



Embracing
the
beautiful madness
OF PARENTING

Cathy Spooner

Hi Beautiful

Thank you for downloading my e-Book

Embracing the beautiful madness of parenting

Parenting in one breath can be so incredibly beautiful and so incredibly hard. So with these stark contrasts in the parenting world... I know I need to find the balance between these two elements. I need to find a way to survive this beautiful madness of parenting.

Here are my top ten tips for surviving the madness. Tried and tested from a mum that feels like she sometimes has her shit together, but many more days feels like she is failing at this mum thing. These are simple, realistic and totally actionable things to incorporate into your life right now.

They will help you... Get through the bad days filled with tantrums, shitty nappies and public melt downs. Keep the balance in a massively overscheduled diary filled with busy-ness. Relocate your sanity among the piles of dirty washing and scattered toys. Find your zen in the demands of being a stay at home mum or a mum juggling work and home. Find balance and peace in an otherwise crazy day. Find your own way to give back to you, to appreciate all your amazing mum-ness and to survive the madness that is your incredibly beautiful world.



Cathy xoxo



Acceptance

BEING OKAY WITH YOUR CRAZY MAD WORLD

Ah those beautiful rose coloured glasses, where are they now? The ones that I so lovingly looked upon parenting with, seeing the snuggles, the laughs, the #twinning. Now I've got myself a pair of heavy duty extra zoom glasses that will never let me escape the wild realities of being a mumma.

We can dream up, we can plan, we can try and control but the daily life of parenting is something that cannot be predicted or tamed. The days when you're woken at 5am after being up three times with a crying baby. When they somehow learn to dismantle a coloured texta to bring new life to their faces, your furniture and carpet. When it feels like you're forever changing a pooey nappy. When everyone refuses to do homework and fills the house with the scent of teenage angst.

Ah the joys.

What I've come to realise is that these 'joys' or realities of parenting are inescapable and more importantly, they are part of a package deal.

I can't have the good without the bad

I've got to earn the good by navigating the tumultuous waters of raising a human being. And yeah, it's a tough gig helping to support and shape a new life and there are many days when I argue with them, myself and our higher being about why this can be so hard at times. But then I realise, **it is what it is**. Through acceptance I open space for change. I'm no longer stuck in a fearful mindset or being the victim to my own reality, instead I take the power back by bringing love back into my heart.

So on the days when it all just goes pear shaped, you're late, no washing has been done, dinner plans rely solely on a toaster, you're frazzled and feeling at your wits end - accept that this is part of your deal. You signed up for this whether you could read that itty bitty fine print through our rose coloured glasses or not.

So roll with it, do the best you can to accept its wild, frustrating madness because not too far around the corner you'll be blessed with a special moment, a memory that makes all the other 'joys' just fade away.



Enjoy Life

MAKE SPACE FOR ALL THE GOOD STUFF

This is parenting life... small things become things that emotionally break you. Sleep is something you actually day dream about. Having solo time for you feels like too hard, difficult or laden with guilt.

Sexy time for you and your partner is few and far between. You desperately need to be waxed, dyed, trimmed, moisturised and looked after. The hours seem to drag on forever but with the frustrating illusion that there just never seems to be enough hours in the day.

Surround these parts of your reality with LIFE. Enjoy what life has to offer, it seems so simple yet this daily act of changing your mindset and embracing the good stuff and being present makes some of the overwhelming, mundane or restrictive stuff easier because you have **balance**.

Get out in nature, the sunshine will do you and the kids the world of good. Meet up with a girlfriend, even have her over while you're still in pyjamas if it means you get time together to chat. Book in a date night with your hubby, organise it months in advance so you know it will actually happen. Make time for intimate moments together, sex is the best way to lift your mood, combat stubborn cranky hormones, release stress, boost your confidence and make you feel alive again.

Sit down and enjoy the most decadent piece of chocolate cake you can find with not an ounce of guilt. Be lazy on the lounge with the kids, they won't be small enough forever so enjoy it while you can. Make the most of early morning weekend sports, invite family to enjoy it with you. **Just be** with your kids... it's all they really want (and you too!)

Fill your time as much as you can with snippets of goodness, those every day moments in life. They are so simple yet so powerful in re-creating and welcoming balance into our life. Balance is where we fall short as mums, so any smalls steps we can take to shift that balance with more of the good stuff will keep us nourished and happy.



Forgiveness

YOU'RE ALLOWED TO GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

As a mum on most days we take on the role of self critic. When you over analyse your decisions, when you judge your own feelings, when you worry too much about what you do. All humans do this, we easily slip into the role of critiquing ourselves and though it may be easy it is incredibly self destructive because we forget to **forgive**.

Forgiveness is your key to letting go of most of what is holding you back. Those thoughts about whether you made the right decision to bottle feed instead of breastfeed, worrying why your post baby bod doesn't look like those other mums, questioning if that disciplining decision was really the best option. All those feelings of doubt are normal emotions but forgiveness always needs to follow.

Allow yourself the right to feel overwhelmed some days, to make poor parenting decisions, to question the harsh realities of your world... you're allowed to feel this way provided you can let go of the judgement through forgiveness.

After all, aren't we all just fumbling our way through this emotional superstorm of parenting, and life for that matter? We can't get it right every time. We can't be "perfect" all the time. We can't be a saint every day. But we can accept and forgive and embrace kindness towards ourselves.

It takes strength to forgive, to push against those ingrained beliefs about how we should feel and behave. So if it's hard just know its probably meant to be... nothing that is right or worth it is given to us on an easy path. Self forgiveness is a life long commitment to accepting that you are perfect just the way you are.

Motherhood is a choice you make every day to put someone else's happiness and wellbeing ahead of your own. To teach the hard lessons, to do the right thing, even when you're not sure what the right thing is. And to forgive yourself over and over again for doing the wrong thing.

Donna Bell



Guilt Free

LET GO WHAT NO LONGER SERVES YOU

So when the kids are all driving you bonkers, you've cried a few times already before lunch service has started and you're overwhelmed and desperate for a break from it all. You're questioning whether you can keep doing this on your own for today or until night shift ends, can you cope with another baby as well not to mention that deadline for work hanging over your head? Should you have had the epidural, was the caesarean just as worthy as vaginal birth, should you continue breastfeeding, never start breastfeeding? Are you anti-immunisation, pro co-sleeping, Montessori or religious schooling, organic home cooked food or kids eat whatever. You need time for you so the kids go to after school care so you can hit the gym and bust it out. You have days when you loathe the role of mummy and all its pressure. You yelled at the kids, smacked them and totally lost your composure. This list goes on and on with mum guilt and we buy into it all.

Why do we feel guilty? It's because we all believe that maybe there is a right or wrong way to parenting and we aren't sure which side we are on some days. It's also because society has convinced us of the cookie cutter version of what a parent looks like.

The reality is every single one of us is individual, our children included, and our lives and our parenting will reflect this. Feeling guilty about whether we did it right or wrong is just giving us extra baggage we don't need to hold on to. **You are doing the very best you can each and every day.** You act with love from your heart and every decision is a reflection of your love. We will get it wrong many times over, we will be unsure and question ourselves even more... but bring yourself back to the acknowledgement that you only ever act out of love. With that, you can forgive yourself and let the guilt go.

That guilt only makes your daily life harder, it slowly crumbles you from the inside out and leaves a seed festering that will impact so many aspects of your world. Acknowledge the feeling but don't attach to it. Let the guilt go. Breathe it out of you. When the thoughts arise repeat this affirmation

I release all guilt and self imposed pressure that no longer serve me. I accept these feelings as natural and part of my human state, but I now release them.

I welcome freedom and acceptance now.



Honesty

FREE YOURSELF BY BEING AUTHENTIC

No one is handing out awards to the most resilient mum who puts on a brave face and hides behind the illusion, keeping the reality of how she truly feels inside.

Putting on the brave face and attempting to be the image of a perfect mum isn't doing anyone any favours. Open up and be honest about what you're experiencing and how it makes you feel. There is such comfort and relief in releasing all that which we attempt to hold inside. Not only will it help you feel better, but it will help other mums know that they aren't alone or help your loved ones know that you may need some help here or there.

This is the toughest role you will ever fulfil in your lifetime. No occupation will expect the same demands that being a mother does. With work you have the ability to switch off, you leave for the day, you can have holidays and most of your days are within your control. Being a mum is that job that on paper no one would ever want. Long hours, sleepless nights, unappreciated work, selfless actions and much sacrifice.

It's okay to talk about the bad stuff without feeling like you're not a good mum or you're struggling.

Having these feelings about being a mum is no reflection at all on the mother you are.

No one is judging you, in fact, people love more than anything to connect with someone who is authentic and honest.

I truly believe one of the biggest issues with being a parent of today is that we lost our village, and with that we somehow replaced that village of support with expectation and self pressure. It doesn't need to be that way. We all want to be understood, supported and loved for all our achievements and our so called flaws.

Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It's about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen.

Brene Brown - The Gifts of Imperfection



Self Care

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF SO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TO GIVE

Signing up to be a mum was never meant to be a mission of sacrifice and ultimate selflessness. But somehow at some point all of us mummies fall into this trap. We love these little mini humans with all our being and distinguishing the fine line between that love and sacrifice is a blurry line at best.

Coming to the realisation that you will never be the best version of yourself unless you take care of yourself is what will ultimately set you free. You can't be your best, you can't help, give advice, take care of and love with all of you unless you have first taken care of **you**. A dishevelled, tired, broken and resentful mummy is no good to anyone, least not herself.

First, let go of that guilt... you deserve and have a right to prioritise your own needs as well as those of your family (ah yes, we can manage to fit you into that equation as well!)

Work out what you can manage, set an achievable goal for you time and follow through. Don't make excuses - you know you need this so make it happen. Get a massage, go for a walk, join that yoga or dance class you've been talking about, have a bath, get the grandparents to baby sit, dinner with girls... whatever it is that fills your heart make it important and do it. It doesn't need to be grand scale holidays and expensive items, all it takes is a conscious effort of showing yourself that you matter, that you are special and that you deserve the 10 minutes, the hour or the night off that you have been hoping and wishing for.

Myself and many other mothers, perhaps including yourself, have learnt the hard way about self care. Leaving it too late before they were too far gone and a broken mess. Coming back from that place is hard, and it's only then do we truly see how little respect, nurturing and time we gave to ourselves. We deserve that and so much more... yet we often demand this from others in our lives and don't demand the same from ourselves. It's time to put yourself number one on your priority list.

Don't start tomorrow... start today and do something to fill up your cup and your heart.



Choose Love

WELCOMING MORE LOVE INTO YOUR HEART AND LIFE

With every moment in life, every situation, you are faced with the decision to choose love or fear. Love is all the good stuff - acceptance, forgiveness, joy, happiness, contentment, appreciation. Fear is the not so good stuff - resistance, judgement, guilt, over analysing, comparison, sadness and resentment.

In every moment it is your choice whether you respond with love or fear.

When there is sibling rivalry, teenage angst, toddler tantrums, relationship struggles, work pressure and incomplete to-do lists it always feels easier to side with the fear, the stress and the negativity. This stress isn't nice and it's hard to just brush it off and be happy. But if we can attempt to make our response to these situations come from a place of love we will find our world around us is a much more pleasant place to be in.

When the hubby makes an inconsiderate comment that pushes the last button... don't side with resentment, choose forgiveness. Being resentful towards him won't make his comments disappear. When your son isn't listening to a word you say, rebelling at every moment and defying the simplest of instructions... don't side with anger, choose acceptance. When life feels like it's just too much, pressure from work, overwhelmed at home with the kids, disconnection from your partner... don't side with self guilt, choose appreciation. Accept and appreciate that you're doing the very best job you know how at juggling a life filled with beautiful madness.

Feeling guilty about whether you're good enough or not will not give you the strength to keep moving forward. Holding resentment towards others just places a heaviness in your heart. Focusing on the stress and challenges in life makes it harder to see the light, to see love.

Next time, take a moment and before you respond ask yourself, do I want to live a life in love or a life in fear?



Reconnection

COMING BACK TO YOURSELF

Somewhere along the line you may have lost touch with yourself, the woman you were before you embraced the title of mumma. The key here is that she isn't lost completely she is waiting in the wings for you to reconnect with her, rediscover all the wonderful things about you that may have been forgotten about or pushed aside when your little darlings graced your life.

Losing yourself in being mum is what we all do... and us mums do it so well. We prioritise everyone in our family before ourselves and before we know it, we are mum and can't really remember what truly makes us feel alive. If we do remember it's often a distant memory. This comes from the demands of being a mum but also isolation and expectation. We are expected to be a certain way and often we don't know how to be it all and have it all... so we make sacrifices.

Don't lose touch with you. Who you are and what you believe is the stuff of gold you need to pass on to your kids. They won't remember the stuff you worry yourself about, but they will remember the good stuff about who their mother really was. Remind them, and yourself, who you are and what makes you so unique and special... why **you are a gift to this world**. Because you truly are.

Sit down and write a list of anything you would do today if nothing was holding you back. The things you want to do but keep putting in the too hard basket, the stuff you fear judgement for, anything you feel selfish to do

Once you have your list, choose three things that jump out at you. Make one something achievable in the short term and two that could be long term goals. Then commit yourself to making them happen - it is essential for you to reconnect with who you are outside of being a mum and this is a key for the whole families happiness not just yours.

The best way to get back in touch with you is to do something you love, to create space in your day to day life to do something that fills your heart and makes you feel like more than just mum. You deserve something special just for you!



Understanding

SEEING IT FROM A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

We can all agree at any age or stage our children have the ability to drive us bonkers with their behaviour, but they are also entitled to experience these emotions like anger, irrationality, fear, stubbornness and pretentiousness. It drives us nuts that we usually can't control these emotions and of course, they almost always arise when its most inconvenient for us i.e. the middle of a shopping centre, during a quiet moment at a ceremony, when you're in the middle of breastfeeding or just when it's *one of those days*.

I find that the more I resist and try to control a situation, the worse it gets! That is nearly guaranteed every single time. Naturally as parents we want it done our way because we know better and are wiser, yet we get caught in that cycle without realising that our resistance creates resistance in them.

Attempt as best you can to see the situation through their eyes. In their world why is this important? Why at this time would they be making a scene? Where is the fear coming from? If we can connect with them and acknowledge their feelings, they will feel heard and understood instead of feeling as though we are dismissing what matters to them (no matter how ridiculous it seems to us!). Once you connect and show them you're there and you get it, you're likely to be able to diffuse the situation and move forward.

No matter how irrelevant it may seem to us they are navigating their way through human emotions, and even as adults we have moments when we act unaccordingly whether we admit it or not. So give them the freedom to explore and when that happens get involved, empathise and relate to them.

It's no surprise we fail to tune into our children's essence. How can we listen to them, when so many of us barely listen to ourselves? How can we feel their spirit and hear the beat of their heart if we can't do this in our own life?

Shefali Tsabary - The Conscious Parent



Breathe

HEALING WITH THE POWER OF BREATH

Take a deep breath in... and out...

When it all gets too much, you're frazzled, temper flared, crying and bat shit crazy...

Breathe

When you're exhausted, sleep deprived, confused and searching for answers...

Breathe

When you unsure of yourself and siding with fear based emotions...

Breathe

Breathe in that you are doing a great job, you are an excellent mumma to your children.

You are powerful, intuitive and strong.

You are a resourceful problem solver and no task is insurmountable.

You are a dreamer with every chance of reaching those stars.

You are an integral member of your family and valued beyond any words you will ever hear.

You are one incredible mumma.

Breathe...



I hope you enjoyed this eBook as much I enjoyed creating it for you

If you did you may love to have a read of my book **Living with Grace: A mum's guide to self discovery and reconnection amid the beautiful madness of parenting**. It's available in paperback and on your kindle. Jump over to my website to find out more.

www.cathyspooner.com.au/buy-book

Want more inspiration and guidance on how to live a more balanced and truly connected life as a mum? Sign up to receive info from me about real, honest parenting and how to truly embrace and survive this beautiful madness.

www.cathyspooner.com.au/join-the-tribe

Join The Mum Evolution group on Facebook where we keep parenting real, honest and completely supported.

www.facebook.com/groups/themumevolutiontribe

Of course, like me on Facebook and Instagram to never miss a beat as well.



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