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## NEVER BUY MOMMA A LAWN MOWER FOR HER BIRTHDAY

**T**he goal of HAPPY HEALTHY is to encourage us as we grow our families. The happy healthy family is a good start for everybody and a prescription for most social woes. With this spirit of encouragement I share the following:

During my sweetheart's birthday (my one and only) I heard the echo of an old-time parable — *"if momma isn't happy then nobody is happy."* How one honors the love-of-his-life on their wedding anniversary, on Mother's Day, or on her birthday are all highly predictive of how he will live the other 363 days of the year.

Who does not wish to help out his fellow man? So I share my story for whatever it is worth. Before I married, an old-timer advised me to never give your wife anything for the kitchen on her birthday. I believed. Another well-meaning man gave his wife a new lawn mower for her birthday. He was surprised she returned it attached to divorce papers.



This 411 may eliminate some of our unnecessary angst for birthday gifting.

At this time in our marriage my sweetheart has been gifted every *"thing"* that I can reasonably afford. Now what? By grace, the following revelation came to me: my sweetheart does not want any *"thing."* What then? The answer, fortunately, was that she *"wants more of me."* The pace of life steals what matters most — our time.

This revelation led me to make her a romantic birthday dinner, and serve her by candle-light. Chinese takeout, pizza delivery, or a hot rotisserie chicken from Publix best fit my skill-set (and my wallet). However, none of these seemed right. Calling a caterer also seemed inappropriate. My own service, from preparation all the way through to the washing of the dishes, would show honor to the woman of my life.

No one can become a chef over the weekend. What is a guy to do? Fortunately I know Larry at *The Corner Butcher Shop* in Canton. I drove to see Larry, confessed my problem, and received the solution. He prescribed a custom menu that fit both my skill-set and budget. With Larry's hand-written, fool-proof instructions, I left with 1 lb. of fresh lamb chops, a side of red potatoes, fresh braised asparagus, an anti-pasta tray, and a brownie dessert. All I needed to add was my love, cook according to Larry's directions, set the family's silver and china on a white tablecloth, find the kids a place for the evening, and light the candles.

The birthday celebration was a success. A five-star establishment, or the champion of Top Chef, would have not done better. Stephanie's smile and tear-filled eyes (tears before and not after dinner) showed that she understood what I tried, in my awkward way, to show her ... *"I love you."* And now the rest of the story ... that they live happily (and healthily) ever after ... and that is not THE END.

**By Michael G Anderson MD FAAP**

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