

# Perfectly Imperfect...

I'm far from perfect but, then again, who is?

I'm fully aware I have flaws and that I am (as the phrase of the moment goes) 'winging it' where Motherhood is concerned, but am I trying my best? Sure as shit I am and surely that's all that matters – isn't it?

Well, I would have thought so, but there are always those few arseholes, smug arseholes at that, out there who have to lob in their two pennies worth every now and then just to remind you that sadly for you, your best still isn't good enough. They are here as your handy morale crushers (everyone needs one of those right?!) sent to remind you that you're doing it all wrong and quite frankly, I am fed up with them and they can stick their 'helpful advice' up their butt holes unless I've asked for it.

Nothing can prepare you for the emotional roller-coaster that is motherhood.

The judging from others and 'helpful advice' can start as soon as your little cherub pops out of your lady bits (or the sun roof). You are presented with no parenting manual but many of these 'handy parenting books' have been written just to let us know we have, in fact, been doing it all wrong from the get go. As far as I am concerned, most of them (Gina Ford I am death staring you) can Foxtrot Oscar. I was lent Gina's, 'Contented Little Baby', book as a nervous and naive first time mother who had been blessed with a non-sleeper. I shit you not folks, Luke our eldest didn't sleep through the night, not even once, until he was 18 months old. The first full nights sleep co-incided with him spending his first night in his 'big boy bed' (his converted cot bed) and myself and Mr Knutts questioned why we hadn't done that sooner as we mourned the loss of a year and half of sleep. The fact of the matter

is, it was probably just co-incidence that he slept through that same night but we did kick ourselves for not de-caging the miniature monster sooner.

Back then, when everything was chaotic – and smelt of sick and baby shit – I wasn't sure why her book made me feel so uncomfortable, especially as a few of my other new mummy friends were raving about it, so I did try the routines and her approaches to sleep but, if anything, I cried as much (if not more than) Luke did. The guilt at leaving him screaming in his cot for hours at night (I'm not joking, it was literally hours some days) whilst going in and out every 5/10 minutes to give him reassurance that I hadn't just abandoned him was horrendous and exhausting. I ended up feeling broken, and it's no surprise I found those first few months with Luke overwhelming. Had I just done what my maternal instincts were saying, laid next to him, put him in bed with me until he had drifted off to sleep, not listened to half of the 'helpful advice' it wouldn't have been anywhere near as traumatic. In the end, I gave up on following Gina's demands and did what felt right for me. That may not have been the 'right' course of action, nor what the 'helpful advisors' or parenting manuals suggested, but it was what worked for me, and in hindsight, I should have done that from the very beginning.



Don't get me wrong, I appreciated the advice, a shoulder to lean on and support of my friends and family, but I didn't like the judgey-mc judge-faces out there who seem to crawl out of the woodwork as soon as you become a mother. Everyone has an opinion on everything and sadly, some of those people didn't know when to keep that advice to themselves which ended up with me becoming a worry head. Worrying that I hadn't heated my child's milk up for them (thankfully he wasn't fussy and drank it at any temperature), worrying that I hadn't taken him to our local rhyme time group to sing Old McDonald had a farm in a circle of other screaming babies from birth, worrying that he hadn't said his first word at 8 months. It was a world of constant stress and worry.

By the time Zak came along, we figured things couldn't be much worse than they were with Luke so we were fully prepared for a crap time of things again. As luck would have it, and it was luck, nothing to do with experience or Gina Ford, Zak was a sleeper. I'm not joking, he slept ALL the time. He was just so different to Luke. He would self soothe, happily be put in his room for a nap, sleep for a solid 12 hours and be happy as Larry when he was awake during the day.



Screw you parenting manuals and 'helpful advisors!'

As time went by, we realised Zak wasn't speaking very much. He was happy, developing socially and emotionally but no words were coming. By the time he was 3 and a half, he still wasn't saying much and we had to seek advice from medical professionals regarding a possible speech delay. Once again, the judgey-mc-judge faces were out dishing out their 'helpful advice' and I was left feeling like it was all my fault.

Maybe it's because he slept so much as a baby?

Maybe his ears aren't working properly?

Maybe you haven't spoken to him enough?

The guilt creeps in and you, once again, feel like a failure as a parent.

After a long wait, some speech therapy and lots of perseverance at home, Zak began talking age 4. He had a lot of catching up to do, and he still gets a bit confused with his words every now and then, but on the whole, he's fine and made

me proud as punch last week by speaking brilliantly in his class assembly at school.

I will never forget the first time he came home from pre-school and 'sang' me a song he had learnt that day, "1, 2, 3, caterpillar," – four little words, but he was saying them and it was wonderful...

### 1. [Zak Singing - age 4](#)

Moving on to the present day, we have very much just 'let things be' with Ben. Life is different now. The older two are busy at school, they have clubs, we are hardly home. Ben didn't get to have a routine that he chose thanks to school runs and things (Gina Ford would be eye rolling me right about now). If he was asleep at 2:45pm, I had to wake him up to get him ready to go out on the school run and that was that. He is a fairly good sleeper, we have hit and miss nights still but that's kids. We don't stress about things with him like we did with Luke and I have to say, we are probably much happier for it. People also dish out less advice the more kids you seem to have, presumably because they assume you're now 'an expert' in all things parenting.

The fact of the matter is, we aren't experts, we just give less of a fuck about what other people think of us and our parenting/life decisions. It's taken a while to get to that point, but it feels so much better this time around than it did with Luke back in 2008 when we were worried parenting rookies.

# **This 'give less of a fuck'**

# mentality is something I need to adopt in more aspects of my life now.

I worry way too much about what other people think of me personally and I really shouldn't. I find it almost impossible to say no, through fear of upsetting people or letting them down, and I need to stop feeling that way. I also find it hard to tell someone when I think they have stepped out of line, or said something I disagree with because I hate confrontation.

The fact is though, sometimes people do annoy me and say things I think aren't right and I shouldn't feel nervous about airing my opinion when they clearly do it so brazenly without fear of repercussion.

Putting myself out there in the form of my blog has been both a blessing and a curse.

I love being able to write, to have my own little space on the internet. I don't write for likes and shares, I write because it makes me feel better and I am able to write things down that I would never normally be able to say. In that respect, it's great, but because I do write and share my life so honestly, I can also come under fire quite a lot. People with loud voices and strong opinions often feel a desire to drop a smug little, 'Well I wouldn't do that,' or 'we don't do it like that', comment in here and there without a thought about how that might be received by the person it's intended for. This person may not know you, they may not even read your blog, but they love to share their two pennies worth and ruffle a few feathers. They seem to have adopted the 'give less of a fuck' attitude pretty well and I'm now of the mindset that it's fair game to engage in scribed combat if they feel the need to comment on something, even if it's trivial.

I don't pretend to be the perfect mum.

I don't pretend to be the perfect wife.

My house is often a mess, but that is because it's lived in.

My washing pile is sky high, but that is because we are lucky and have a busy and full life.

My kids don't pull their weight around the house as much as they should but hey, they're kids! I don't recall having to do much more than keep my room tidy and do some washing up every now and then as a child and I think I turned out alright (and let's face it, getting the kids to cook me dinner is just a recipe for disaster and a surefire way of ensuring at least one of us spends the evening on a visit to A&E).

I shout at my kids to tell them to shut up when they're being too loud, so I'm shouting at my kids for shouting. Yep, I know, the irony isn't lost on me there either.

I cry at TV adverts because having kids has made me emotional about everything.

I drink a Gin and Tonic a couple of times a week because being a mum, wife, homemaker and general life-keeper-togetherer is bloody tough and it makes me feel better.

I haven't polished my kids school shoes once since September and do you know what, I don't care. They have shoes on their feet and look vaguely smart most days.

I give my kids sausages, waffles, baked beans and peas and class it as a winning, well rounded, nutritious dinner.

So, what I have come to realise is that I am perfectly imperfect, and do you know what? I kind of like it like that.