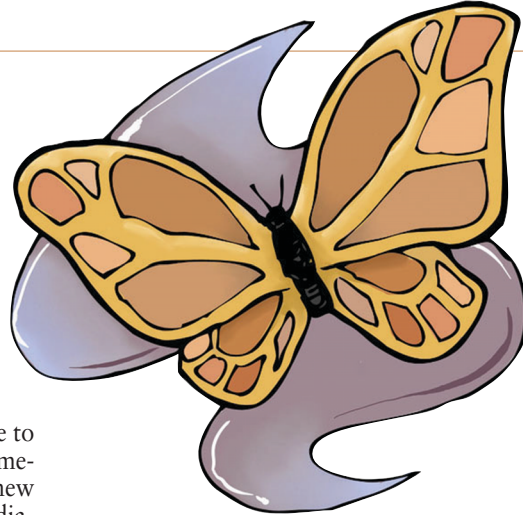


Laura on Life



Mothers of Invention

Necessity is the mother of invention, isn't that so? I could say that mothers are the mothers of invention. Just because it's a little redundant does not make it less true.

I am reminded of a certain woman who whipped up the first pot of liquid white-out on her kitchen stove. I can almost imagine a New England Clam Chowder that went horribly wrong, but from all accounts, making a concoction that would hide typos, was actually her plan.

I understand that pioneering spirit because, after all, being a parent is the "final frontier." Although many people have raised kids, they have never raised yours kids. Living with them is new to you. So now, you have to make up the "rules" as you go and invent things to fit your particular circumstances.

For example, for my kids, a good report card deserves a trip to Dairy Queen. Another family may have a kid who is particularly resistant to good grades, and so a trip to Disney World may be the only thing that motivates him to get above a "C." Thank goodness we have ice cream kids.

Many motivational methods have been invented, but my talents run more toward inventing techniques for improving my family's health and well-being. For example, one child's well-being may have been in jeopardy if not for my technique of using duct tape to keep his diaper on his body. He couldn't man-

age to get a spoonful of food from his plate to his mouth without having a spasm somewhere in between, but somehow he knew how to remove the Velcro tapes from his diaper.

I don't know why, but that's not something that one is ever prepared to deal with. But no matter the challenge, most parents are up to it with their own brand of engineering.

Imagine the frustration of the parent whose child wet the bed. He invented electric pads to place in a child's underwear that sound an alarm when "moisture" is detected while he's sleeping. I like that: moisture. Who are they kidding? Imagine the satisfaction of the parent who finally invented those binky clips which prevent the binky from falling on the floor for the hundredth time.

I wonder how many times a child tried to stick his fingers in an electrical outlet before his parent invented those plastic inserts?

Who was the first person who decided to try vaginal cream to heal cold sores or hemorrhoid cream to diminish under-eye bags? I've heard those remedies work, but I've never had the courage to try them, because, well, I don't know where those creams have been... or maybe it's because I do.

Who invented the stuff that gets burnt chicken noodle soup off your burner pans? Who invented conditioner so that when your daughter puts on a sweater her hair doesn't cling to her face? Who invented garbage dis-

posals, gummy bears, night lights, waterproof mattress pads, and fat crayons? Parents, of course.

Tell me, where would we be without a nasal aspirator to get the snot out of a baby's nose? I shudder to think how it was done before a nasal aspirator was invented.

I have, for the last twenty-five years, had three or four males living in our house at the same time. Little boys think the inside of the toilet, as a target, is simply a lofty goal. As a result, there is no remorse when they let loose a wild stream of urine in the general direction of the toilet, only hitting the "target" by accident.

For the last twenty-five years I have been wondering, "What can I invent that would motivate them to get hold of that thing and aim with a little more precision?" If I could just figure that out, I would be a very rich woman.



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www.lauraonlife.com for more columns and info about her new book.



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