

# Cherish every moment of parenthood

**Dear Ann Landers:** I clipped the enclosed article from the Los Angeles Times many years ago when my twin daughters were babies. I have had it taped to a kitchen cabinet in every place that we have lived. It has become part of my life.

To my knowledge, this essay has never appeared anywhere else. I feel strongly that every mother, young or old, should reflect on the wisdom of this message. I have applied it to my own life since I first read it.

Now that my children are grown and busy with their own lives, I am glad I cherished every day I spent with them. It was this essay that opened my eyes. Please share it with your readers. Sign me — **A Faithful Fan**

**Dear Faithful:** Thank you for sending this sensitive and heart-warming essay. I am sure it will move millions of mothers as it moved me. Did I see myself? Of course I did — and they will, too. Here it is:

**Dear Daughter:** Although you are only 4 years old and will not understand what I am saying, I feel the need to write this letter and put it away for you to read many years from now.

When you were an infant and the

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newness of being a mother wore off, I couldn't wait until you grew up. At first I found myself wishing, "If only she would start walking!" And then, "If only she would start talking!" One day I suddenly realized that you were out of diapers. You were indeed walking and talking, and pretty soon you would be going off to school.

I remember the morning your father and I brought your baby sister home from the hospital. You and I had been apart six days. When the door opened I saw you standing there with your angel smile. You seemed so big compared to the baby I was holding in my arms. It was hard to imagine you were once that small.

I suddenly realized how much of your babyhood I had wished away. Being a mother is demanding. It robs you of so many freedoms, and I resented the fact that I had so many added responsibilities. And then I looked down at your soft curls and your trusting eyes. Suddenly I felt so ashamed. My heart almost broke.

I cannot relive those first four

years, but I have been trying to make them up to you — and to myself. I hope and pray that when your first child is born you will be wiser and more mature than I was. I hope you will enjoy every phase of your child's growing up and not wish they would hurry and pass so you could be free of the "burdens" of motherhood.

You and I will have our share of heated words and angry battles in the years to come. There will be days when we will find it impossible to please each other. I will secretly wish that you would hurry and graduate from high school so I could send you off to college and be rid of you.

Life rushes by all too rapidly, my darling daughter, especially the lovely days and the beautiful times. Be smarter than your mother was. Don't let a single moment slip away unsavored or unappreciated. These days are priceless and afford you the greatest opportunities for fulfillment. Never again will your heart be so full.

**All my love,**

**Mother**

Ann Landers writes a syndicated advice column that appears daily in the Times-Union.