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Happy Mother's Day



May is for Mother's Day, but it provides an opportunity for all men to honor the women in their lives. This newsletter is to tell all the women in my life they are loved, and thank you for enriching my life.

Throughout history, in many places and forms, women were/are treated as second-class citizens. The justification is that women were subordinate to men. In some situations, family fortunes go to sons, ignoring daughters.

Fortunately, there is a generational progression of women, each building on the strengths of the previous. Unfortunately, progress is not worldwide. I love and am very proud of my brothers, son, and sons-in-laws, grandsons, and grand-son-in-law but this newsletter pays tribute to the women in my life.

In our home as a child, life moved at the direction of a steely four foot nine inch tall woman, intolerant of inequality. Mom treated everyone the same and drilled that core message into her children. Widowed and trapped in a poverty situation, she succeeded in obtaining moderate wealth through hard work and frugal living. One of my sisters is now a great-grand mother, and the other joined Mom, Dad, and my youngest brother in God's hands.

My mother-in-law was a strong woman, managing a farm while raising twelve children as her husband worked in Milwaukee, returning home on weekends.

Both women experienced the Great Depression, profoundly affecting values and actions. It is amazing they were able to overcome tremendous adversities. Both were exceptionally intelligent women who never had an opportunity for higher education. The world is poorer for their passing, but by most measurements, they lived fulfilled lives.

My wife is an advocate for life, and despises abortion but not the girls desperately seeking them as a last resort. This is not anti-feminism, it is pro-life, and the terms need not conflict. She sees and treats people as equal. One of her core life goals was providing superior education for our four children, who graduated from a college prep private school system, draining the pocketbook. With three students in college, she took a menial job without complaint, spending virtually every cent on education. Work was never about her, and like mothers throughout history, investment for the future equates to investment in her children. She centers my life.

Our three daughters worked while attending, then graduating from college, one obtaining a Master's degree. Our daughter-in-law continues to fight for her dreams. All are rightly intolerant of discrimination, and have elevated life to a greater level. We are very proud of them.

Our granddaughters are bright, vibrant, and intelligent. The oldest has finished her undergraduate degree and need only finish her thesis to get a Masters from Columbia University. The second recently graduated from college and she is participating in the workplace. Our youngest is active in sports, music and does well in school. Without a doubt, they will elevate life yet another notch.

They have work to do. Other women in the world suffer horribly. I have two new heroes. The first is Malala Yousafzai, shot as a ninth-grader by the Pakistani Taliban for advocating girl's rights. Recovered, she is now running a worldwide campaign for education. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who suffered growing up in Somalia, is second. The discrimination followed her to America. Brandeis University denied her an honorary degree for speaking the truth about growing up in a specific Muslim culture that disrespects and mutilates women.

Pray for the 276 Nigerian schoolgirls, ages 16-18, recently kidnapped and sold as wives or shared among the soldiers. Underreported in the media for three weeks, civilized people everywhere should be outraged. It is a constant and brutal reminder of the thin line between barbarism and civilized behavior, and how little people care when it is "invisible." Equality and love cannot stop at our front door.

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