

# 10 THINGS NOBODY TOLD ME ABOUT PARENTING

## ARTICLE

Plenty of people will give you unsolicited parenting advice (I didn't ask whether my baby should be wearing a hat, thank you), but rarely will they tell you what you really need to know. Starting with the changes in pregnancy, you're changing to a whole new person called mom. Yes, there will be a father, too, probably, but the change hardly hit them as much as it does the women. Beginning with the figure, state of mind, sleep quality, stress level, health. And then, the baby is born. And the fun starts.

### 1. THINGS TAKE WAY LONGER

When you take a young child anywhere, you'll pack as though you were called upon to settle a barren new world, without handy targets everywhere. The other day, I saw my harried neighbor loading four squirming kids, car seats, bags, etc., into the back of his van while still wearing pyjama bottoms. He looked up at me and said, helplessly, "I'm just going to get milk!" Well, it may be a little overdramatized but in some cases I actually wonder, why we pack the whole household when leaving to a visit. Yes, we want to be ready and cover every situation, but sometimes, it is ok to take less things and have less stress about it. Or?

### 2. YOU WILL SAY THINGS YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D HAVE TO SAY

Besides the I-can't-believe-I-just-said-that remarks such as, "Hey! No shenanigans" (unscrupulous or dishonest conduct) there's a whole other category of things you never dreamed you'd need to say, because who would do such a ridiculous thing as, oh, lick the cat food. Your kid would, that's who. I actually had to tell my child, "Don't eat with scissors." They were safety scissors, but still.

Or "Please don't step on the baby!" this is really unbelievable or? Do you have two kids? Thank you may understand... "Yes, you may stand on my back and pretend I'm a surfboard until I can lie in my bed." After four years without a night slept through, you'll do anything to stay there...

### 3. YOU WON'T LIVE UP TO YOUR STANDARDS

"Everything you say you won't is what you will eventually," Robyn Hitchcock sings in the 1989 song The Devil's Coachman. Maybe you won't do "everything" you said you wouldn't, but you will be a hypocrite at some point - possibly many points. You will feed mac and cheese to your kid for four consecutive days even though one of your purported "core values" is healthy eating. You will say things that you will regret. And that's going to have to be OK. Because some situation in your life will bring you to a moment, when you just need to stay sane and that's more important than healthy food, attachment parenting, zero waste priorities or anything else. If it's not your new lifestyle, a break is ok in some stage of your life. Take it as a lesson for the next stage :)

### 4. IT'S POSSIBLE TO THINK TERRIBLE THOUGHTS ABOUT A CHILD

Sometimes a nasty little kid will do something horrible to your child and it will just break you. Comedian and father Louis CK says in his stand-up act: "There's one kid in my daughter's class who I hate so much. And it's really (messed) up, because I'm 44, and I hate a six-year-old." Yep. Well, it happens. Because you and your kid were one for nine months, then you've spent a lot of time to balance your and his/her life. To

find a way how to be friends, have fun and enjoy the time together. And then, SOMEONE comes and hits him/her??? No way. I can fully understand. I am furious, too. Although I know the kids have to deal with it alone until some stage, I am very nervous to see a situation like that. Because my kid is a huge part of me and all my heart and life.

#### 5. KIDS ARE WAY GROSSER THAN YOU EVER DREAMED

Writes blogger Joslyn Gray: "Before I knew it, they were all eating stale fries off the floor of the minivan and I was like, 'Whatever, thanks for cleaning.'" But you're never completely broken, and occasionally your kid will do something so vile it will still manage to shock you. For me, this was my second child passing the time in the Alice in Wonderland line at Disneyland by running her tongue along the metal handrails touched by countless park visitors throughout time. "Tastes salty!" she reported. They really can cross any line you've probably set.

#### 6. YOU WILL HAVE TO STIFLE LAUGHTER BECAUSE YOU ARE A GROWN-UP

There are certain things you just aren't willing, able or ready to explain. Thus, you won't be able to die laughing when, say, your four-year-old, back from lunch with Grandma and full of freshly gleaned knowledge from the restaurant's Chinese zodiac place mat, starts telling everyone, "I'm the snake and I love the cock!" Or when the kid comes to you and with all seriousness tells you that from this moment, he is too busy to answer your questions about what he likes to breakfast, just think about his favorite meal. Oh yes, there are a lot of situations like this.

#### 7. IT'S KINDA BORING

There's nothing better than getting on the floor with a child and experiencing her take on the world. It's just that after you do that, you don't get to clock out and go back to thinking your thoughts. You just keep doing it. Over and over. This is truer today than ever. According to the Pew Research Center, today's parents actually spend more time with their children, even more than stay-at-home mums did in the 1950s. That's a lot of pretending to eat toddler-created plastic food feasts.

#### 8. THEY WON'T ALWAYS SHARE YOUR PASSIONS

When my kids didn't show what I deemed a suitable enthusiasm for the glories of composting, I forced them to behold the compost bin. "Look at it!" I said, perhaps too forcefully, holding a handful of perfectly crumbly dark earth aloft. Deep lessons on the circle of life or in-home eco-terrorism? Still not sure about that one. You've lost some pounds and your kid tells you "well, you could do it better...", or after a new meal, when you're super happy about a perfect change in habits everyone at the table just makes a bad face? Family can be very unsupportive sometimes.

#### 9. BUT YOU WILL DEVELOP ARCANE KNOWLEDGE IN THEIR PASSIONS

This is not so great in the beginning. I know way more about the TV show Fireman Sam than I wish I did, and my husband was crowned, more than once, the Pretty Pretty Princess during board game tournaments with the girls. (He is pretty competitive.) It's all paying off now, though. Through my kids, I've learned to appreciate Broadway musicals, discovered John Green's oeuvre, and been schooled on how to make a proper salsa verde. I bought tomatillos for the first time at age 49! This has to be good.

#### 10. EACH KID IS ACTUALLY 100 DIFFERENT KIDS

"Every time my daughters get noticeably older, I feel like the smaller version has disappeared," says my friend Bill. "I love the new kid just as much, sometimes more; but I look back at photos of the smaller kid and get very sad that she's no longer around." Yes, this will break your heart a little. With everything new something old disappears and the only thing I can tell you is: enjoy every minute with them, easy and hard, nice and nicer, stressful and lovely. It will be sometimes the only thing that you'll have. Memories.

## QUESTIONS

1. Do you remember a situation when you had to be somewhere and your kid(s) actually did everything against leaving? What was the worst "late" you ever had?
2. Do you know about something you said and actually had in your list "I will never say this!"?
3. What are you missing the most from your previous life without kid(s)?
4. What is the grossest thing your kid did so far?
5. Do you remember a situation when your kid seriously came to you and you had to burst out in laughter?
6. What's the most boring thing in motherhood?
7. Have you ever had a situation when you were excited about anything and the kid(s) didn't see it like that?
8. What is the nicest memory with your kid you have so far?
9. Do you know about a thing, when your kid surprised you with something and you realized: "the baby is grown, again!"?