For All Us Moms (or devoted parents)

As related by Pat Baker

This is for the movers who have sat up all night with sick toddlers in their arms, wiping up barf laced with Oscar Mayer wieners and cherry Kool-Aid saying, "It's okay honey. Mommy's here." Who have sat in rocking chairs for hours on end soothing crying babies who can't be comforted.

This is for all the mothers who show up at work with spit-up in their hair and milk stains on their blouses and diapers in their purse.

For all the mothers who run car-pools and make cookies and sew Halloween costumes. And all the mothers who DON'T.

This is for the mothers who gave birth to babies they' II never see. And the mothers who took those babies and gave them homes.

This is for the mothers whose priceless art collections are hanging on their refrigerator doors. And for all the mothers who froze their buns on metal bleachers at football or soccer games instead of watching from the warmth of their cars, so that when their kids asked, "Did you see me. Mom?" they could say, "Of course, I wouldn't have missed it for the world," and mean it.

This is for all the mothers who yell at their kids in the grocery store and swat them in despair when they stomp their feet and scream for ice cream before dinner. And for all the mothers who count to ten instead, but realize how child abuse happens.

This is for all the mothers who sat down with their children and explained all about making babies. And for all the (grand)mothers who wanted to, but just couldn't find the words.

This is for all the mothers who go hungry, so their children can eat. For all the mothers who read "Goodnight, Moon" twice a night for a year. And then read it again. "Just one more time."

This is for all the mothers who taught their children to tie their shoelaces before they started school. And for all the mothers who opted for Velcro instead.

This is for all the mothers who teach their sons to cook and their daughters to sink a jump shot.

This is for every mother whose head turns automatically when a little voice calls "Mom?" in a crowd, even though they know their own offspring are at home.

This is for all the mothers who sent their kids to school with stomachaches, saying they'd be FINE once they got there, only to be called by the school nurse an hour later asking them to please pick them up. Right away.

This is for mothers whose children have gone astray, who can't find the words to reach them. For all the mothers who bite their lips when their 14 year olds dye their hair green. For all the mothers of the victims of school shootings, and the mothers of those who did the shooting. For the mothers of the survivors, and the mothers who sat in front of their TVs in horror, hugging their child who just came home from school, safely.

This is for all the mothers who taught their children to be peaceful, and now pray they come home safely from a war.

What makes a good Mother anyway? Is it patience? Compassion? Broad hips? The ability to nurse a baby, cook dinner, and sew a button on a shirt, all at the same time? Or is it in her heart?

Is it the ache you feel when you watch your son or daughter disappear down the street, walking to school alone for the very first time?

The jolt that takes you from sleep to dread, from bed to crib at 2 A.M. to put your hand on the back of a sleeping baby? The panic, years later, that comes again at 2 A.M. when you just want to hear their key in the door and know they are safe again in your home?

Or the need to flee from wherever you are and hug your child when you hear news of a fire, a car accident, a child dying?

The emotions of motherhood are universal and so our thoughts are for young mothers stumbling through diaper changes and sleep deprivation... And mature mothers learning to let go.

For working mothers and stay-at-home mothers. Single mothers and married mothers.. Mothers with money, mothers without.

This is for you all. For all of us. Hang in there. In the end we can only do the best we can. Tell them every day that we love them. And pray.