

Mothers' Day - on the cards

I wonder if you've ever found yourself staring at the racks of cards in a card shop feeling the same waves of frustration and disappointment as I have. Why is choosing a card for somebody so very difficult?

I have a couple of theories to offer.

First, it is almost impossible to find a card that costs less than a large caramel latte in a decent coffee shop. Why is that? It's a piece of card after all. OK ... and an envelope. But still ...

Second (and most frustratingly), finding a card to suit your needs is a never-ending pursuit. I know this is true because as I stand in front of the displays, despondently picking up different cards, sneering and putting them back again, there are always three or four other people stood around me also losing the will to live. It is so hard to find a card which, in some small way, reflects your feelings and thoughts without being too sugary or too blunt. It's a relational minefield out there.

For many of us, Mothers' Day is one of those challenging card days.

For those who are close to their mums, Mothers' Day is an opportunity to try and express genuine gratitude for their love, care and selflessness. And gosh, don't mums need a bit of that? Just once a year, it is undeniably wonderful to receive a bit of TLC and some words of love and thanks for all of those packed lunches, jigsaw puzzle marathons, bank loans, taxi runs and counselling services. The words we choose to use are so powerful. So although finding or writing meaningful words in a card can be difficult, because these words are often treasured, and perhaps even kept for years in a special box (like I do), it is important we make the right choice.

For others, the issue of Mothers' Day cards is even more difficult. It would be good if we could go to an alternative card shop selling cards with words which more realistically express people's different kinds of feelings. Things like, "Well, Mum, we have a really difficult relationship, but I hope you have a good day anyway." Or "Mum, I miss you - it doesn't seem fair that you're not alive anymore." Or perhaps even "This card is for you because I know you have always wanted to be a mum, but it hasn't happened."

Real life doesn't always reflect the idealistic sentiments we absorb from cards, adverts, films or magazines and sometimes we feel these messages are quite disconnected from the more complicated reality of our lives.

But, while being sensitive to the feelings of others, Mothers' Day is also a real opportunity for us to express to the mothers around us that they are doing a fantastic and often under-valued job. Let's give a hearty thanks to the army of women up and down this land who sacrificially give to their children, their families, their schools, workplaces, churches and communities. These women are the glue which holds families and relationships together, often struggling to fulfil their own dreams and ambitions while they are stretched and tired, caring for others.

There isn't a card in the world which could adequately express these things. But it's good to try to find the words to show how much we value and support mums and others whom we care about.



Those words might be more precious and needed than we ever know.

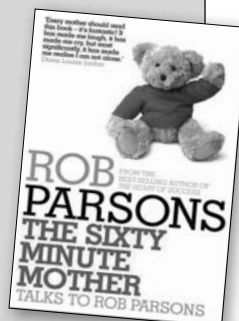
And if we really want to spoil them? Perhaps taking them out for that large caramel latte might be an option ...

The Sixty Minute Mother

Rob Parsons taps into the experiences of all kinds of mothers - first-timers, old hands, 'loving it' mums and 'tearing my hair out with it' mums.

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