How much fun is it to talk to someone from your hometown or someone who shares the same hobby? Make a sincere effort to draw your Mother into the conversation. Sure, she is from a different generation and has different interests. However, you should have plenty of past experiences, family members you know, and other things in common to always be able to include her in the conversation.

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*BE ON A MISSION TO MAKE HER  
HAPPY*

A mission is a self-imposed action. We are all on a mission to achieve happiness. We do things because we believe they will make us happy or make others happy. When you make others happy, you increase your capacity to love. When your capacity to love increases, you increase your own capacity to be loved and to be happy. Happiness is not something you can touch; it is carried and felt in your heart.

Be on a mission to make your Mother happy. Relationships are about serving the other person. Ask her what you can do to make her happy. Take note, and then do it. Observe what makes her happy. It may be sitting outside on the porch, having coffee at a local coffee shop, or going for a walk. Let one of your core values be making your Mother happy. Clearly define how you will treat her and conduct yourself around her. This requires personal growth on your part. It requires a disciplined mind.

When your mission is clear and taken to heart, your actions will evolve. Your core values of making her happy will remain firmly embedded in your genetic makeup.

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*SETTLE WITH YOUR PAST*

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You may be unable to develop the relationship with your Mother because you are hanging onto a past filled with unresolved issues. How can you ease your Mother's heart if you need to come to terms with a situation or free yourself from a longstanding issue? Perhaps you are accumulating unresolved disappointments as it relates to your Mother, and this has caused your relationship to deteriorate. Regardless of the situation, settle with your past so you can create peace of mind between you and your Mother.

A good exercise for settling with your past is to travel in your mind backward in time, and piece together the past. A good starting point is when you were 12 or 13 years old. For each year, write down specific incidents that occurred. Think about what you were doing, what you were thinking, how you felt, and the relationship you had with your Mother. Recognize any feeling that holds your attention for whatever reason. That may be an unresolved issue that you need to explore and deal with now. Forgive yourself and forgive your Mother. Recognize the importance of settling your differences. There is no future in the past. You can never live in the present if you have not settled with your past.

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*SMILE*

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A smile is an expressive, life-affirming form of communication. It is the art of speaking without saying a word. Smiling makes the brain produce endorphins, which give you a greater sense of well-being. A smile is one of the greatest gifts you can give your Mother. When you smile at her, it conveys pleasure and happiness. A smile creates a “halo” effect that helps her remember other happy events more vividly. Think about this: babies smile an average of two hundred times a day, but the average woman smiles just sixty-two times a day. It takes nearly three times the number of muscles to frown as it does to smile, 43 versus 17.

The power of being face-to-face with a smile cannot be underestimated. Just like with a yawn, when you smile, your Mother will probably smile back. A smile sends a message that you are interested in what she has to say, and that you are glad to see her. Life can become so routine that we forget to smile. Smiling takes so little effort, yet can make such a big difference. Your smile is a special key that fits the lock to your Mother’s heart. You can open her heart at any time with a simple smile.

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***FORBID ANY MISTREATMENT***

Do not let anyone mistreat your Mother in any way, whether physical or emotional. If you know someone who is neglecting her, hurting her, taking advantage of her, or dishonoring her, get involved and stop it immediately. Take up for her. Place her under your care and safekeeping. Be courageous and love her enough to defend her at all times.

Mistreatment may be any behavior that is intended to control her through the use of fear, humiliation, intimidation, guilt, cruelty, or manipulation. It can include anything from verbal abuse or constant criticism to more subtle tactics such as making her feel inadequate, stupid, or unworthy. Mistreatment may even be very slight but significant enough to make her feel sad such as repeated disapproval or the refusal to ever be pleased with her. It may also include someone ignoring her or bringing up things in the past that make her sad. Confront that person and let him or her know in no uncertain terms, no one is allowed to mistreat your Mother.

## 91.

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### *SPEAK POSITIVE, MOTIVATING WORDS*

Words have the power to influence the conditions in our lives. However, words are really only combinations of letters. Did you know that the Hebrew word for *letter* means *vibration*? Vibration is energy, and energy makes things happen. Words create impressions, thoughts, and expectations. Words build psychological associations and influence how we think. Since thoughts determine actions, there's a powerful connection between the words we use and the results we get.

What if you only spoke positive, motivating words to your Mother? I believe you would experience a deeper sense of oneness with her. Build your relationship with words of genuine appreciation.

You have a choice to decide about which words you use. You may have come across the sayings: *Watch your thoughts; they become your words. Watch your words; they become your actions. Watch your actions; they become your habits. Watch your habits; they become your character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.*

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One of the primary reasons we have words is so we can communicate our feelings to the ones we love. Look at your words as blessings. You know this intellectually. Embrace it emotionally. Take it to heart. Be careful how you use words. There is great value in the admonition “think before you speak.” Be accountable for how you use your words. It’s one of the few actions you can control 100 percent of the time. When you choose the words you speak to your Mother, choose positive, motivating words.

Remember that words are only words. Your message lies in the *meaning* of your words, combined with your thoughts, intentions, and actions.

*Each word brings the opportunity to give new purpose, meaning, and happiness to life.*



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*TALK ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT  
SHE IS*

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Researchers have studied characteristics of close relationships in families. Close families talk about how important they are to each other. They appreciate, praise, and value each other, noting each other's strengths. Even though Mother's Day is the formal day to acknowledge, show appreciation for, and honor Mothers -- you can share how important your Mother is to you on other days as well. Relationships are built on frequent, mutual acts of appreciation. Tell her how fabulous she is. Show her how much you care.

Your acknowledgement to her may be a simple thank-you card. It may be an unexpected homemade card with a recent family photo included. Your appreciation may be a flower or just a simple smile. It may be a late-night phone call in which you tell her that you appreciate everything that she does for you. Since so much of our time is consumed by the little details of living, live like today may be her last. Talk about how important she is to you, loud and clear, over and over, to make sure she gets the message.

## 93.

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### *GET HER A PET*

Animals that can physically respond to us, like a cat or a dog, bring joy to our lives. Think about the soothing sound of a cat purring, or a dog that is happy to see you any time of the day. Doesn't this automatically bring out the best in you? Research indicates that pet ownership increases family fun and happiness. Maybe it is because a pet loves unconditionally.

Consider getting your Mother a pet, if she doesn't have one. It will give her something to touch and talk to when she doesn't have anyone else. A pet may decrease her feelings of loneliness by providing companionship. Having a pet to care for can focus her attention away from her problems. Pets offer comfort and trust, lessen anxiety, reduce stress, and provide consistency. Get her a pet to add an additional element of love in her life.



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*DON'T SAY YOU DON'T HAVE TIME*

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Our world today is preoccupied with speed, activity, and technology. There is this bogus idea that a successful person is always busy, or that material things are a measure of success. The truth is that most of us rush around in a fury and forget about the people who mean the most to us.

Think about the last time your Mother invited you over to dinner or to visit and you said, "I don't have time!" Maybe you made the time begrudgingly, but in your mind, you were thinking about all the things you needed to be doing. What if you were told that you had one month to live? Would you rush back to your home and clean it? Would you hurry in to work to make sure you finished your monthly report? No! Most of us would spend time with our family. We would focus our energy on the relationships that are most important to us.

Your priorities should not be based on achievement or material things. Continuously reassess your priorities and make sure you have time to spend with those who are most important to you, including your Mother.

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*REALIZE YOUR  
INTERDEPENDENCE*

You and your Mother are interdependent. You are dependent on one another -- physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. She is the giver of your life; nothing will change that. If she is your genetic Mother, her blood runs through you. Regardless, the mother-child relationship is a bond that is connected by a common love, purpose, and interest. You honor her by realizing your interdependence with her. For example, recognize one of her positive traits, such as her hair. Make a comment like, “Your hair is so shiny and thick. I am so thankful I took after you. I get compliments on my hair all the time. I always tell them I took after my Mother.” It makes her happy when you recognize this connection in a positive way.

Also, show your interdependence by sharing your experiences with her. When good things happen, let her know. Sharing magnifies the happiness. Conversely, when not-so-good things arise, ask for her advice. This makes her feel useful and trustworthy. Build your relationship by realizing your interdependence. Experience the oneness with her.

## 96.

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### *REFLECT POSITIVELY ON YOUR PAST*

When people are asked to think back on their past, over 80% reflect on positive memories. Talk about your past family experiences in a positive way. Why bring up negative memories that happened when you were younger? There is nothing that makes a Mother feel more ashamed than feeling like she was responsible for bringing anything negative into your life. Honor her by making her feel that your past was unique. If there are negative memories in your past, let them go. Let those memories be the 20% that you do not dwell upon. Ease her mind by letting her know that she did the best she could at that time. It is easy to turn these negative memories into the positive aspects of your life today. Let her know that you are who you are because of any negative experiences you endured.

The warmest feeling that resonates in Mothers is when her children reflect on happy family times. To hear laughter about things that happened in the past is music to her ears. Reflecting on the past in a positive way is an easy way to bring happiness into her present.

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***REMIND HER OF HER LIFE'S  
PURPOSE***

Research shows that one of the best predictors of happiness is whether a person considers his or her life to have a purpose. Without a clearly defined purpose, 70 percent feel unsettled about their lives. Let your Mother know that nothing would be possible without her. She is the reason for your existence. She is the only one who initially gave you a purpose because she gave you life or adopted you as her child.

Purpose is not related solely to achievement or material possessions. One of her greatest purposes is that she contributed to your life. She was put on this earth to give life and to help others, and that is the greatest purpose of all.

Remind her of her life's purpose. Hearing it from you, one of the most important people in her life will make her happy. Maybe she has lost sight of this. A simple reminder or recognition of her life's purpose is one of the greatest gifts that you can give her. Thank her for giving your life purpose.

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***SAY SHE'S THE BEST***

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All of us want to be considered the best at what we do. Being a Mother is no different, except that it is a lifelong job. It is the most important role within the family and carries the greatest amount of responsibility in life. So of course, a Mother wants to feel that she is the best. There is no one that she would rather hear this from.

Tell her often that she is the best! Here are some phrases that you can use to communicate that idea:

- You are my inspiration.
- You exude the highest quality of Motherhood.
- You are the most capable person I know.
- You are kind, worthy, and genuine.
- You use good judgment and I trust you.
- You are reliable, dependable, and responsible.
- You are agreeable, cheerful, and pleasant.
- You are warm and loyal.
- You are the best Mother in the whole wide world!



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*CREATE FAMILY UNITY*

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Your family most likely extends beyond you and your Mother. You probably have siblings, in-laws, or other relatives that you consider family. These relationships will affect your interactions with your Mother. It takes careful planning and thought to create family unity. The more time families spend together, the greater the probability of the family being close.

Take a greater responsibility in organizing the family's schedule so that family members can spend more time together. Then make every minute count! Create family unity by embodying these interactions.

- Do not label any family member lazy, klutz, nerd, etc. These labels have negative connotations and create animosity.
- Be fair. Often one family member is jealous of another, with or without justification. Be in a position to explain your actions about any situation or issue.
- Families help support one another. Stress that aspect of family in all daily conversations.
- Expect all family members to treat each other with respect. Make that an inherent expectation.

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- Never compare one member of the family to another. Recognize and honor uniqueness.
  - Never complain about one member of the family to another. If you have a complaint and are having a conversation about another family member, be very careful.
  - Never allow any family member to be teased or picked on. Allow no family member to make negative comments about another. If this starts, stop it immediately. Never contribute anything to a de-motivating situation or conversation. Nothing good ever comes from unconstructive remarks.
  - Never keep score or rank any family member. That promotes competition. There will always be a loser and a winner, and the loser always feels bad about himself or herself.
  - Never show favoritism. Each member of the family needs love and approval.
  - Never take sides during a fight or argument. If emotions get out of hand and it looks like someone is going to get hurt, stop the fight and split them up. Otherwise, stay out of the argument or serve as a facilitator to help them work through the issue.

You will make your Mother happy when her entire family is happy. Be a contributor. Help bring her family together by creating family unity.

# 100.

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## *SURVEY YOURSELF*

Seek to improve by testing yourself. Find out if you are easing your Mother's heart, making her happy, and showing her appreciation and honor. On a scale of 1-to-5, where 1 is never and 5 is always, indicate your level of agreement with each of the following items.

I schedule at least 2-to-4 hours of quality time with my Mother at least once a week.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I tell my Mother how important she is to me.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I notice when my Mother talks about her past, and I listen to her attentively and ask questions.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5

## SURVEY YOURSELF (Continued)

I thank my Mother and show appreciation for everything she does for me.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I encourage my Mother to talk about positive things that make her happy.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I feel proud for what my Mother has accomplished.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I smile when I look at and talk to my Mother.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I find opportunities to tell my Mother that she is the best.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5

## SURVEY YOURSELF (Continued)

I communicate with my Mother on most days.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
When I am with my Mother, I give her an unexpected hug, a kiss on the cheek, or hold her hand.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
My Mother and I share a common interest, and spend time participating in that interest.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I am particularly attentive to what my Mother's emotional needs are.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5
I take up for my Mother if anyone finds fault with her or criticizes her.				
<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5

I accept my Mother for who she is and view any perceived mistakes she has made as learning experiences.

<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
1	2	3	4	5

**ADD UP YOUR SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## *INTERPRET YOUR SCORE*

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Your score is interpreted as a percentile rank. Scores range from 0 to a high of 75. This type of score compares your scores to those of a reference group. Your score represents the percentage of people in the reference group who scored lower than you did. For example, if your score is 60, you scored higher than 60 percent of the people surveyed. There are three categories that will help you interpret your score.

 <b>Score 51-75</b>	<b>Heartsease   Heartsease</b>
<b>Score 25-50</b>	<b>Heart Breaking</b>
<b>Score &lt; 25</b>	<b>Heart Broken</b>

## *SEEK TO IMPROVE*

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**Score < 25 Act now; your Mother's heart is broken.** Sorry, your Mother is probably heart-broken. It is time to act quickly. The good news is that there are some easy things you can do immediately. With minimal effort, you can start contributing to your Mother's happiness today!

**Score 25-50 Your Mother's heart needs more happiness.** Even though you are doing some things to make your Mother happy, you can do more. You make her happy some of the time, but there is a lot of room for improvement.

**Score 51-75 You are easing your Mother's heart.** Commend yourself! You are contributing greatly to your Mother's happiness. You are easing her heart, showing her honor and appreciation, and giving her peace of mind. Continue what you are doing. Others will see you as a positive role model and will, hopefully, imitate your behavior.

## *IN CLOSING*

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It is a universal law to honor our Mothers. To honor is to revere, to appreciate, to respect; to treat with reverence and obedience. It implies that you have such high respect for her; you would have great apprehension about doing anything that would displease her. Most think of dishonor as an act of disrespect or insult. That's true, but it is also an act of dishonor when you ignore her or do not pay attention to her.

We are commanded to abide by universal laws, such as honoring our Mother in her old age. This means that we must help her and provide the necessary care for her. As she ages, we are not to berate her for having wrinkled skin and gray hair. If she becomes forgetful or disabled, we are to show her even more honor -- "Do not despise thy Mother when she is old."

Show honor as it is age-appropriate. To a child, honor means obedience. To an adolescent, honor is respect. To an adult, honor is kindness, appreciation, and care. Do not honor your Mother based on what she deserves or has earned, or on what she gives. Give honor to her freely, as it is your responsibility.

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Honor is a commandment. Recognize that honoring her begins with you. As her child, it is your duty to honor her on a daily basis.

It must be understood that no person has the power to *make* another person *experience* happiness. You do not have the control to make your Mother happy. Your Mother has the strongest power and the greatest responsibility to influence her level of happiness. You cannot create happiness within her, however, as her child; you can create an atmosphere that is conducive to happiness and be a contributor to increasing the intensity of her happiness. At the most basic level, you can do the following things:

- Explicitly express your love and gratitude. Telling her how much you love and cherish her will make her feel appreciated. Explaining to her that you are grateful for all that she has done for you will amplify her level of happiness. You should do this on a regular basis, not just on Mother's Day.
- Make it a habit to verbally reminisce about your cherished memories. Include stories about the past or things that she did or said that were special and meaningful. Let her know that you remember those things and you will cherish those memories. This increases your bond with her.

- 
- Stay in touch with her so she knows what is going on in your life. This type of communication helps her to stay connected and involved in your life, regardless of the distance.
  - Spend time with her. Share fun and positive experiences with her in the present and build a memory bank for the future. Sharing happy times boosts the enjoyment between you two and develops a solid foundation for the future.

Remember, whatever you put in to the relationship, you will get back. Fast-forward and imagine that you are a Mother of her age. Set the stage for being honored and respected by your family. You are a walking, talking role model. Commit to memory, the happier you make your Mother, the less she will demand from you, and the more you will receive from her.



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*“Blessed is the mother who has  
character strong enough to withstand  
the thoughtless remarks and  
resentments of the growing child, for, in  
due time, she shall be honored.”*

**- Leonora Zearfoss**



## *APPENDIX A: 12-MONTH CHECKLIST*

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Your Mother is a subconscious teacher whose lessons live within you. It is not materialistic and worldly pleasures that she wants from you. There are simple, everyday things you can do that will make your Mother happy. This heartsease checklist sums up the book and provides a 12-month roadmap for improvement, starting today! Remember this: if you make your Mother happy each day, in fifty years you will have made her happy 18,250 times.



### *GET STARTED*

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- ✓ Desire to honor her. Your heart must sincerely want to honor her; otherwise, your tone of voice will give you away.
  - ✓ Do not bring up mistakes that she made in the past. It may be insignificant things like using the wrong ingredient in a recipe or getting lost. Or, it may be a big mistake that she made in her younger years. Mistakes are in the past.
  - ✓ Ask to hear about her life experiences, grandparents, and ancestors. Ask her to describe other members of your family, maybe those you have never met.
  - ✓ Observe her willingly and with pleasure.
-

## *Month 1 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Pick a day and let her know in advance that you plan to spend the whole day doing some chores around her house. If home chores are not your forte, hire a local housecleaner.
- ✓ Never make her out to be stupid. Just because she does not have the same frame of reference that you do in a given situation, does not mean she doesn't know what she is talking about.
- ✓ By definition, a mother is one who "exercises control and responsibility." Make her feel like she is the primary person that the family looks to for direction. When it comes to making decisions about special events, let her be responsible. Ask her to make a decision.
- ✓ Call her for no reason, just to find out how she is doing that day.
- ✓ Take her a favorite pastry if you are going somewhere early in the day.
- ✓ Enjoy talking to her. She knows when you think talking to her is a chore. Recall something she told you and ask about it.
- ✓ Tell her that you love her every time you talk to her.
- ✓ All women want to feel beautiful. Tell her that she is pretty. Compliment her dress or hair.
- ✓ Find something nice to say about her appearance. It means a great deal to her if she feels you think she is attractive.

## *Month 2 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Arrive at her house on any given day for no reason and do something special for her. Let her relax.
- ✓ Decorate a room in her house. Put fresh flowers in a vase. Change the draperies. Bring in some hand painted flowerpots. Frame a favorite picture of the two of you and place it on a tabletop.
- ✓ Tell her some important or happy news before you tell anyone else. Tell her that she is the first one that you told the news to.
- ✓ Let her know that she is your inspiration. She was the person in your life that made a difference.
- ✓ Never ridicule or make fun of her. Ask yourself, “What purpose am I serving by making fun of her?” When this occurs, it makes her want to give up on life, and on being the great mother that she knows she is, in her heart.
- ✓ If she is out and will be returning home, follow up with a phone call to make sure she made it home safely.
- ✓ Embrace and appreciate the reality that she is your Mother. Motherhood is a calling that lasts a lifetime. You will always be her child and she will always be your mother, regardless of your age. Respect her age and wisdom.

### *Month 3 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Be responsible. Function in society in a manner that makes her proud. This is the ultimate gift.
- ✓ Copy a favorite Mother’s Day card or poem, frame it, and wrap it up as a small gift.
- ✓ Tell her that you want to spend time with her, even for a short while.
- ✓ Bring her joy. Create an environment full of great happiness. Provide pleasure for her; be cheerful to her.
- ✓ Call to talk to her and say “I love you” just because you are thinking about her. Try not to call only when you need something.
- ✓ Get some of her older family pictures restored. Frame them and hang them in a special place in her home.
- ✓ Join her in an activity that she likes to do. She feels honored when you take time for her and to be with her.
- ✓ Make her feel appreciated for the work she does around the house. Thank her after she cooks a meal or does the laundry. If you do not live with her, tell her you appreciated all the things that she did for you when you lived at home.
- ✓ Share your thoughts, feelings, and dreams with her.
- ✓ Take an afternoon nap with her at home.

### *Month 4 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Under no circumstance raise your voice to your Mother.
- ✓ When shopping with her, if she sees something that she wants, buy it and put it away for her next birthday. Or, pay for it while she is not watching.
- ✓ Be traditional on special occasions. Get a gorgeous corsage. This will make any Mother feel special.
- ✓ Bestow your blessing by giving approval for whatever decisions she makes. She is a grown woman. If it contributes to her happiness and well-being, wish her the best. She has earned the right to choose.
- ✓ Give her a heart locket with your picture, an engraving, or a note inside, letting her know that you want her to be reminded of how much you love her at all times.
- ✓ If you send her flowers, know your colors. Pink is for friendship. Yellow is for respect. Stay away from red (passion) or white (purity).
- ✓ If your mother lives in the same house, if she is visiting you, or if you are on a family vacation, surprise her with breakfast in bed.
- ✓ Make a biography of her life, such as a video documentary that is an all-encompassing portrait of her life. Include old pictures, favorite songs, and personal interviews.

## *Month 5 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Create family rituals, such as a special saying or gesture that become a tradition.
- ✓ Say “I love you” first – with sincerity and enthusiasm.
- ✓ Surprise her with an unexpected weekend trip. Take her someplace that she has always wanted to go. Or, consider taking her back to her hometown or to visit an old friend.
- ✓ At dinner, let her have the most comfortable chair and the best view.
- ✓ Create a life timeline, an outline of her life. Events may include her birth, each time her family moved, special achievements, first date, wedding date, birth of children and grandchildren, deaths of loved ones, etc.
- ✓ Give her the opportunity to express who she is, and encourage her individuality.
- ✓ Never cut her off in the conversation. This makes her feel devalued.
- ✓ Prepare a scrapbook with old photos and other memorabilia, and decorate it with her favorite colors.
- ✓ Shop. Shop with her. Shop for her.
- ✓ Stay interested in everyone in the family.
- ✓ Talk in a positive tone to her and everyone else in the family.
- ✓ Tell her how lucky you consider yourself to have a Mother like her and how you value everything she does for you.

## *Month 6 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Understand a Mother's nature. All of her instructions, her warnings, her encouragements, her sacrificing for your sake – is all for you. It doesn't matter how old you are. It is a Mother's nature and innate desire to care for her young. Heed her instructions and be glad you have a Mother. Appreciate your place in her life.
- ✓ Write a poem and thank her for all the wonderful things she has done for you in her life.
- ✓ Give her a huge package of her favorite candy, wrapped in special paper.
- ✓ Take her side. Everyone wants someone who will take their side, whether they are right or wrong.
- ✓ Tell her that you will take care of her when she is old.
- ✓ The next time you give her a card or a present, tape a fresh flower on it.
- ✓ Avoid making her worry.
- ✓ Write a note and put it beside her bed at night for her to read the next morning.
- ✓ Ask about the choices that she made in her life. Find out why she married your father, or why she chose to live in a certain town.
- ✓ Send her the same number of balloons as her age. On her sixtieth birthday, celebrate by sending sixty balloons.

## *Month 7 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Clear your schedule and devote the entire day to your Mother. Do whatever she wants to do.
- ✓ Demonstrate spontaneous acts of affection. Hug her. Kiss her on the cheek. While walking beside her, reach down and hold her hand, even if only for a second. Gently squeeze her hand. Put your hand on her shoulder. This makes her feel loved.
- ✓ Do not honor her based on what she deserves. Give honor to her freely. It is a spiritual directive from the highest source of love.
- ✓ If you live with her, extend daily greetings every morning and night. If you live apart from her, communicate with her as regularly as you can, to let her know what you are doing.
- ✓ Offer reassurance of her worth. If she is no longer a productive member of society, she needs more than ever to be honored, valued, and assured of her worth.
- ✓ Order food and bring it to her house.
- ✓ Prepare a lavish breakfast of her favorite foods and serve her breakfast in bed on Mother's Day morning.
- ✓ Buy two of her favorite concert or theater tickets. Try to get front-row seats. Send her an invitation requesting her company, with the tickets.
- ✓ Comfort her when she is upset.

## *Month 8 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ If she is ill or has any other difficulty, whether emotional, social, or financial, give her your unconditional support.
- ✓ Love the people in her life whom she loves. Love her husband, even if he is your step-father. Love her mother as she does. Love her friends or sisters. Whoever it is, love them and treat them with respect.
- ✓ Talk to her about your day. Give her specific details about what you did.
- ✓ Tell her how much you love her.
- ✓ Plan a little celebration for no reason. Invite some of her friends or family members. Ask each one to bring a separate card especially for her.
- ✓ For a special occasion, such as her birthday, send a taxi or limousine to pick her up.
- ✓ When your mother falls short of being perfect, overlook it. Do not magnify her imperfections. Lower the standard that you have set for her and give her room to grow.
- ✓ Give her your undivided attention when she talks to you. This makes her feel like she has something important to say.
- ✓ Go to church with her.
- ✓ Make her feel that her life has been worthwhile. Let her know that she is worthy.
- ✓ Never argue with her, even if she is wrong.

## *Month 9 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Take a long drive and wind up at a nice restaurant.
- ✓ Be courteous. If you are walking her to the car, open her door. Help her put on her coat. Get her purse.
- ✓ Empathize with her when she tells you about a problem in her life. Let her know you identify with her and understand. It will make a big difference in your communication.
- ✓ If you have children, train them to honor her as a grandmother. Talk about her to them. Help bridge the gap and work to build their relationship between them.
- ✓ Take care of her when she is sick. If she has surgery or is in the hospital, be there!
- ✓ Take her out for a movie or lunch, without an occasion.
- ✓ Take her seriously. If she asks you to do something, carry out her wish in earnest. If she is talking to you, be sincere and deeply interested.
- ✓ Use good judgment in the decisions that you make for yourself.
- ✓ Ask for her opinion or suggestion about how you should handle a situation.
- ✓ At the next family dinner, make a toast to her. Honor her for being your Mother.
- ✓ If she is upset about anything, give her a hug.

## *Month 10 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Call her and let her know when you are running late, if you are expected to be at her house or pick her up at a certain time.
- ✓ Do not allow anyone to mistreat her. If you know someone in her life who is neglecting her or dishonoring her in any way, get involved and stop it immediately.
- ✓ Do not throw advice back to her. She is telling you all that she knows. Take it to heart and even if you don't agree, say you will take it under consideration.
- ✓ Don't ignore her if you are talking about an experience that she knows nothing about. Try to make a correlation with something she knows about to include her in the conversation.
- ✓ Enthusiastically receive her guidance and inspiration.
- ✓ It is highly probable that you have different tastes in clothes, food, decorations, etc. If you are shopping with her, accept that fact. Don't make negative comments about what she likes.
- ✓ Make her feel important. Never try to take her place or position in the family. She is the Mother, after all.
- ✓ Ask her how her day went.
- ✓ Don't make an issue out of it if she doesn't remember something that happened.

## *Month 11 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Make her feel like she holds a position of authority or responsibility. This is a basic definition of a Mother.
- ✓ Never dispute her word or correct her, especially in public. What is the point of your being right about an insignificant story, or something that happened years ago? How you make her feel now is what is important.
- ✓ Talk about your past family experiences in a positive way.
- ✓ Send an unexpected card just because you are thinking about her. It could be a funny greeting card, a thinking-of-you card, a home-made card, or a card with a recent family picture.
- ✓ Set goals for yourself and work toward achieving them.
- ✓ Place your trust in her by telling her something confidential.
- ✓ Seek her advice and opinions about everyday matters.
- ✓ When you walk by her, wink. Smile. Give her a look of admiration.
- ✓ Laugh with her if she tells a joke, even if it's not funny.
- ✓ If she does something funny, laugh. If she laughs, laugh. Find the humor. It must be there somewhere if she is laughing.

## *Month 12 – Heartsease Checklist*

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- ✓ Hang family pictures. Place a picture of her in your office or somewhere visible in your home. This makes her feel you want to be reminded of her.
- ✓ Take her out to a movie that she has wanted to see.
- ✓ At the next family party, ask each person invited to bring a flower. Make a bouquet for the table. Send the bouquet home with her.
- ✓ Set the tone and atmosphere of honor toward Mom in the home. When she speaks, back her up. Treat her with respect in all words and actions. Set an example by pleasing her.
- ✓ If she works, drop by her job just to tell her hello. Mothers are proud of their children, regardless of their age, and she loves to show you off.
- ✓ Plan ahead to turn a casual lunch into something special. The next time you take her out to lunch, call in advance and make a reservation for the best table in the restaurant. Tell the waitress that it is your Mother's special day and to treat her with special priority. Ask the waitress if the restaurant has a special dessert or appetizer that could be served in honor of her.
- ✓ Show appreciation for everything she does for you. Smile and say thank you.

## *ABOUT THE AUTHOR*

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