

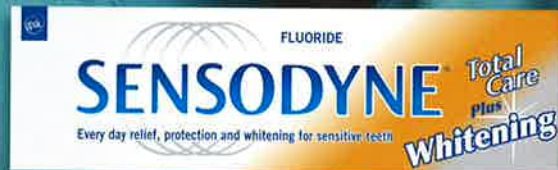
Weekend

Khaleej Times March 14 - 20, 2008

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What it means to be a mother

Mother's Day is round the corner. It's a day when we pay tribute to mothers. It's customary to ask people what their mothers mean to them. *Weekend* reverses the cliché and speaks to three mothers.

BY VEATHIKA JAIN

*Lending us her ears
Giving us her prayers
Sharing our tears
Leading us through the years
Protecting us against all fears
Forgiving us for all our errs
To you mother — Cheers*

THESE ARE some of the things that most mothers do. They are our best friends, safeguarding us from all evil, teaching us what's good and what's bad and finally making us into the good people that we turn out to be.

It's not too often that we sit with our mothers and thank them for all that they have done and do for us. Mother's Day is one such day when we can take some time to really appreciate the woman who has selflessly sacrificed so much for the joy of her children.

Every mother is a beautiful woman — so rich, so deep, so divine and so loving.

On this special occasion of Mother's Day, we ask three mothers — Lara Tabet, Helga Jensen-Forde and Ezmina Taurani — what it means to be a mother.

What does it mean to be a mother?

Lara: Being a mother makes me feel extremely proud. It's my biggest achievement in life. It means the whole world to me.

Helga: To me, being a mother means not being selfish and always putting my child first.

Ezmina: Motherhood is a gift. It means enjoying every moment with your child.

What was/is the highpoint of your motherhood?

Lara: For me the highest point of motherhood is when my children appreciate me for the smallest things that I do for them. My sons are 10 and 12 and I got this appreciation only when they grew up a bit.

Helga: For me, probably in later years, when my son can come out with some of the funniest things, it will be a high point. He is almost five now, and even at this age, he is so funny. He does something

every single day that makes me laugh.

Ezmina: As I have twins, the highpoint is always having two smiles and two hugs every morning! It's a super-sized deal!

What are the heartbreaks of motherhood?

Lara: It's going to be when my sons go off to university, away from home. But I am going to go with them, as I'll certainly be heartbroken without them being at home.

Helga: The hardest thing is if another child says anything horrible to your child. You just want to be there and wrap your children up in cotton wool. Of course, you can't. But it would be great if you

could protect them from everything in the outside world!

Ezmina: No heartbreaks yet. I think when they leave the nest to study abroad will be my hardest heartbreak. Thankfully, we still have about 13 years to go before that!

How do you spend your time with your children?

Lara: I like to spend quality time with my sons over meals and movies. I like to communicate with them. So we talk a lot.

Helga: At the moment, my son is learning to read and write properly. So we have been spending time writing letters to his idol — a Spaceman called Lunar Jim!



"Only happiness! That's all I wish for them. If they are happy, then nothing else matters." — Ezmina

Other times we play tennis and he rides his bike. I think it's important that children have a balance between playing and learning.

Ezmina: Having twins and that too a girl and a boy, it's difficult to juggle. We usually go out to parks together and talk or just play around.

How do you deal with your children's demands?

Lara: I make sure that they get everything they want. I don't say no to them, but I make them earn what they want. I ask them to get certain grades or behave in a good manner for them to earn what they want.

Helga: Keep calm, is my formula. Children are the best thing in the world, but they can be demanding too. By remaining calm, it helps to understand a child's demand and come up with a solution.

Ezmina: With a lot of patience. I have a double load of demands with the twins, which is not always easy in terms of balancing between both my children. I do my best to meet the demands that I feel are reasonable and within our values. They don't always get what they ask for and I try to instill a sense of responsibility in my children, to understand that we cannot always have what we want.

Being a mother, do you feel your freedom to work and move around is restricted?

Lara: Not really. My kids are quite supportive and they understand that I need to work. However, when I work over the weekends, my older son asks me to stop working, as he needs the time with me.

Helga: Yes, it is, most definitely. You feel guilty if you have to work. However, I am in a very fortunate position. I work from home. So when it's time to pick up my son from school or take him to a birthday party, I can escape from my work.

Ezmina: No, not really. I feel that it's important to find the right balance so that both parts of my life are fulfilled. For working women, I think it's really important to have both aspects in their lives. As an entrepreneur, I am always on the go. But I am so grateful to have the flexibility to adapt my day according to my children's needs.



"You wonder how you lived for so long without your precious child!" — Helga

PHOTOS: JUDITH BERNARD/KHALEEJ TIMES

"Be observant and listen to everything that your child has to say. Enjoy every moment of being a mother." — Lara



If there was one thing in the world that you would wish for your children, what would that be?

Lara: I wish that they get the perfect life partner — their true love. I wish they have no rough times and are passionate about what they choose as their career.

Helga: Good health, of course. I also wish for their happiness. I don't really mind what job my son chooses when he grows up, as long as he is happy doing it. I'd hate to think of him stuck in a boring job for the rest of his life because he thought it was something that his parents would approve of!

Ezmina: Only happiness! That's all I wish for them. If they are happy, then nothing else matters.

What do you think about Mother's Day and how do you celebrate it?

Lara: It's a beautiful day. My kids get me cards and gifts and pamper me all day. My husband does his part of telling my kids what to do to make me feel special. We celebrate it by going out for a

meal together and I ask my children if they would like to change anything in their mother. It has always been a great day.

Helga: It's great. We are all so busy with careers and one thing and another. But Mother's Day gives you a day to reflect on everything you do for your child all year through. Usually, my wonderful husband makes sure that I have my favourite chocolates and a lovely card when I wake up. This year my son wrote a Mother's Day card all by himself as it's the first year he can write. That was very special.

Ezmina: Mother's Day is a great day to make mums feel appreciated and loved, and maybe even spoil a bit for a day. Who doesn't enjoy that?! Usually, I play it by ear, depending on what the kids and their dad have schemed. It usually includes small gifts and an effort at a delicious cake. We celebrate Mother's Day by turning it into a Children's Day!

How important is Mother's Day to you?
Lara: It's quite important as it's a spe-

cial day. I am well taken care of by everyone. My whole family wish each other a Happy Mother's Day, including my grandmother.

Helga: It's important as it's the one day of the year we also get to thank our mums for everything too!

Ezmina: Basically, it's just nice to see the children going through all the effort to please me and having fun with it. I think it's a nice day for us to have fun as a family.

Some tips for expectant mothers?

Lara: Be patient. Always be there for your child. Be observant and listen to everything that your child has to say. Enjoy every moment of being a mother.

Helga: Remain calm. It is a bit of a surprise at the beginning and does take some adjusting. But soon you wonder how you lived for so long without your precious child!

Ezmina: Take one step at a time. Be involved with everything that your child is doing.



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