



THE ETERNAL MARK  
OF A  
*mom*

SHAPING THE WORLD THROUGH  
THE HEART OF YOUR CHILD

LINDA WEBER

## Praise for *The Eternal Mark of a Mom*

The following comments came from readers and everyday moms:

“I have found a lot of encouragement from your book. Many days as I embark on the ‘grind’ of daily tasks, I often ask myself two questions—*What am I doing anyway?* and *Do my efforts really matter?* Your loving, wise counsel has helped me to reestablish a purpose, God’s purpose, for raising these two precious gifts from God.”

“I have been feeling very overwhelmed lately as a full-time mother and working full-time as a registered nurse. I believe God led me to your book. I needed to hear those encouraging words.”

“Sometimes as a mother of small children I feel used, abused, and unappreciated. Your book brought back into focus the ‘big picture’ of what an important role I play as mom in my kids’ lives.”

“I especially appreciated what you said about nurturing. It is truly a high calling. My mother wasn’t there to meet my emotional needs. Your book is a mentor to me, and I will refer back to it often.”

“I must tell you how much I’m enjoying your book. I bought it after an extremely grueling day with my boys (ages two and one), and I needed your encouragement. It is so hard. I know I’ll make a big difference in their lives. It just feels extremely good to see it in print.”

“I am a physician specializing in internal medicine, formerly in active private practice. I now have five children, but I am committed to staying home while my children are small. This book provides a hearty rationale for choosing to make nurturing motherhood top priority as well as practical encouragement for mothers in a variety of situations. Childhood is fleeting. Linda Weber’s book can help us make the most of it.”

“I will never look at the job of motherhood in the same way.”

“As a mother of three small children, it’s easy to get lost in diapers, runny noses, and dirty dishes, but your book helped me to refocus. Thank you!”

“What an inspiration you were to me and my decision to stay home with our child and delay returning to our veterinary practice.”

“Your book came to me just at a time when I was feeling overwhelmed, run-down, and stuck in a *why do I even bother, because nothing I do makes a difference anyway and*

*I don't do any one thing really good* attitude. You put me back into focus, reminding me that my calling to be the best wife and mom I can be is important! I once again feel very fulfilled and at peace.”

“With my husband being a pastor in a small church, an extra income could come in handy, but the Lord has always provided our needs and given us the opportunity to raise our children at home. I thank you for providing a book to give moms an encouraging word!”

Being a mom of “littles” can be very challenging, but Linda shows us how important this time is. *The Eternal Mark of a Mom* helps guide us through this process of raising confident and strong children in a world of chaos and evil.

LISA ROBERTSON

Coauthor of *A New Season* and *The Women of Duck Commander*

From the day I met Linda Weber over 45 years ago, I witnessed her focus and intentionality as a mother. I know few people who have given more thought to motherhood than Linda has. *The Eternal Mark of a Mom* overflows with insights and wise advice. It offers truths and tools, principles and practices that will bring much-needed hope and help to moms.

RANDY ALCORN

Author of *Heaven*, *The Treasure Principle*, and *If God Is Good*

Being a mom of four strong-willed boys, I would have loved having Linda's book to help guide me. If you watched *Duck Dynasty*, you know I had my work cut out for me!

KAY ROBERTSON

Matriarch of the Robertson family from the hit show *Duck Dynasty*

It's said that women are uniquely built for nurturing children. Some do this in other ways besides mothering, but more than ever before mothers need to see that their contribution of raising up the next generation is invaluable. Linda Weber's words are worthy of attention and adherence.

JUDY TAYLOR

Mother of four, pastor's wife for 46 years, speaker for FamilyLife Weekend to Remember for 23 years

Having been a pediatrician for over 30 years, I see the need every day for moms to get guidance in parenting. This book will inspire married and single moms of all stages to do their best for their children. Our whole society could benefit from the words of wisdom and experience that Linda Weber has to offer us.

JO ANNE NIELSON, MD

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LINDA WEBER



TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC.  
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# Introduction

MOM, YOU HAVE A LIFE-CHANGING MISSION. On some days, when you're deep in diapers or driving kids around and barely have a minute to text someone, you might wonder about that mission.

What was it again? And how do you accomplish it? Is there a motherhood GPS that can keep you moving in the right direction?

Yes, there is! This book is your GPS. It will remind you that the special role you play in your child's life is powerful, influential, important, and irreplaceable. The value of a conscientious, nurturing mother cannot be overstated.

She crafts the psyches of her little children in so many ways: She helps them develop a sense of security that will give them lifelong strength; she directs a child who tends to have a negative view of life to see instead through eyes of gratefulness and optimism; she protects her children's hearts and spirits.

With intelligence, she notices what's missing in her

children's worlds and steers them away from life's minefields and harmful pursuits. She skillfully guides her children so they can develop their individual talents and capitalize on the strengths of their natures. She prepares them to be launched into the world, ready to tackle any life assignment.

If you want influence, Mom, you've got it!

During your kids' vulnerable and moldable childhood years, you possess the power to prepare them for a complex world. With determination and skill, you run a business plan, if you will, with a goal of countering undesirable influences that have crept into our society and could lead your children in the wrong direction.

The work of a nurturing mother is essential and noble. Mom, I esteem you for the perseverance you display as you complete thousands of tasks each day to ensure the positive development of your children.

It is critical that you learn to feel good about who you are and what you do. You are not expendable. Your influence marks the world forever and leaves an important legacy. You should feel terrific about that. As you read the following pages, may you catch your value in a new and powerful way.

My purpose here is for you to come to believe anew that you're invaluable, and to raise your effectiveness to an all-time high. Mom, you leave an eternal mark on your children. As you shape their hearts, you shape the world.

CHAPTER I

DO WELL-ADJUSTED KIDS  
JUST HAPPEN?

AS A MOM, you've probably given deeply of yourself to your children—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. On hard days, you may sometimes wonder if it's all worth it, whether what you do day in and day out really matters in your child's life.

I'm here to tell you that everything you do as a mom is definitely worth it. And your role as a mother *does* matter—immensely!

Consider this Facebook post I came upon that took my breath away. I hope this post will motivate you to never give up and to realize that your behind-the-scenes work as a mother changes many lives for the good.

There once was a young boy who had potential, but he did not know it. However . . . the boy had a mother, who was always active and on alert. Her work would soon help him see the potential he possessed. It seemed as though she never slept. She was always awake when he awoke and worked hard far after he fell asleep.

Every time the boy's heart hurt, his mother was there to fill him with comfort and confidence. Every time there was danger, she scared off his aggressors. Every time the boy was sick, she cared for him. Every time he had the flu and vomited, she was right there rubbing his back, telling him it would soon pass.

Every night, and through the day, she would sing with him and taught him to be joyful despite life's circumstances. She constantly made him food, washed his clothes, cleaned up his messes, and navigated his dangerous and adventurous world to keep him safe. She not only tolerated his constant noise and activity that annoyed everyone else, but she also loved it.

He could tell she loved him. She put her life and desires on hold for his. With each act of love, even those the boy didn't understand at his young age, it strengthened his young heart and gave him courage and peace that would last a lifetime. When the boy became a man, he realized that his mother's tireless, selfless acts were responsible for everything he had,



and all that he knew, every outlook he had, and the fun he always encountered.

When life became difficult for the young man as he grew, he knew he could not only make it through it but he could also come out on top, with joy and having learned something, because he remembered his mom's commitment as she tackled countless unknown obstacles for him. When the boy's obstacles came, he could hear a voice whispering encouragement, and he could feel his mom's hands on his back. He knew the difficult times would pass, and he would sing songs of God's providence that his mom taught him, as he rolled up his sleeves to be like her.

Mom, thank you. Linda Weber, there is no one like you. I do not deserve your love. But I am so grateful for it. Thank you for never giving up on me. Thank you for giving up your life to make mine. I love you, Mom!

That Facebook post was written by my son Ryan, and it blew me away! What he wrote so graciously shows the difference we moms make in our children's lives. I hope this post will help you feel the power of your hard work, moms. You do make an impact.

I know that a lot is expected of moms today. I want to say things were better for my mother. I suppose they were in a way. Being a mom was considered a full-time effort back then. No one chided, "Lean in to your career. Get out in

the world and make a difference.” She was never challenged to opt for a different focus. In her generation, if you were a mom, that’s just who you were, first and foremost. Anything else was extra and secondary, even though she did have to work to keep us alive.

On the other hand, things were a lot harder for Mom. She had three children to raise and an angry, abusive husband to contend with. Eventually, my father abandoned us, which tells that story very mildly. He should have been in jail. This type of home situation could have caused many children to have major life problems. Instead, my siblings and I are a redemption story, praise God! (And you can be a redemption story too, if your circumstances weren’t good.)

The responsibility of providing for the family always fell on Mom’s shoulders. If we were going to eat, she had to work. And back in the 1960s, the job market for women was limited, both in choices and in pay. As I recall, she never made more than 200 dollars a month.

We lived in an apple orchard in a small structure built to house migrant workers. A couch sat against one wall of our tiny living room, and an old family upright piano covered the opposite wall. If I stood in the center of the room, I could reach out and touch both pieces at the same time.

Cold floors. No carpet. An oil stove for heat. The rent was 25 dollars a month. We used spare apple boxes for cupboards and dressers and covered them with old tea towels. We were allowed to collect the fallen apples and add to them the wild asparagus that grew here and there among the trees.

When the school year began, if we kids were lucky, we'd get to choose one pair of shoes to last us the year. Most of our clothes were hand-me-downs from other families, and they were limited. Occasionally, our grandmother would buy Easter dresses for my sister and me. When I got to high school, a friend's mother made clothes for me so I could look like everyone else.

What Mom lacked in wealth, however, she made up for in character. She was a devout Christian woman with a steady, thankful heart. She loved her God and read the Bible morning and night. She never did anything she feared was wrong, not even reusing a postage stamp that had been missed by the cancellation stamp. She trusted that God could handle anything we had to face, and she told us time and again, "God knows our need. He loves us. He'll provide."

The list of God's character traits, which she kept telling us about, was long. And those facts stay in our minds today: God will never leave us (He is always with us). God never makes mistakes. God is good because His way is perfect. God has the power to do all things. God never changes. God always keeps His promises. God is fair and will judge the wrong. He dispels confusion.

We knew we had this *big enough* God, so we could trust and follow Him with everything. We could do anything, and we didn't have to fear. As a result of Mom's strong faith in God, and since her God was our God, we were not reduced to becoming insecure people. What a gift. Because of this,

my favorite Scripture verse is Matthew 19:26: “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

For all her sacrifices, for all she did without, Mom never made us feel it was our fault or that she was missing out on something. She never gave the impression she was “stuck” raising the three of us. She never gave those impressions because she never felt that way.

Mom was doing all she knew how to do in being a good mom. Working at a job outside the home was a necessary part of that, but we knew that she loved us. She didn’t see any way to remove us from the traumas in the home—where do you take a family of four when you have no money? She was proud to be Mom to us. She invested her life in her children; she taught us about the hope we have in a strong God, and she did that with passion.

Was she perfect? No. Would it have been better if she had moved us to a women’s shelter, away from the dad we had at home? Yes. Without shelters available in those years, she instead confided in her pastor about the abuse, but nothing ever transpired to move us all out of there.

We got by, but it wasn’t easy. Even so, Mom kept a positive attitude while she focused on the *heart* and *spirit*. That’s what she developed in us, and that need is still important for today—inner strength to face all the battles around.

Because she had a focus, because she knew one thing was more important than anything else, she has three successful, well-adjusted children who adore her. Her son, Bruce, is a pastor. Her two daughters, Judy and myself, married pastors.

And all of us raised our children with the same passion and focus Mom showed when we were young.

Well-adjusted children are shaped through hard work, incredible insights, and a large portion of unselfish giving of ourselves. (Glory in any field comes with sacrifice.) As with anything in life, however, there are no guarantees. Children become adults, and God made them with a will of their own. But this is your chance to do all you can to shape your child.

Despite any overwhelming circumstances you find yourself in, Mom, your chosen optimism and unwavering positive outlook will make huge differences in the life of your child.

Let's consider how a mother of six, while leading an overwhelmed life, would teach her children that being happy wasn't dependent on their circumstances.<sup>1</sup> And years later, her sons reflected on this principle and said, "She showed us that optimism is a courageous choice you can make every day, especially in the face of adversity."<sup>2</sup>

You see, this mom and dad were in a near-death car accident when the kids were little. Mom survived with only a few broken bones, but the father lost the use of his right hand. Through the stress and frustration that the father felt, he developed a harsh temper. Life was not perfect, but Mom still believed that "life was *good*."<sup>3</sup> Because of this, the kids did not develop a victim mentality.

Each night at the dinner table, this mom said to her children, "Tell me something good that happened today." Her sons Bert and John Jacobs were so influenced by their mom's emphasis on being a master of attitude and gratitude

that they started making and selling “Life Is Good” T-shirts, which has developed into a \$100 million clothing empire. It was their mother who planted that seed.<sup>4</sup> Now you and I may not inspire huge business ventures, but our influence is powerful and substantial.

Moms, we need to see mothering—developing a child’s heart and spirit—as the main thing, the central focus of our efforts. And as the German proverb says, “The main thing is that the main thing always remains the main thing.”

Well-adjusted kids come from families in which mothering is seen as a complex, beautiful challenge worthy of everything a mom can give to it. Mothering shapes lives and attitudes, one way or the other.

That’s not to say you have to stay home all the time to be a decent mother. My mom worked at outside jobs. She had to. Today, more moms than ever have to fit work into their schedules. In fact, in 2017, the labor force participation rate of mothers with children under six years old was 65.1 percent.<sup>5</sup>

My mom understood the importance of giving her best efforts to what was most important—her children. Despite all the demands on a working mom in the 1960s, she understood the need to be there during the rehearsals of life—the learning stages of our youth—so that when the curtain went up for each of us, we could perform well. That meant setting the stage by developing our character and confidence. Though Mom didn’t give us a high standard of living, she gave us a high standard of life. It didn’t

matter how many rooms our little migrant worker's house had. What mattered was how our hearts and spirits were developed in those rooms.

These days, moms need to be increasingly astute. Raising children in a rapidly changing culture presents new challenges, of which you are undoubtedly well aware: rampant teen suicide, sex trafficking, sexting, an increasingly genderless society, transgender/transition living, social media bullying, same-sex marriage, legalized marijuana, the easy availability of drugs, school shootings by troubled kids, pornography—this tragic list could go on and on.

One nice girl I knew from a diligent, caring home actually crawled into her parents' bedroom while they were asleep to retrieve her phone—her parents kept it under their bed in an effort to keep her safe. This girl wanted to interact with a guy she had met online, but the parents woke up and stopped that advance. The mom messaged the guy and later called him, telling him to never contact her daughter again or there would be serious consequences for him.

Yes, a lot *is* expected of moms today. The truth is, motherhood can't be discounted. It can't be devalued. And it can't be approached casually. If we want to do well at mothering, we're going to have to study, which you are seeking to do here.

Conscientious mothers nurture a healthy self-esteem and emotional security in their kids; their children enjoy self-confidence and a sense of direction for their lives.

Doesn't it just make sense to give mothering your best

efforts? Trying to raise well-adjusted kids requires an investment of your life in theirs—the *best* of your life, not the leftovers. It takes lots of time, lots of energy, lots of commitment, lots of wisdom.

Mom, if you don't do it, who will? If this isn't all-important, next to the nurturing of your marriage, what is? The challenge is yours. Will your family enjoy the positive results of your efforts?

"I need my shortsighted vision of motherhood corrected with an eternal perspective," writes Gloria Furman, mama of four and author of *Missional Motherhood: The Everyday Ministry of Motherhood in the Grand Plan of God*. "Otherwise I will not keep my gaze fixed on the horizon of eternity."<sup>6</sup>

If you haven't done it before, won't you commit yourself right now to making the main thing the main thing? What better legacy could you leave to your children than your full investment in their growing-up years?

If you've already made that nurturing commitment, take pride in your decision. Affirm it. Motherhood is the greatest cause you could follow, and you've given yourself to it. Now do all you can to live out that decision with excellence!