

Moxie Tells it Like it IS

(an excerpt from her blog <http://moxie.blogs.com/askmoxie/>)

I think basically all mothers are victims of propaganda. We're allowed to think that pregnancy is all positive, wonderful rainbows and sunshine, but a huge percentage of us have hormone-related depression that makes us feel horrible and sold out. Let's not even talk about the delivery and birth, which have so much baggage attached to them even before we get to the tough painful part. (Let's think about it--labor and delivery hurts like hell coming or going already. Isn't that enough? Why add all this strange mythology to it, too to give all of us a nice case of pre-post traumatic stress disorder?) Then we get to the actual motherhood, and it's really hard and there's no real reward for weeks and weeks, and then the reward is just a smile.

And yet everyone, at every stage of the game, keeps saying, "But it's sooooo worth it." Well, duh. Yes, it's worth it. Your children are the joys of your life. But. It still sucks at all stages of the game, either a little or a lot.

People give sympathy for the first few months, because they're like being captured by aliens. But by the time your baby is 8 or 9 months old you're supposed to have a handle on it. The baby is plumped up and sweet-looking, like a magazine baby. Everyone in your mother's group is lying and saying their baby is "sleeping through the night" (5 measly hours! Is it even a worthy goal?). But it's still really hard emotionally.

I kind of think that that's about the age when it starts to sink in that this IS the New Normal. Whether you're at home or at work all day, the baby exhausts you. And then there's the whole nighttime routine, and middle-of-the-night stuff. And thinking about the food all the time. But you're also supposed to have lost all of the baby weight, and having an amazing sex life with your husband, and be up on current events, and either totally present at your job or gleefully happy about being at home.

Honestly, it's just too freaking much. No one can do it all without the help of anti-depressants. So my advice to you is to cut yourself some slack. All those moms who look so zen (and people tell me I'm one of them--apparently I look calm all the time) are really just fantasizing about having a night alone in a hotel with nice sheets and no one else there wanting something from them. It's not like everyone else is totally in the moment and you're not. Everyone's dropping the ball in one way or another. It's just that some of us are forcing ourselves to be OK with dropping those balls.

Not an expert, just a mom.

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