

The Day I Was Too Busy

"Mommy, look!" cried my daughter, Darla, pointing to a chicken hawk soaring through the air.

"Uh huh," I murmured, driving, lost in thought about the tight schedule of my Day.

Disappointment filled her face. "What's the matter, Sweetheart?" I asked, entirely dense.

"Nothing," my seven-year-old said. The moment was gone. Near home, we slowed to search for the albino deer that comes out from behind the thick mass of trees in the early evening. She was nowhere to be seen.

"Tonight, she has too many things to do," I said.

"Dinner, baths and phone calls filled the hours until bedtime.

"Come on, Darla, time for bed!" She raced past me up the stairs. Tired, I kissed her on the cheek, said prayers and tucked her in.

"Mom, I forgot to give you something!" she said. My patience was gone.

"Give it to me in the morning," I said, but she shook her head.

"You won't have time in the morning!" she retorted.

"I'll take time," I answered defensively. Sometimes no matter how hard I tried, time flowed through my fingers like sand in an hourglass, never enough. Not enough for her, for my husband, and definitely not enough for me.

She wasn't ready to give up yet. She wrinkled her freckled little nose in anger and swiped away her chestnut brown hair.

"No, you won't! It will be just like today when I told you to look at the hawk. You didn't even listen to what I said."

I was too weary to argue; she hit too close to the truth. "Good night!" I shut her door with a resounding thud.

Later though, her gray-blue gaze filled my vision as I thought about how little time we really had until she was grown and gone.

My husband asked, "Why so glum?" I told him.

"Maybe she's not asleep yet. Why don't you check," he said with all the authority of a parent in the right. I followed his advice, wishing it was my own idea.

I cracked open her door, and the light from the window spilled over her sleeping form. In her hand I could see the remains of a crumpled paper. Slowly I opened her palm to see what the item of our disagreement had been.

Tears filled my eyes. She had torn into small pieces a big red heart with a poem she had written titled, "Why I Love My Mother!"

I carefully removed the tattered pieces. Once the puzzle was put back into place, I read what she had written:

Why I Love My Mother

Although you're busy, and you work so hard
You always take time to play
I love you Mommy because
I am the biggest part of your busy day!

The words were an arrow straight to the heart. At seven years old, she had the wisdom of Solomon.

Ten minutes later I carried a tray to her room, with two cups of hot chocolate with marshmallows and two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. When I softly touched her smooth cheek, I could feel my heart burst with love.

Her thick dark lashes lay like fans against her lids as they fluttered, awakened from a dreamless sleep, and she looked at the tray.

"What is that for?" she asked, confused by this late-night intrusion.

"This is for you, because you are the most important part of my busy day!" She smiled and sleepily drank half her cup of chocolate. Then she drifted back to sleep, not really understanding how strongly I meant what I said.