

What Mothers Really Want: The 7 Most Desired Gifts for Mom

Mother's Day is just around the corner, and thoughts about gift cards, flowers or a brunch may have crossed your mind.

But here's the secret; what moms really want cannot be purchased.

Here's a list of gifts I have compiled through my 30 years of working with moms.

mood. Often, they are sleep deprived and function with little energy. So, if you can help Mom get more sleep, she will thrive and be very grateful. Partners sometimes take on a feeding and allow mother to have a longer stretch of sleep at night or they may go out with the baby or children for a couple of hours to allow Mom to rest during the day. She is going to be so thankful.

especially about breastfeeding. Moms are experts on self-judgment as it is, so they do not need judgment from others. This is a gift by omission, but if you can offer Mom your non-judgmental presence, it will sure go a long way. So, avoid criticism, unfavourable comparison and judgment. If you already do that, then you are one step ahead of the game!



1. The Gift of Sleep

Mothers of young children are always tired. The constant care, chores, mental load (see gift number six) and multi-tasking tends to take a toll on their health and

2. The Gift of Non-Judgment

Our society is very quick to judge mothers. People will comment on just about anything that a mother will or will not do for her children. Mother-shaming is also common,

3. The Gift of Empathy

Empathy is the ability to sense and understand other people's emotions. Expressing empathy is the ability to convey your understanding to the other person, not trying to change how they are feeling, dismiss their feelings or try for them not to feel their feelings. For example, if a mother tells you she has had a difficult day, an empathic response could be "Sounds like you've had a rough day. I know it can be hard." Avoid trying to come up with solutions. These may have a place later. But what moms really want first and foremost is to be understood.

4. The Gift of Appreciation

A mother's work is often invisible unless you observe her all day long. Between feeding, changing diapers, rocking the baby to sleep, taking care of other children if they are around, preparing meals and snacks, grocery shopping or lists, doing the laundry, making and going to appointments, responding to calls or emails and trying to take care of herself while she is doing all that, a mother never has a dull moment. Notice that even when children are napping, Mother is still "on call" and rarely has a real break. Mothers often need and want practical help, but recognition and appreciation are precious. Make sure your words of appreciation are genuine. As tired as Mom might be, she can probably still detect an ingenuine comment.

5. The Gift of Reassurance

Mothers commonly experience self-doubt, especially if they are first-time moth-

5. The Gift of Reassurance (Cont.)

ers. And while moms are often encouraged to follow their instincts, they may be judged and criticized for their choices. A simple way to reassure a mother would be to say, "You're doing a great job," or "Look at this baby, they're lucky to have you as their mom."

6. The Gift of a Lighter Mental-Load

Mental load refers to the invisible, yet very real cognitive effort involved in managing all of one's responsibilities. In simpler words, mental load is the weight on a person's mind related to their multiple responsibilities. Studies have repeatedly shown that mothers experience a heavier mental load than fathers do, even in couples where house chores are shared 50/50. Unfortunately, a heavy mental load may take a toll on a mother's physical and mental health. Remember that mental load is invisible, so you may need to ask mom how you can help relieve it. A lighter mental load is bound to bring more smiles to Mom's face.

7. The Gift of Quality Time

Quality time is a time of mindful connection, which is hard to come by when you have little ones. But spending quality time is a great relationship booster. It does not have to be expensive either, because the main idea here is to connect. You may start with everyone putting their phone away and looking in each other's eyes.

Does this sound like a lot? Indeed, it is but you can start by becoming mindful of these precious gifts and then ask Mom what she would appreciate the most. She is going to be oh, so thankful!



Dr. Michal (Michelle) Regev is a Registered Psychologist and Marriage and Family Therapist, practicing in BC. Dr. Regev has helped mothers, fathers and families overcome mental health and relationship challenges for the past 30 years. She is an adjunct professor at UBC, and worked as the Reproductive Mental Health program's psychologist at BC Women's Hospital for many years.