

Aprons and Glamour

August 26, 2008

At our son's rehearsal dinner, we invited our guests to come up to a podium for a time of addressing the happy couple. Kevin had asked for this since his now-wife's love language is words of affirmation. (But even if he hadn't, we would have planned that anyway. I'm a huge believer in helping people love and encourage each other publicly.) My husband, as the host, first welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming, then it was my turn.

I had donned a bright red, brand new apron for the occasion and spoke to my precious new daughter-in-law. "For 24 years I have been the number one woman in Kevin's life, but that ends now. Lauren, I have a gift for you. . ." I untied the apron and gathered the strings in my left hand, and from a pocket on the apron I pulled out a pair of scissors with the other. I snipped off the strings and handed them to Lauren.

Her mother exclaimed out loud, "She's cutting off the apron strings!" But Lauren's face was a mixture of bewilderment and confusion. She was clearly thinking, "What's going on?!??"

All the people in the room over 40 knew what I was doing: making a symbolic statement that I was no longer Mommy, and I would not be mothering my son the way I did up to that point in his life. But the under-40 crowd didn't have a clue. Many of them hadn't seen their mothers in an apron, and the expression "cutting off the apron strings" as a metaphor for letting a child go free into adulthood was foreign to them.

In my fantasy, it was going to be a sweet, tender and powerful moment. I was going to make an eloquent statement that would communicate to everyone there my faith in Kevin to be a full adult man and my promise to his bride that I would not interfere with the priorities of his affections.

It sure didn't turn out that way!

It was more like lamely having to explain the punch line of a joke.

Which is why we need to be aware of how culture shifts and changes, and that what is relevant to one generation may well be lost to the next. If we want to minister to women across all age ranges, we need to keep our eyes and ears open to what it's like to be 20, or 30, or 40, or beyond. My son and his wife live on a college campus where they are surrounded by youth culture, and they have already blessed me with perspective on songs I need to be aware of, and the ways college students are thinking and processing life.

Which is why, when *Glamour* magazine started arriving unordered at my house, I didn't toss it. I read it. Yikes!

And Lord have mercy.

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/aprons_and_glamour