A Salute To Non-Mothers

**By: *Erma Bombeck***

**Let’s hear it out there for non-mothers. There aren’t any songs sung for them. There aren’t many appropriate cards written for them. There aren’t any days set aside for them, but they exist. They are people who experience all the joy, the caring and the pain of motherhood. They just aren’t there at delivery. Some non-mothers are disguised as teachers who spend more time with the children than the mothers. They contribute ambition, hope and expertise, time and a sense of self to the child. After all, isn’t that what a mother is all about? Other non-mothers are older brothers and sisters of a child who share bedroom, pizza and their lives. They take them to the bathroom, the movies on Sunday and hold them while they are rejected by a parent and there is no one else to cling to. Isn’t that what a mother is all about? There’s the father-non-mother who pinch-hits occasionally at getting meals, mopping up or sitting through a pageant when mother can’t do it. He offers a back-up system of support, sharing and security. Isn’t that what a mother’s all about?  Some non-mothers have experience. They’re called grandparents, and whether their custody of a child is occasional, part-time or full-time, they add to the child another dimension of another time - another set of values - an appreciation for the things that endure. Isn’t that what a mother’s all about? There are non-mothers who touch a child’s life in a million ways, and who, at first glance, don’t seem to fit the role. An angry motorist whom a child has never seen before he yells at him to get his tricycle out of the street. A guidance counselor will tell him to get off his behind and work. A shop owner will chew him out for lifting a piece of penny candy. At a moment when he needed it he was picked up and pointed in the right direction by someone who took the time to care about him. Isn’t that what a mother is all about?**

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