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## Deb's Page

### *Tweety Bird and Teen Tattoos*

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#### Abstract

In this column, a childbirth educator humorously reflects on teen tattoos.

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While attending a women's music festival recently, I observed a beautiful work of art in progress. The medium was rich, rusty-hued henna and the canvas was a third-trimester abdomen. The belly in all its splendor was truly something to see.

The artist explained how the elaborate image would gradually fade. I grinned, reminded of the million times I had uttered the same reassuring words about stretch marks. Also brought to mind were some of the not-so-temporary tattoos we have all witnessed through the years, but we won't go there!

I will, however, go back to a time in the early 1990s when, after many years as a bedside nurse, I decided to enroll in several music classes at the local college. With delusions of grandeur, I arrived for the first class, fully expecting I would blend right in with the college crowd.

Twelve singers sat in two tiered rows, one arced above the other. Barely older than my own son, the men took the back row seats overlooking a giddy group of young women. I chose a seat at the far edge and discreetly kicked my purse under the seat. The handbag suddenly looked like something my own mother would carry. I shuddered as I thought, "My

gosh, one would expect to find a rain bonnet and some antacids in a purse like mine!”

The professor asked the students to state their name and something about themselves. “Easy enough,” I thought as, one by one, the students began their introductions.

“Hi, I’m Tiffany. I’ve got a part-time job.”

“Hi, my name is Brandon and I’ve got a used car.”

Everyone cheered.

My heart began to race as I realized that I was “so not” relating to these kids as peers. “What in the world will I say?” I fretted. My mind filled with theatrics. “I’ve lived. I’ve suffered. I’ve lost. I’ve conquered.” The speech was cut short when Heather announced she had a tattoo.

Heather’s off-the-shoulder peasant blouse became an off-the-chest garment as she immodestly revealed a very

large rose adorning a very large bosom. The back row stood, craning for a closer look. I stifled the urge to adjust my turtleneck dickie. Next, Jen trumped the rose with a tiny Tweety Bird tattoo. Bright yellow and cheery as ever, Tweety was nested just above Jen’s pubic hair. I blushed and fought the urge to adjust my stirrup pants.

My turn arrived and, quite honestly, I don’t recall what I said. I believe it was something about a car... a carpool and stretch marks. I can say for certain that I did not reveal my stretch marks, nor would the back row have been interested.

I thoroughly enjoyed my classmates during those years and think of them often. I imagine Heather is on stage somewhere. I picture Jen with a family. What do you want to bet Tweety has become an interesting version of Big Bird?

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