

A Labor of Love

Introduction

- Think about a person you love – a relative, a friend, a hero.
- Think about an activity you love – a hobby, a skill, a talent.
- Now think about a labor of love. That is an act of kindness you do for a person you love, an activity you do without thought of recompense, or a combination of both.
- When you leave here today, I want you to be prepared to start your labor of love! To get you thinking and motivated, let me tell you about my current labor of love!

My Current Labor of Love



Here's a magnet that our family distributed to guests at Mom's 90th birthday celebration. It shows Ma at her piano and says, "Our Ma makes music and does a world of good." As we visit here today, Ma is likely at her piano, for she practices religiously about three hours every day. Ma studied classical music as a child and teenager. Fortunately, Professor Shuman's gentle taps on her fingers did not tarnish her love of music and her talent. Today, she plays totally by ear. I can still hear my Uncle Harry say, "You make that piano talk."

- My Ma is a person I admire and love. Whatever I do for her is a labor of love – most of the time.
- My current labor of love involves recording Ma at her piano, playing just a few of her favorite tunes. Cousin Syd with a beautiful voice will sing and I, too, will sing (backup!). I can carry a tune, but my real role is providing the words.

Process

1. Ma and I came up with a theme, Songs from Around the World. “South of the border, down Mexico way.” “I love Paris in the springtime.” We started our song list.
2. Next time we visited, I started to review the list we created. “Oh, Judy, bring me the fat book.” (Almost 700 pages with “More than 1,000 of the finest lyrics from 1900 to 1975”) “Look at the loose papers in there.” Yes, there were papers with lists of many more songs that were not included in our Songs from Around the World theme. And so our theme and our list evolved ... and evolved!
3. Wanting to keep other family members involved, I sent out a progress report and requests trickled in. Cousin Suzi insisted we add her favorite, Perfidia (“To you, my heart cries out perfidia”), which means treacherous. That should spice up our repertoire.
4. Over time, we organized many favorites into groupings for 3 CDs. We found a family friend, Zach, who happily agreed to do the recording.
5. When scheduling the recording session, Ma admonished, “Not so fast with the recording. Not without a rehearsal.” And not without having all the words printed out. When I told Ma I would have the words printed for CD1, her retort, “Have them ready for CD1 and 2.”
6. Just yesterday, I had to give up my day job to download the words to just about every song on our list for CD1. (“When marimba rhythms start to play, dance with me, make me sway.”)

You know what? I had the best day! All by myself, at my computer, I sang! And the musical tidbits I gleaned.

Did you know... Blue Skies is one of the few happy songs written in a minor key?

My labor of love – an act of kindness for a person I love – has become an activity that I love! I can hardly wait to download the lyrics this week to CD 2. (Who knows what I will learn about “Grenada, I’m falling under your spell.”)

Conclusion

Now, “Grab your coat, and get your hat. Leave your worries on the doorstep. Life can be so sweet on the sunny side of the street.” And while the sun is shining, plan your labor of love “and the world will smile with you.”