



Mothering Yourself into Wholeness

On

**Mother Yourself Saturday
May 10, 2014**

By The Rev Ann Keeler Evans^{©2014}

Sculpture: Longing by Lorraine Rantala

Hey, you! You, the lovely person who had a lousy mom, welcome to **Mother Yourself Saturday!**

Not everyone is lucky enough to have a good mother. Even those who do may find that there are areas where our mothers were unable to mother us in a style that addressed our deepest needs. Others may find that the platform our mothers established for us does not serve us in today's rapidly changing world. I'm so sorry you didn't get what you needed.

Any of these can leave profound wounds. The healing process can be long and arduous. Not having been loved for who you are by the one whose role is supposed to be nurturance can be devastating. It's a long road between that place of pain and a life where you know (and allow) yourself to be loveable and well loved. (After all, if your Mother didn't love you, how are you going to let anyone else in? Bad Moms can lead to lots of looking for love in the wrong places!)

But at some point, if we're to have the life we want, we have to take our healing into our own hands. Decide she did the best she could, or she didn't. Forgive her or don't. But get clear that her insufficiencies are in the past and that, insofar as you are able, they will not be allowed to blight your present or your future. Remember this while you're working through things: **You are not alone. Many others struggle with these issues.**

It's not easy to stop the pattern, but stop it you must. Your health and happiness depends upon it. If you can, get yourself a great shrink, or a series of them who help you realize that not only are you not crazy, because she didn't love you well, but that you are a wildly wonderful person in your own right. If you can't find a shrink find an on-line chat group (please, one that's actually talking about real things and not just complaining.) or get yourself a good book and start working through it. Not happy with who you are yet? Well, that's why we have a lifetime. But best to get started, times a wasting! And it's your life to rescue.

Why go through another Mother's Day feeling sorry for yourself that you didn't have what you wanted and even needed? Why not start mothering yourself into the life you want to have and the person you want to be?

I was excited when Peg Streep first talked this about concept and then asked me to weigh in. I'm a ritual maker and a process person, so, I thought I'd think through this with that lens.

Let's think a bit about what good Moms try and do for their kids.

- They love them just the way they are.
- They see their good points.

- They encourage them to try new things.
- They teach them to figure out what they believe and what they think.
- They tell them the truth and the hard truths.
- They hold them accountable.
- They teach them to be kind.
- They sometimes even spoil them.
- They push them to grow up and take responsibility for themselves.
- They teach them to get along with others and to be helpful.
- They're available to them.
- They have wild and wonderful expectations of your success.
- I'm probably missing something big. Write it down.

That's a lot of stuff you may have missed. And some of it you may need to take on and bring into your own life. In this notion of Mothering Yourself, it's a lot to take on. But your health and wellbeing, perhaps even your success, may depend upon it.

And you are worthy. And although it's a daunting task, you are up to it. I believe that. If you've done the work to admit your mother wasn't up to the task, you're ready to claim good mothering for yourself. You will be a great mother to yourself.



Chapter 2 You're a Kind, Wonderful, and Talented Person (KWTP!)

Before we get started, I want to tell you something important. **You're a kind, wonderful and talented person (KWTP!).** Whatever anyone else has said, I know this to be true about you. It's how we're born. And you don't need to listen to, hang out with or be intimidated by people who tell you differently. You just need to spend some time figuring out, how kind you can be, why you're wonderful and where your greatest talents are. Then, go about acknowledging those traits and set yourself the task of living into them.

(N.B. Part of getting to this place is **letting go of being judgmental.** Judgmentalism, whether yours or someone else's, is so destructive and eats away at your security. "I am not enough is what you tell yourself." It's really easy to turn that feeling on others, maybe because it helps you feel as if you're at least better than someone. But it kills your soul to do it to yourself and it does the same when you do it to others. So every time you look at someone else and start to think "Well!" finish that thought with "I'll bet she's doing the best she can," or "can I help you?" All that self-righteousness deflects from your real task — loving yourself into wholeness.)

Be kind and acknowledge yourself for being kind. Kindness is basically a one-way activity. It starts with noticing other people, what they care about and what they need. It forgives them their foibles. However, kindness happens with good boundaries, being kind to someone is not allowing people to impose on you. It's a self-aware activity. If you know where your boundaries are, then it's easy to be kind. Start practicing with people you don't know (always the easiest place to make changes.) Tell a total stranger how nice they look. Smile and chat with the person in the toll booth. Let someone go first in line. Little things. Keep a journal. Try for one a day at first. Then slowly raise your expectations. As the numbers rise you'll begin to see how true it is that you are Kind. One of the fun secrets of kindness is that as you are kind to others (and become known for being kind) is that more and more people are kind to you and welcoming. Look at you, you're Kind. It's a wonderful thing to be. Forget what anyone ever said. And although kindness was parsimoniously parceled out in too many families, the kinder you are, the more you'll see there is plenty of love and kindness to go around.

When you're journaling in such a fashion keep the focus on where you want to go. Go toward kind. Slowly edge the unkind folk out of your life with your focus on loving kindness.



Chapter 3 Enjoy Being Wonderful!

Why not be wonderful and enjoy it? What do you enjoy doing? For many people, far more than you suspect, the answer is an unknown. And so people find themselves sitting in front of the TV or the computer. And while that can be comforting, it often becomes the sort of macaroni and cheese activity. Nice, once and a while, but not a healthy diet! Why not experiment? Plan a little adventure. Go to a museum or a zoo. Go to a lecture. Volunteer for a one day event in your community. Do something that helps someone else. Go on a walk with a Walking Club. Start training for a 5K. Figure out what you like to do and do it. As you start enjoying yourself others will be so attracted to you because you are having a wonderful life and being a fulfilled person. There is something that you like to do that you can do, whatever your capabilities (and disabilities). And discovering what that is can be a marvelous journey. Look at you, you like to explore life and its endless possibilities! Look at you, having a wonderful life, all the stuff notwithstanding.

The more you do things you like, the more you reflect on that the more pleased you will be with your life. Invite other people to join you. Get to know people who also delight in their life. These are people who will encourage you to take better care of yourself.

Drawing people to you isn't necessarily the point, enjoying your life is, but good friends — the right friends — certainly help.

I might argue that happiness isn't the most important thing in life, that having a life that matters and makes a difference is the best guarantee of a good life. But enjoying what you do, meeting the challenges, even when they're hard, that makes life wonderful... and it makes you pretty wonderful as well.



Chapter 4 What Do You Want to Do with Your Life?

Once you start feeling good about how your daily life is going, let's look at your life's purpose. You may have a great job or a great relationship and you may enjoy all too. Yahoo. If you don't, and often people who haven't had good cheerleaders in their lives aren't doing exactly what they want to do, tell me: **What would you most like to do with your life?** The quickest way to feel powerful is to start working toward a goal and ticking off the individual steps that lead where you're headed. If you've never thought about what was possible... Now's your chance! (Remember: You're a KWTP. Put it up on your wall, put it at the top of every mirror in your house, write it on your hand. Stick notes in the mail to yourself that remind you. Here's the great thing about our brains. They believe what they're told. You've got to supplant the nasty messages you got from your past with great messages from reality — even if it's your new reality. If you don't have the skills to get here on your own, find a good, reality based self-help book or a great coach. There's an industry built up around this because it's not exactly uncommon.

1. **Make yourself a list of your talents.** I categorize talents as bigger than skills. I also think that, when I'm using them, they give back. I differentiate them from skills, at which I'm competent, but which tend to use a lot of energy. For instance? I'm talented at rallying folk. I'm skilled (but oh so lazy) about organization. For me to organize things, particularly down to the last detail, it takes an enormous amount of energy. That was my sister's gift. I watched it, I got a bit of it, but using it uses me.
2. Then **ask yourself if you're using those talents.** You might not be, because you might never have been encouraged to use your talents. You might not know how good it feels to
3. Is there **something you'd like to do that you're qualified to do that would use those talents?**
4. If the answer is no, are you interested in getting qualified?

You can noodle on these for a good long while and keep coming back to them. Encourage yourself. That's an important Momming-yourself job. You can do this. You are a KWTP!



Chapter 5 Do Unto Others

What would you like to do for others in your life? I think one of the saddest statements I ever heard from someone I knew was that she wanted to do something to make a difference, but didn't know what she cared about.

Now it may be that she just hadn't ever been taught to care about what she believed and what she felt. Which is equally sad.

This is a connected world. If mothers are/were disconnected, we have to learn to build those connections ourselves. Valuing the earth we live on and the creatures that live on it is important. Working to support, protect and facilitate what we find important is very important to our sense of self.

Write down for yourself:

1. **What do you believe?** What is fundamentally true for you?
2. **What do you value?** What enriches your world and your life?
3. **What do you worry is endangered?** What will you fight to keep safe?

Once you know the answers to those questions it's pretty easy to figure out where you'd like to put some effort. Doing work in places that care for what is important for you nurtures and strengthens you.



Chapter 6 Nurture Yourself!

As a result of thinking through this, **how will you undertake to nurture yourself into wholeness** (or what passes for wholeness for most of us. Remember no one, no matter how it looks had a perfect ride.)?

What will you undertake to do for yourself that your mother never managed? Yes. Make a list. Write it down.

You are a kind, wonderful, talented person. You deserve the best of life. You're worth every bit of nurturing and success you're willing to give yourself.

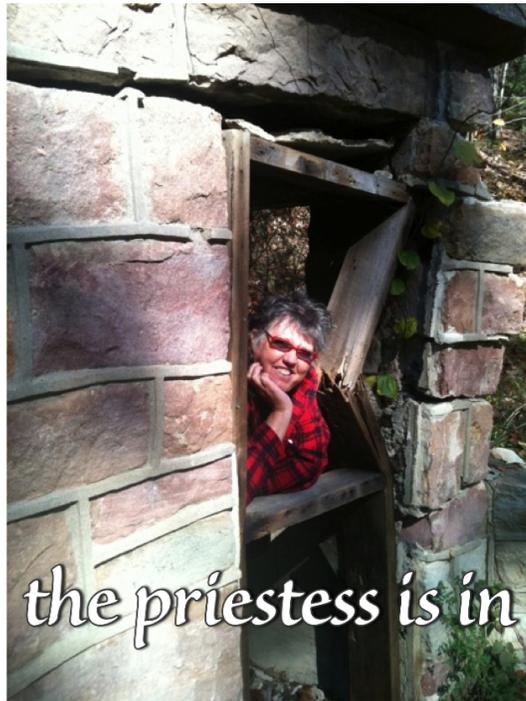
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Mother Yourself Saturday, this Saturday... and every day that follows. It's never too late to be a good mother to yourself and to other people that you choose to make part of your circle! Have fun! Mother yourself into a great life. Let me know how it goes!

You are a Kind, Wonderful, and Talented Person! And you are the answer to your deepest longing.

Blessings on your way,

Ann



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Ann acknowledges the need to keep her feet on the ground in a small and thriving community, her heart in her dreams and her head in a book and the cyber world.

You can sign up for her daily musings at <http://sacredvillage.org> and start your day reflecting about what sort of world you wish to inhabit and to build.

You can keep watching that page for new opportunities for on-line rituals that will help you make a difference in the world and stories of places where wonder and what's right trumps what doesn't work.