

## **Aphrodite treats herself to a bit of goddess worship**

**By Ruth Ostrow**

I decided to not spend the day upset as I have in years past, rather to be proactive and self-nurturing

A FRIEND of mine rang last week with an amusing Mother's Day tale of woe. The story had such bitter-sweet familiarity to it, I felt it had to be retold.

My girlfriend, having spent a decade with a man who is generous and reliable but not particularly romantic, decided a few days before Mother's Day to take matters into her own hands to ensure a happy outcome.

She cut out an advertisement for a special Mother's Day spa package that catered to families, and included sensual massage, facials, sauna, and other delights.

She let her eldest daughter know of a lovely restaurant as an alternative in case the spa didn't work out. Plus she circled an ad for childcare so that her partner would get the message that perhaps after a family day together, they could do some "grown-up" things.

Then she left the papers on her husband's desk as a hint.

"Mother's Day isn't just about celebrating being a mother," she told me.

"For me it is also about celebrating the feminine, the grand Mother, the goddess, Shakti, fertility, sensuality, womb.

"It's a ritual not only for children to say thank you, but for partners to honour female energy."

I absolutely agreed. I loved her spin on a day that has come to symbolise rampant consumerism and a cynical opportunity for shops to sell appliances and schlocky cards. I loved the deeper ceremonial and sacred way she approached it.

But I also loved the fact that she didn't want to leave her needs to chance.

Knowing her husband was not of the goddess-worshipping variety, and was more likely to buy her a potato peeler than celebrate the sexy diva within, she went out of her way to give him a crash course in *How To Manage The Modern Urban Goddess*.

That morning she woke up, and awaited breakfast in bed. No breakfast came, so she went downstairs and wandered around a bit, finally making her way to the toaster. "Let me do that," said her husband taking the toast out of her hand.

"It is Mother's Day after all," he said with a twinkle in his eye. He then proceeded to spread Vegemite on the toast, and put it in front of her with a huge grin on his face.

"Okay," thought the goddess. "It's a start." As children began waking and gifts were given, she felt better -- a cookery book from dad, several objets d'art made at school from bric-a-brac.

It was all Earth Mother stuff, honouring the Demeter inside her.

But what of her Aphrodite?

"So what are we doing today,?" asked the Goddess of Love. "Well first I have to ring my own mum," he said. "And you have to ring yours." Thereafter there were lots of calls to mums and grandmas, followed by lots of showers.

And then someone put on a bad video and the kids plonked in front of it. And dad took the papers and sat reading.

"Are we going out for Mother's Day?" asked the goddess.

"Yeah sure ... if you really want to," said dad, and they drove around in circles for over an hour looking for a restaurant that wasn't full.

And -- of course -- the inevitable argument erupted.

"Why couldn't you have taken the time to think about this, and reserve a table?," my friend beseeched.

"But I bought you a cookbook," her husband replied, becoming sullen and withdrawn. As I am writing this, I know that many women are nodding. "For Valentine's Day I got a steak knife," one will be protesting. "He forgot my birthday again," another will be saying. "All I want is a bit of romance," will be the lament of yet another.

Comedian Mandy Nolan jokes that most men only have one massage in them. And you get it at the beginning of the relationship -- that fantastic night where the body is appreciated, honoured, smothered in tantalising chocolate and orange blossom oil, garnished with rose-petals. Thereafter its all domestic appliances.

But it isn't the men's fault. Far removed from primitive fertility-rites and sacred moon ceremonies of old, modern males are not trained to honour and worship the goddess in their females, just as we are similarly remiss in acknowledging their inner god.

This story has a happy ending. The mother in question left her kids with her god, drove to her favourite chocolate shop and indulged her every whim, then took herself and a favourite girlfriend out to a sumptuous dinner, and movie, and had a gorgeous time.

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In short: Aphrodite had grown tired of banging her head against a brick wall.

Whenever there are festivals of romantic import, the message is simple -- go back to the tribe, the clan, and celebrate the fire, the passion, and the beauty of being a woman, with the sisterhood. It's a whole lot healthier than being angry at god.

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