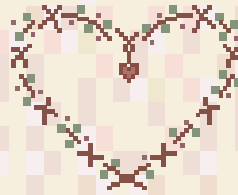


# Some things you keep



Like good teeth. Warm coats. Bald husbands. They're good for you, reliable and practical and so sublime that to throw them away would make the garbage man a thief.

So you hang on, because something old is sometimes better than something new, and what you know is often better than a stranger.

These are my thoughts; they make me sound old, old and tame, and dull at a time when everybody else is risky and racy and flashing all that's new and improved in their lives.

New careers, new thighs, new lips, new cars. The world is dizzy with trade-ins. I could keep track, but I don't think I want to.

I grew up in the '50s with practical parents -- a mother, God bless her, who washed aluminum foil after she cooked in it, then reused it -- and still does. A father who was happier getting old shoes fixed than buying new ones.

They weren't poor, my parents, they were just satisfied. Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away.

I can see them now, Dad in trousers and t-shirt and Mom in a housedress; lawnmower in Dad's hand, dishtowel in Mom's. It was a time for fixing things - a curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress.



It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, reheating, renewing, I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant there'd always be more.

But then my father died. And on that clear autumn night, in the chill of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't any "more." Sometimes what you care about most gets all used up and goes away, never to return.

So, while you have it, it's best to love it and care for it and fix it when it's broken and heal it when it's sick.

That's true for marriage and old cars and children with bad report cards and dogs with bad hips and aging parents.

You keep them because they're worth it, because you're worth it. Some things you keep. Like a best friend that moved away or a classmate you grew up with. There's just some things that make life important.... people you know are special.... and you KEEP them close!



Author Unknown

