

Essay #2:
Mama Bear

How many movies have you seen where a wild, raging, lunatic, grizzly bear comes ferociously running out of the forest chasing some human and looking to annihilate him? She is trampling anything in her path, roaring and snarling every step of the way. This savage animal terrifies everybody – including the audience. The human, in self-defense, shoots the bear. Later, he discovers her cubs; she was protecting her young. Well, that female bear reminds me of a human mother. I believe that it is instinctive for females of many species to be very protective of their offspring; and humans are no different. A human mother is protective of her babies despite her child's age, regardless of how tolerant, proper, or quiet a woman may be; the very thought of her child being in danger will cause her to become livid!

Even the most passive mother can turn into a savage animal. For example, Laura, my neighbor, is a single parent who tolerates just about anything, and finds it difficult to be the authority in her family. Because of that, her two teen-age children take advantage of her: They do whatever they want; they talk back to her; they raise their voices; but she simply walks away. However, one time, I saw a different side of her. One evening she was knocking at my door frantically. Her 14-year old son, Edward, and a friend were at a movie theater about two or three miles away. They were already out and waiting for her, and she had locked her car and house keys in her house! She didn't know what to do. Edward had keys to the house, but what good would that do if he couldn't get home? With every minute passing that Edward and his friend were alone outside the movie theater, she became more hysterical.

She asked if she could borrow a hammer so she could break her front window, but I was apprehensive about giving a potentially dangerous weapon to a crazy person. I just didn't understand her hysteria. I was tempted to tell her to let them walk home. Since those boys are over

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six-foot tall, nobody would bother them. If she didn't agree, I feared reprisals for my lack of compassion, so I volunteered to take her to pick them up. I finally realized that she probably saw Edward as a helpless little baby in diapers, sucking his thumb and crying for his mama; rather than as a 6-foot-tall, teen-age boy.

If a passive mother cannot override the temptations of a “mama bear” instinct, then neither can a poised mother. Lilly is the epitome of a classy lady who can handle the most difficult situation with poise. However, even Lilly's diplomacy will give way to the "mama bear" instinct. I remember a time when she asked me to help her assemble a cart. I was using the screwdriver, and she was hammering on the end pieces. Eventually I started to notice that she looked rather angry. Every pound of the hammer became more intense. Her petite hand was gripping the hammer handle so hard; I could see her veins bulging. Her eyes started to cross and she started to frown. I figured she was annoyed because the end piece wouldn't go on. But it was already on. She was seething as she continued to pulverize the piece. In fact she was striking it so hard, I thought it was going to break off! She finally stopped. She admitted later that she was remembering a time when her father-in-law gave her three-year-old son a taste of beer. She wanted to kill the jerk! No wonder she looked so intense; she probably confused the end pieces for her father-in-law.

If poise and class can't compete with the maternal instinct, neither can intellect. Samantha, who is usually a very quiet, thinking and diplomatic person, told me about her opportunity to play "mama bear". She and her husband were walking along in the park with their two girls. John was pushing Liz in her stroller while several men were playing football nearby. As the men were trying to catch the ball, one man accidentally tripped over the stroller, knocked Liz out, and tumbled with her in his arms. Liz wasn't hurt; but that didn't matter to Samantha. She also didn't care just how many men she was facing. She immediately started to rampage. She was cursing them. She called them every four-letter word she knew – at least 100 times! Later, John told her that she was so irate that she was actually kicking the man, but since she was so angry; to this day, she doesn't remember

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kicking anyone. Of course, I believe John. I know how protective she is with her children. I could just imagine quiet little Samantha instantly turning into a seven-foot grizzly having the power to crush skulls with her rage alone!

Since I have no children yet, I often wonder whether or not I would become a "mama bear" under stress. Typical of my personality, I analyze everything I experience, think, feel and observe – often to the point of annoying everyone. Since I am so busy scrutinizing the world, I have little time for compassion. Knowing that I contemplate everything, I probably wouldn't react in such a way – although anything is possible.

I have four cats, whom I spoil and protect, since they are my babies. In fact, the other day, Milo sneaked out the door just before I was ready to leave. He was determined that he didn't want to come back in. So I looked at him and said, "Fine. You can suffer then. It's going to rain today, but you'll learn." During my drive to work, I kept thinking about him. When I got to work, I called my brother at the house and begged him to please bring in my poor, pathetic little baby. I just couldn't stand the thought of him being out in the rain all day, sucking him thumb and calling for his mommy!