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## Mother's Day Metamorphosis

*Cathy Dausman*

Remember your first Mother's Day? I'm not sure I do. It just blends into the patchwork quilt that is new motherhood. We were so busy feeding, changing, bathing, photographing or comforting our baby that one certain Sunday on a May calendar might have slipped away. Sorry, Hallmark!

Mothering seemed an endless and sometimes thankless chore, even for those of us lucky enough to have our mothers lend a hand. Then suddenly your baby enters school, and you step back. When your child enters high school they make you take two steps back! As your child matures, it's all about change and separation.

When your son or daughter becomes a new parent however, connectedness takes on a whole new meaning. I am currently grandmother to just one child. That doesn't make me an expert. But it does give me bragging rights! Being a grandmother means watching as your child tackles a new role, and reinvents the wheel. "Our child has his first tooth!" "She took three steps today!" Every mother recalls these comments about her own child or children, and now they're delivered by your adult offspring. How retro is that?! You find it's time to get out the baby book-your grandchild's, and your son or daughter's-and compare notes! "He's just like his father!" "Her mother did that!" Being a grandmother means looking ahead and reminiscing. It means remembering your mother and how she cared for you; remembering caring for your own children, and watching your daughter or daughter-in-law take up the cause for the next generation.

Being a grandmother can be bittersweet. Skype can put you in the same room with a long distance grandchild but it can't put the child in your arms. Patti Witalice of Orinda misses "the tradition of our children piling on the end of our bed for Mother's Day, Father's Day and birthdays," but hopes her daughters will develop a similar experience in their households for her grandchildren.

A longtime friend is a new grandmother. She says:

"When I became a grandmother my mother became a 'great' grandmother.

But my dad says, 'Aren't all grandparents "great" already?' So maybe Mother's Day should be Great, Grand, Mother's Day, because at that moment of birth, at that exact point in time, it is great and it is grand to be a mother."

When our grandchild was born a friend sent a gift. The small plaque bears a simple inscription: "When a child is born, so is a Grandmother." For me, that pretty much sums it up.

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