

MOTHER

VOLUME 1



Interview with Mother of Six - The Evolution of Motherhood -
Five Tips for Rediscovering Your Lost Self - A Letter To My Daughter -
Mental Health in Motherhood - Who Let Me Fly this Plane?

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MOTHER

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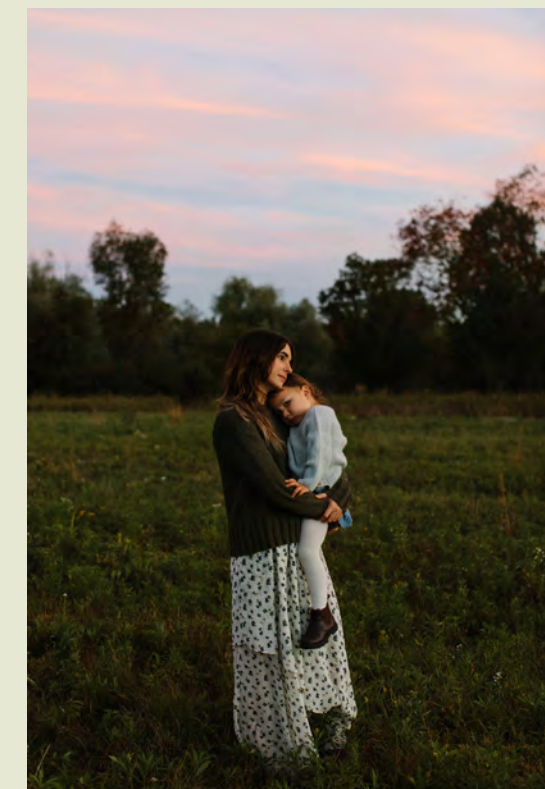
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“Who Let Me Fly
This Plane?”

A note from the editor-

Mother: it's a term we all know whether it sparks positive or negative emotions and connections in our mind. It's a word that cultivates a very distinct visual – again, one that could be positive or negative, or a complex web of emotions in-between. We all have some connection to the word, but what happens when you somehow stumble into embodying the title? What happens when, suddenly, your whole being and entire identity in this world changes? How do you wade through it? How do you embrace it without losing the self you once were? That's what I, a 27-year-old mother of a 3.5-year-old, am in the midst of figuring out. I am reasonably doubtful that I will ever have it all figured out – but I nevertheless want to keep learning, and I want my learning and growing to be an open conversation between mothers. Motherhood isn't just a season – it's the rest of your life. You will be a mother until the day you die. Each mother is intrinsically different, which is quite beautiful to me. We may differ on how we mother; we may differ on how we came into motherhood, we may differ on how naturally the title fits and fulfills – , but we have this one core similarity that links us forever:

We are mothers.

-Shauna Reiman



Motherhood exhausts me,
overwhelms me and breaks me.

And then it awakens me.



Cayla and Her Daughter Juni
Images by Shauna Reiman





Image by
Shauna Reiman

Interview with Tamra Klaty, Mother of

“My initiation into motherhood was harder than I expected. Physically, emotionally, everything. I guess I thought that something I really wanted and I considered to be “natural” wouldn’t be so difficult”

Shauna Reiman: So Tamra, you are a much more experienced mother than I am, so I really wanted to interview you and get some better perspective on what motherhood is like throughout 20 years or so. Can you tell us a bit about your kids and their ages? How old were you when you had your first child?

Tamra Klaty: I have six kids, 3 girls and 3 boys, ages 22, 20, 17, 16, 14, and 11. I turned 21 while pregnant with my first child, a boy.

SR: Is motherhood something you always dreamed about growing up? Is it something you always wanted to experience in your life?

TK: I thought about being a mother way more than most girls fantasize about their wedding day, haha. I looked forward to being a mom so much, and it was my dream to be a stay-at-home mom. I didn’t want to go to college, a fact my high school counselor did his best to change. When my husband and I were dating and talking about getting married, I let him know right away that I planned on always staying home with my kids. He was all for it, and now, 26 years later, is still all for it. We married just a few months after I graduated high school, and because my parents strongly encouraged college and offered to pay for it, I enrolled in a local business college and graduated with a certification in accounting. I worked until my first child was born, and then stayed home to raise him.

SR: Did you always desire to have a large family?

TK: Not really. I thought I would have two or three. Four seemed crazy. It’s funny, because after our first two—a boy and a girl—we thought we were done. I felt done. Our lives at the time were set up to really only accommodate two kids. We had a lot of debt, and I drove a little sporty Camaro that I wasn’t ready to give up. A second home in Florida was more appealing than more kids. I’m not sure what ultimately ended up changing our hearts. It started with deciding to home-school and then that turned into a slow move in the direction of less stuff and more.... Love? Family? Contentment? That’s how it felt, anyway. I was so scared and I didn’t know if we could afford more kids. We really pushed to get out of debt, stuck to a strict budget and started to change our spending. That was the outward stuff.

Inside, we were letting go of a lot of expectations we felt from others to prove we could be “successful” even though we married young and he didn’t have a college degree. It was part of the process we went through to start to find our own way. I remember coming downstairs one morning, going to take my birth control, and saw my husband had written a note on it. “Are you sure?” With a little heart.

SR: What did giving birth to a child do for you mentally? Was it a different feeling each time?

TK: It’s so amazing how your capacity for love just grows and grows. Every now and then I’ll hear a mom of many worry about giving each child enough attention or worry about experiencing a change in the dynamics of the relationship with their older kids, but it just works. My initiation into motherhood was harder than I expected. Physically, emotionally, everything. I guess I thought that something I really wanted and I considered to be “natural” wouldn’t be so difficult. I had spent my last year of high school working part time at a day care center, and spent the summer working as a nanny for 3 young ones. So I kinda had this idea I knew what I was doing, ha! I think the hardest part was feeling so detached from everyone. My friends were all in college and we had lost touch. There wasn’t facebook back then. My husband was so supportive of everything, but he also worked 80+ hours a week. My mom was a huge help in those days, and I don’t know what I would have done without her. She did everything—laundry, finishing taxes, helping me get the hang of breastfeeding... but she had to go home at some point, and that was an hour away. I felt so lost. I adored being a mother, and must have taken thousands of hours of videos of a baby doing absolutely nothing. There was this pressing need to make sure I was doing everything “right.” I read so many books. So much of what I read didn’t sit well with me, but I was a rule follower and so I tried. I tried really, really hard. I wish I could go back and undo a lot of things that I did with my first two. I guess I had to learn that there’s no “right” answer or method. Baby number two was difficult and for the first time I felt deep within my soul that I wasn’t cut out for motherhood. She was difficult and demanding. I remember one time in particular, when they were just barely 2 years old and around 3 months old I was losing my patience because I was trying to get a cute photo of

them. Then they were both crying and I was crying and I felt like a failure. It sounds silly, but knowing the struggle going on inside of me- I tear up every time I think about that day. I hate those photos now, haha. She humbled me, even more than the first baby. She taught me to let go of my idealistic expectations of motherhood. I softened a lot and slowly learned to just be in the process of it. To let my babies teach me. To listen to them- I mean really listen. Once I stopped trying so hard to “make” them behave a certain way and think I could control everything, it’s like I melted into being a mother. It was so much easier after that. Baby number three taught me to ask for help. To stop trying to be super mom. Before, I felt like it was some kind of badge of honor to “snap back” right away and do everything I did before. Well, I overdid it and while it was hard, it was a good lesson to learn. Every baby after that I stayed in bed the first 3 days, around the bed for two weeks, and would not leave the house for the first month. Bliss. My mothering changed over the years. Younger mothers who have asked for advice seem a little put out that I would

“Once I stopped trying so hard to “make” them behave a certain way and think I could control everything, it’s like I melted into being a mother. It was so much easier after that.”

usually shrug and smile and say I really didn’t know. I mean, I have a lot of things I think are really really important when it comes to raising little humans. But most of what we THINK is important- how to get them to sleep through the night, how to potty train, etc- are really not important at all.

SR: After your first child was born what kind of changed as far as your identity goes? Did you feel this way after having each of your children or just after the first

TR: I was so ready to be a mom the first time, that even though the transition was hard, I loved it. I battled loneliness and feelings of inadequacy that stemmed from being surprised it was so difficult (If I was a “good” mom, it wouldn’t be this hard, right?!) but overall, I embraced being a mom. The third and sixth baby were actually the biggest identity shifts for me. Two kids is “normal” and like I had mentioned earlier, we had initially planned on stopping there, so three was a big step for me. I sold my cute little sports car- which is so funny to think about

now, but at the time was quite a thing. And honestly, I struggled with bodily changes. Two kids is bearable, but carrying and breastfeeding more... I knew it would bring bigger physical changes and that honestly was really tough for me. I mourned a lot after each one, even as a celebrated some aspects and tried to tell myself I was stronger.

Jumping ahead to baby six... I had a miscarriage at 22 weeks between babies 5 and 6. I didn’t want any more. I was angry and questioning a lot of things. I felt stretched way too thin as it was. So getting pregnant right away after losing my previous one was... tough. It’s a little too much to get into, but there were a lot of changes in our marriage and life circumstances during that time, and honestly the reality of his existence seemed too much. It’s ironic that I ended up loving being pregnant with him, even though his pregnancy, birth and postpartum was way more difficult- being pregnant in your twenties is a lot different than in your mid thirties. I can’t imagine life without my rainbow baby, though. He’s special to us all in a way that it is hard to describe.

Mentally, I was all-in when it came to motherhood. When things were hard, I just pushed in and figured out what worked for us. Once I gained confidence, and learned a bunch of lessons that I touched on above, being a mom was my favorite thing in the world. I kinda lost myself in it- and I don’t say that as if it’s a bad thing. It’s ok on some level, because that melting of self brings joy in a time that its easy to get discouraged and really frustrated. However, looking back I wish I had been aware of some of the bad habits I was forming. When you ALWAYS conform to what your family wants, choose everything based on what you know they’d prefer, stop making time to enjoy the little things you enjoyed as in individual, etc. Well, I wish I had been aware of that. I think I would have done them a far greater service if I had kept my “self” alive. I mean, I actually came to place - my youngest was around 6- where I realized I had NO IDEA who I was. That sounds cliché, but it really just came down to the fact that I didn’t know what I liked, what I wanted, what I enjoyed, what my preferences were. I had made a habit of deferring to my husband and kids’ needs and wants so much, that I didn’t have a clue who I was.

They thought I actually preferred the stuff they did, because that’s what I had always chosen! That was eyeopening, scary and made me very angry. And it was entirely my own fault.

SR: Can you kind of give us a brief summary of how different it is to be in motherhood when your children are little verses when they are teenagers and adults?

TR: This one is tough... Simply because its hard to find the words to describe the reality of it. I’ll try. For me, being a mom of littles was very rewarding. While babies and toddlers can be frustrating, I can honestly look back and say I was a damn good mom in those seasons. I loved nurturing, training, playing... But parenting teenagers humbled me all over again. I think I’ve cried more through the teenage years than ever before. The feelings of being completely inadequate are intensified to a whole new level. You want them to learn how to make more and more of their own decisions. You want them to know why you have chosen to live a certain way while allowing them to learn how they want to live. You want to give them room to make mistakes. And they make it all so damn hard. They will take something simple and turn it into an exhausting 2 week ordeal. They hate you for existing, then unexpectedly cuddle next to you while watching a movie. Then they’ll ask you to drive them somewhere. On one hand they’re such beautiful humans turning into amazing adults, while also being the most selfishly horrid monsters you’ve ever met. It’s a breath of relief when two things have happened- they turn 18 AND moved out. I worry myself to death sometimes (more about one than the other) but the fierce struggle and tension between us is loosened. They’re free to be as dumb as they choose, and it’s on them now. I’m enjoying being on more of the friend side of things than a rule-enforcer.

SR: How does your role or your identity change as your children also change and grow up and go through new phases of their life?



TK: Caregiver/friend --> policeman/rule enforcer --> back to friend/confidant/ cheerleader

SR: How did motherhood change the way you viewed the world and yourself?

TK: I often joke that was I super patient person until I had kids. But children are just character revealers. They have so much to teach us.

SR: So many moms I know really like to talk about mental health within motherhood which I think is great that we are making that less and less of a scary topic to bring out into the open. Did you ever struggle with mental health issues as a postpartum mom or as a mom of older kids? What are some ways you coped with it or what are some things you wish you could have done differently in that area?

TK: I experienced light depression after some of my births. I say “light” because while it felt very heavy, it wasn’t debilitating or as intense as some have felt. Thankfully, for those births I had a very wise midwife who had very good advice - the main one being to take it easy. By that she meant take it easy physically and take it easy on the expectations I may put on myself. She’d take my husband and family members aside and tell them how important it was to “mother the mother.” She was very firm about having helpers that knew the importance of being aware of my needs and providing them. Good food, supplements and aromatherapy worked wonders for me. Later, I learned about placenta ingestion and now that I’m knowledgeable with how to do it and have seen the amazing benefits for my clients, I really wish I had known about it for my own births.

SR: Did you feel like you needed a lot of support from other people as a mother? What about from other women? You know, everyone loves to say “it takes a village” and “find our tribe”, did you relate to these concepts?

TK: I didn’t. I was a lone wolf mother. I really didn’t know anyone who parented like I did. I didn’t have close friends, didn’t “go out” and didn’t do play dates. For one, no one my age was having kids. And I really didn’t feel motivated to go out and make an effort. And honestly, I was fine with it. Now that I’m in my forties and my kids are older, I am more connected with other moms. I make the time to be with other women. I reach out and talk with other moms. I share my mess ups and successes. It’s funny because while those connections have been so good and have become an enjoyable necessity for me, authenticity can also invite negativity. I’ve been harshly judged and told I’m not a good mom. That would have wrecked me 21 years ago. Now I quote them to my kids and we all laugh.

SR: Did other people’s opinions of how you chose to mother deter you from doing what you felt was best in your own journey of motherhood?

TK: I’m realizing as I’m trying to answer this that as a young new mother, I was often questioned for being too “into” being a mom. Things like choosing to quit my job and stay home, exclusively breastfeed, and home school. The worst decision was to have more than the acceptable 3 kids, haha It didn’t change my decisions, though. Naysayers came around eventually- or at least eventually stopped making rude comments. But now, I catch flak or not being “enough” of a mom. I go out too much, we have too much fun, I’m not disciplining enough.

Listen to opinions only to use them as useful tools. Is it true? Does it resonate with your life? If the opinion contains something you need to hear, then use it to reset your compass and keep going. If it doesn’t, let it go, internally thank the person for reinforcing your choice and move on. Easier said than done, but I’m getting pretty good at it.

It’s interesting that my husband doesn’t receive any of this scrutiny. No matter what I choose, somebody will have something to say about it, while he gets applauded for simply existing.

SR: Was/is motherhood fulfilling to you? Have you ever or do you currently feel like there was something else you wanted to pursue for yourself outside of motherhood?

TK: I don’t know that one thing can ever fulfill a person at all times, and certainly not their whole lives. The whole idea of being fulfilled by motherhood has the potential to fill us with so much shame - no matter the choices we make in life. If we have a career and interests outside of motherhood, we can invite shame in for not being “more.” But if we did nothing but sit at home with our babies, we’d invite shame in for not enjoying every minute of it. Both are ridiculous and yet all too entirely real.

I’ve enjoyed learning about the 3 phases of a woman’s life- Maiden, Mother, Crone. We have the ability to experience each phase even if we never marry or have children, but we can also age and not really ever experience what each phase is meant to teach us. It’s interesting that as my Crone phase is coming into view, I am finding myself in the midst of lessons from Maiden and Mother that I need to deal with. I think if we approached the season we were in with an awareness of what each phase can teach us as each does their work to mold us into our truth as an individual, we’d be far more gentle with ourselves and have greater empathy for other women.

SR: In motherhood, how were you able to balance taking care of yourself and also being present and available for your spouse and children?



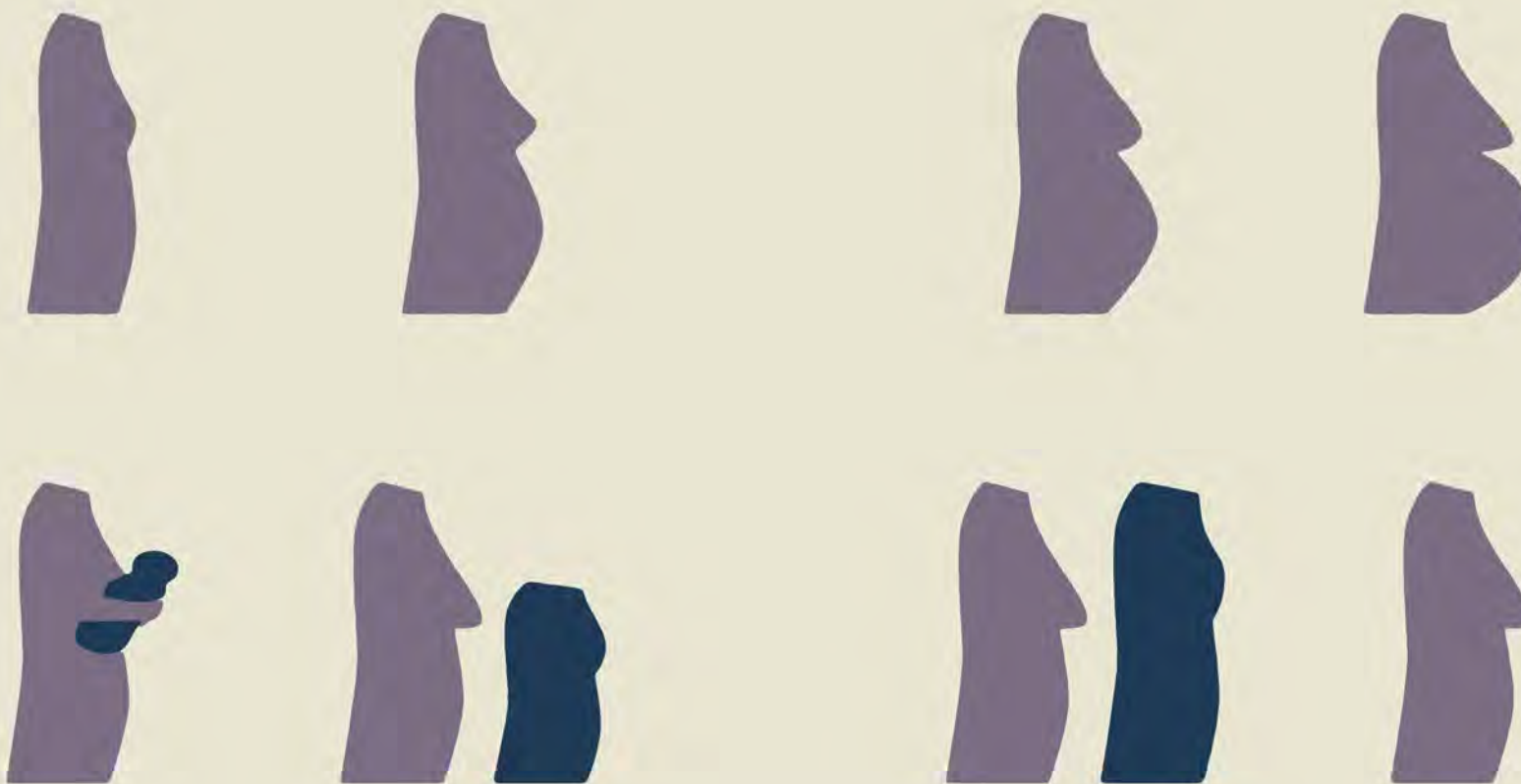
Image By
Shauna Reiman

“Each “pull” will have its ebb and flow. Take notice of any demand, but let truth and love dictate what you decide to pour into, not guilt or expectations. Imbalance is a perpetual reality of life, especially for mothers. So instead of trying to constantly fix it allow yourself to learn how to enjoy the tides.”

TR: I didn’t take care of myself for the first 15 years of motherhood. It seeped into our marital habits, too. Setting boundaries and laying the groundwork for a more well-rounded life was one of the hardest things I did. That blasted mom guilt would be strong some days! But as a more whole, happy person, I am ultimately more available to my kids and more interesting to my spouse. But I caution against seeking balance, too. I know that sounds strange! Sometimes, in the pursuit of trying to make everything even and perfectly equal, we can just end up feeling resentful. I would put it this way instead... Be intentional about the imbalances in your life.

Sometimes you need to melt into motherhood. Sometimes you need to fully dive into your spouse. Sometimes you need to be alone and discover new parts of your soul. You can’t do it all, all of the time.

Each “pull” will have its ebb and flow. Take notice of any demand, but let truth and love dictate what you decide to pour into, not guilt or expectations. Imbalance is a perpetual reality of life, especially for mothers. So instead of trying to constantly fix it allow yourself to learn how to enjoy the tides.



The Evolution of a Mother

Ways To Rediscover Yourself

Written By: Christina Herr

In the late summer of 2013, I only had two names. As a mother to three children ages 4 and under, and my career as a teacher, I was either Mommy or Mrs. Herr. I loved these titles immensely, but I was lost in them, and I wasn't Christina anymore. Who was she, anyways?

It took a tragedy to make me realize the need to reclaim her. One of my best friends died after being hit by a drunk driver. It shocked and devastated our close-knit group of friends. I drove the 17 hours back to my hometown for the funeral, and between the photos displayed and the stories we all shared, I was reminded of how we used to spend our time, making memories, going to concerts, laughing until our sides hurt. That same week, I found a box full of my old journals from childhood and beyond in the house I grew up in. Those entries reminded me that community was my lifeline, writing was in my blood, and reading books was a balm to my soul. But since motherhood and the working life had been my reality, I had not made time for community. I hadn't written for fun or therapy in years. And the last time I read a book just for entertainment? Far too long. I had forgotten what brought me joy outside of my children. I saw the old Christina and realized I missed her. I wanted her back, and eventually, yes, I found her.

Maybe you're in this boat as well? The boat that says you love your role as a mother but that you also want to enjoy personal pursuits and passions? The boat that carries you through choppy seas and uncharted territories as you try to remember who you were when you first stepped into it? It's possible to reclaim who you used to be, if you miss that person like I did. Here are a few tips to help you do just that.

1. Let go of guilt

The world places so much pressure on new moms. Sometimes we feel like we have to be all-consumed by the role and that we are bad mothers if we don't want to spend every waking (and sleeping) moment thinking, analyzing, obsessing over some aspect of our children's lives. Don't buy the lie.

2. Talk it out

Talk to someone who has known you through all of life's stages. Tell them you're feeling a little lost. Tell them you are having trouble remembering who you were before you were called mama. Maybe it is a parent, a sibling, or a close friend. They can help you mine your history for golden nuggets of you-ness and help you make a game plan for moving forward.

3. Remember your passions

I had forgotten how much I loved to write. The discovery of my old journals reawakened a fire inside of me and it led me to pick up the hobby once again. I encourage you to think back to what you loved as a child. Were you always drawing in the margins of your notebook? Did you used to love baking but haven't made time for it in years? Did you run track in high school? Think about your former passions and think about how to integrate them into your current life.

4. Practice contentment

It's okay to step back and say, "You know what, I am feeling out of sorts. I'd like to reclaim my lost sense of self by pursuing something about which I am passionate." It's normal and appropriate. What is harmful though, is if you just stew in discontent and focus only on the negative. It is a blessing to be called to raise a child, to mother, to pour into a life. It is important to live and love with an air of gratitude rather than bitterness, which leads me to my last tip...

5. Remember it's not either/or

It's not an issue of "I can be a good mother OR I can have personal hobbies and interests." You don't have to pick one or the other. And when you pursue your interests and develop them, you're teaching your children that it's okay to do the same.

Just like a flight attendant would tell you during an in-flight safety message, you must secure your own oxygen mask before tending to your child's mask. Why? Because girlfriend, you can't help someone else if you aren't breathing yourself. So grab a mask and remember to breathe. You may just find out a lot about yourself in the process.

A Letter To My Daughter:

I'm sorry that you were born into a world with impossible beauty and body standards. I'm sorry if you even feel the pressure or need to be beautiful. I'm sorry you may have to fight the urge to compare yourself to every other woman you see. I'm sorry if you ever feel self conscious of your arms, legs, belly, breasts, nose, hair, etc. I'm sorry for if and when I ever complain about my body, face, hair in front of you; I'm working on that.

I'm mostly sorry that you may grow up and forget this perfect girl that I know who is not shaken or stirred by anyone's standards of who they think she should be. She embraces her own self. She thinks freely and without hesitation. She has no notion of comparison, no desire for conformity, no yearn for acceptance.

She is free.

I promise to remind you of this girl I know when you seem to be forgetting her.

Love,

Your Mother



Image and words by
Shauna Reiman



Park Feeding



3 A.M. Feeding

From Where I Nurse

A Photo Series by Shauna Reitman



Stall Feeding

“Celebrating women’s ability to nurse in any given location and in any given scenario...”

Mental Health In Motherhood

Article by Amanda Carlson

Almost four years into motherhood I finally admitted my need for a professional counselor because of the state of my mental health. The more I spoke up to my mom friends about my mental health struggles, the more apparent it became to me that almost every mom I know goes through the same type of things. So many of us seem to be riddled with guilt, anxiety, depression, stress, etc. and yet no one likes to talk about it. My expectations of motherhood were almost completely opposite of my reality as a mother. This led me into a deep darkness of isolation, inadequacy, and depression. I want mothers to know they are not alone in this and there are so many options that can help them. There are people who will listen. I asked my friend and Licensed Professional Counselor, Amanda Carlson, to give us some information on mental health within motherhood.

-Shauna Reiman

Motherhood is often an exciting experience. One that is highly talked about. During pregnancy many mothers are given gifts and hear stories from others about how wonderful it is to be a mother. It is common for new mothers to have baby showers where they receive positive and supportive messages about raising their child, but what about mental health within motherhood? More specifically, what about mental illness?

Although awareness around mental health is rising, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that only 43.3% of U.S. adults with mental illness receive treatment. So, what is mental illness and who does it affect? Mental illness is a medical condition that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves both personally and with others. Mental illness does not discriminate, rather it affects all people, including mothers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the reasons a mother may acquire a mental illness is not always known, but often occurs as a result of factors including, but not limited to, early adverse experiences, medical conditions, genetics, substance use, and lack of healthy interpersonal relationships.

The awareness around mental illness is rising, as well as the occurrence. In a given year, 1 in 5 adults will experience mental illness, per the CDC. Of those adults 10% of pregnant women and 13% of women who have just given birth experience mental illness according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Although there are many different types of mental illnesses the most common forms are mood disorders such as depression, anxiety, and bi-polar disorder. More specifically, mothers often experience depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (NAMI). Experiencing mental illness does not make you a bad mother. Motherhood can be a strange and even traumatic experience.

Remembering that mental illness is treatable is often helpful for mothers to hear. One of the first things you can do is acknowledge how you are feeling. Often times sharing your feelings and thoughts with a trusted support person is a positive step toward getting help. Just like taking prenatal vitamins and going to your regular doctor's visits are important, so is taking care of your mental health. Not only for you as a mother, but also for your child(ren).

Remember that you must put your oxygen mask on first before you can take care of someone else. Putting on your oxygen mask is another way of emphasizing the importance of self-care. Self-care is a term used to describe taking care of yourself. There are many self-care activities, but some that may be most helpful in treating mental illness include seeing a mental health professional, going to your primary doctor for a wellness check, taking medication if necessary, joining a support group, getting adequate sleep, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and making time for pleasurable activities. Sometimes mental illness includes the experience of thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else. If you are having any of these thoughts, immediately call the national suicide hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or 9-1-1.

Mothers, you are important. Your mental health is important. Mental illness is treatable and there are people who want to help you. You are not alone.

References: CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>
WHO: https://www.who.int/mental_health/maternal-child/maternal_mental_health/en/
NAMI: <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>



Image By
Shauna Reiman

Who Let Me Fly This Plane?

an essay by Emily Germain

Have you ever flown a plane? Presuming you're not a pilot, it's a terrifying thought. You would never attempt to take to the skies without dedicated, thorough preparation. Can we agree that becoming a parent for the first time evokes a similar set of emotions? How will I do this? I can't do this. I've never done this. If I can do it, I won't do it right. Every parent I know can relate to this on some level, and I believe mothers especially feel this in a unique and powerful way.

For those of us who have experienced the trauma of toxic parental relationships, our emotions can easily take us on a path less traveled. This is the path I stepped onto the moment I learned I was pregnant. Of course, the moment was full of joy. It was soaked in joy, but it also pushed me to press the take-off button on a plane I wasn't ready to fly. (That's how planes work, right? With a simple take-off button?)

My thoughts spun into dark and twisty patterns- to places that could be summed up in one fearful sentiment: My children will be permanently, definitively scarred because of the ways I am permanently, definitively scarred. This felt so tangible, so real. I swear I could reach my hands out and hold the heaviness of this burden.

Years have passed since the moment I learned of my first pregnancy. The intensity of that sentiment has lightened. Some days it doesn't exist at all. My oldest child is 5 years old, and she is living, breathing proof that we can overcome the pain of our past and foster a brighter future for our children. But sometimes we can't.

As a mother, I naturally crave perfection for my kids. I crave it within myself, believing it is the key to my children's success. I crave it in the world around me, and I ache when I can't see a path to achieving it. But if I let it, my parenting journey teaches me something contrary: perfection is not the greatest teacher.

Despite all the ways I'd anticipated damaging my daughter and son with my imperfections- even through my overzealous desire to right every wrong from my childhood - I have not. They are not ruined because of who I am or who I am not. They might be shaped, in part, by it. But it's not a box to which they are confined. My shortcomings are not the voice of their future - and I know this because my mother's shortcomings are not my own. Your mother's are not your own.

I'm living in the thick of this tension - and I can only share my journey, but this is it: My steps have been scattered. Sometimes paralyzed. Often eager or too quick. But releasing the expectation I had put on myself to right every wrong is powerful. It chips away at the cloud of anxiety it created.

It fills me with hope and daily prepares me for the wildest of plane rides: motherhood.

Colophon

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