

Why I'm Not Giving Flowers for Mother's Day, or Ever

Description

In all honesty, I have been against giving flowers for years now. Going Mom and my mom both know this and therefore never expect to receive the colorful bee food from me.

Plus, I enjoy trying to be creative and making something personal/sentimental to give. Sometimes it's just a note with my crappy handwriting (okay, a lot of times) and nothing more, or I'll have a small gift I made or purchased to go along.

My reasoning was simple; they just die. Why pay for something that was living and then cut and put in a vase to look pretty for a few days before it dies? Don't say the thought that counts or for symbolism, there are better thoughts and symbols out there!

Now, I have given flowers in the past, but they are ones that I picked and put together myself. Did they look good? Not really, but it was the thought that mattered. See what I did there?

Anyway, now I have a bigger and better reason not to give flowers for any occasion; most come to us from Columbia under harsh labor conditions.

Yeah, most flower bouquets are put together by workers being treated poorly in Columbia just so some guy in desperate need of a gift for his demanding wife/mom/grandma/male lover? can quickly pick one up and avoid confrontation! That's just an example, I know some people actually enjoy getting and giving flowers, but I was going for dramatic effect here.

I just read [this article](#) depicting a Colombian woman's struggle to provide for her family by working under harsh conditions in the cut-flower industry. I never would've put the words "harsh" and "flower industry" together unless talking about those darn thorny roses, but sure enough, it's a serious and sad story.

Here are a few parts of the article that stood out to me:

"...pulling a minimum-wage salary of \$333 per month. Years of difficult and dangerous work have wracked Lorena's body, leaving debilitating injuries in their wake.

The National Retail Federation estimates that [this Mother's Day weekend, Americans will purchase more than \\$2 billion worth of flowers. Almost 80 percent of those flowers come from Colombia](#)...

Work in the cut-flower industry is notoriously dangerous. "To protect their investments, companies pump highly toxic pesticides and fungicides into the greenhouses where flowers are grown. Twenty percent of these chemicals are so toxic and carcinogenic that they're prohibited in North America and Europe. "workers often suffer from rashes, headaches,

impaired vision, and skin discoloration. Women, who make up 70 percent of the cut flower workforce in Colombia, report substantially higher instances of birth defects and miscarriages.

“Women are chosen to work in the flower industry because they have agile hands—they can go through the motions smoother and more efficiently,” Fuentes explained. “Their hands aren’t as heavy, and so they can manage the flowers and arrange the bouquets faster.”

But in exchange, they’re often taken advantage of. “Women are regularly paid less than men for the same jobs,” Fuentes said. “Companies commonly require female employees to take pregnancy tests in order to weed out workers who might be eligible for maternity leave. A 2008 International Labor Rights Forum report suggested that more than half of all women in the industry have suffered from sexual harassment.

“There are so many mothers in this industry who have to work all day and can’t take care of their children,” Alejandra told me, her young daughter cradled on her lap. “Kids go to school and get out at 1 or 2 in the afternoon, and their parents don’t come home until 1 in the morning.

I could keep going, but at this point, it’s best to just read the article.

I understand not every bouquet of flowers in America comes from these poor conditions, but then I go back to my original reason; they just die.

Really, unless you absolutely just love flowers sitting in a vase for a few days before they turn their bright heads down and wilt, I’d be mad someone didn’t put more thought into a gift. It doesn’t take much, just a simple handmade token to show you care will mean more than flowers to most of us.

I’m a sentimental guy, Going Mom knows since I can never let go of anything, and I love even the tiniest of notes she leaves for me. The point being, it’s more personal.

So, for your loved ones, you should know what they really like and work off that. Write a poem about something they like or how much you love them. Use Pinterest as a guide for handmade, inexpensive gift to give.

If you’re a parent, your kid can be the one giving the gift and you get off without guilt! Even a picture and a card should mean more to your loved ones than flowers.

Am I getting my point across? What, you got it a few paragraphs ago? Sorry, I just want to really hammer it in. I’m not saying anyone should feel guilty for getting flowers because of how most of them get here, but maybe try something different and see how the mothers in your life like it.

It would be weird if I didn’t post a picture of the love of my life, so I’ll leave you with this to enjoy; both loves of my life!



Do you avoid giving flowers as gifts?

What do you prefer to give/get?

What are your thoughts on the harsh working conditions in the cut-flower industry? *Sounds like an oxymoron, huh?*

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