

Help make Mothers Day magical, with Debenhams

I've no idea where the year is going already.

It seems like it was only Christmas a couple of weeks ago, and now it's (almost) March. Not that it feels like it thanks to the 'Beast from the East'! Come on Spring, let's be having you!



Easter is zooming it's way towards us (I have to say, this is one of my favourite holidays of the year, purely due to the fact there are Crème Eggs in the shops (yes, I know they've got smaller – so now I eat two in one go #noshame – but I still love them) and it is acceptable to eat Chocolate for breakfast once again.

Mothers Day 2018, UK: Sunday 11th March

Now it's nearly March, Mothers Day is just around the corner and in order to get ready for it, I have very kindly been given the chance to buy a couple of Mothers Day gifts for my lovely mum, courtesy of Debenhams. I was gifted an £80 voucher to use on their Mother Day gift selections – a legitimate excuse to shop, guilt free! What a treat!

I love buying gifts for other people – I genuinely get so much joy from watching friends and loved ones open them...



“Motherhood is Unselfishness”.

I feel so lucky to have my mum here still.



Family



Mothers Day can be a very tricky time of year for lots of people. Many people no longer have their mum, some people find the day hard because they long to be a mum but things haven't worked out that way. Life, it's safe to say, can be a bit of a jerk at times.

With that in mind, I am going to try and make Mothers Day a celebration of being thankful in our house, yep, even the annoying bits like the kids making a mess everywhere and my husband leaving his sweaty-bum cycling kit on the bathroom floor.

I said try...I'm not going to promise anything.



S.H.O.P.P.I.N.G – We're shopping!

We have a Debenhams store local to us and I will normally pop in there every few weeks when the kids are being compliant and aren't having a meltdown about having to go shopping. I have to admit that a lot of my shopping is done online these days because of that very fact, as well as often being too busy to go into town.

The [Debenhams homepage](#) currently has a convenient link on it that will whisk you off in the direction of some lovely [Mothers Day gifts and ideas](#); I had a browse around it myself last week looking for some inspiration for my mum. There is something for everyone on there; [perfume](#), beauty products, knitwear, food hampers, watches, jewellery; you name it they probably have it! And, if you can't find something to buy them, you could always get them a [Debenhams gift voucher](#) so they can go out and treat themselves at their leisure.

I asked my mum a couple of weeks ago if there was anything she

would like for Mothers Day and, in typical mum fashion, she said, "nope". I could have bet £1000 that this is the response she would give. Like a lot of mums, my mum is completely and utterly selfless and her response when I said that no wasn't an option was, "well why don't you use half on yourself and half on me?"

Erm, still no mother, it's for you!!

The lack of ideas given by mum meant I had free reign which is both brilliant and mind boggling in equal measure...

She isn't really into handbags, she isn't particularly into makeup but will dabble a little now and again, she likes to go out and enjoy herself with friends and family and I am glad to say she looks after herself a bit better now and will get her nails and hair done if something nice is coming up – and rightly so, she does so much for us all that she really deserves some self-care and pampering. With that in mind, I decided to get my mum a [BareMinerals 'Get Started' complexion starter kit](#) (she always says she looks tired and pale so hopefully she can make herself feel a little more happy and confident by using this) and I also got her a really nice room diffuser by [Butterfly by Matthew Williamson](#), which will look great in her newly decorated living room...that the grandchildren are (thankfully) yet to destroy.



LUXURY CANDLE RANGE
butterfly HOME
MATTHEW WILLIAMSON

FRANGIPANI SCENTED
DIFFUSER



I am sure that my mum will love her gifts from Debenhams. I also plan to pop to the shops and get her a nice bottle of Fizz, which she can enjoy all to herself, and a spring flower planter – me and my mum love Spring flowers and my Nan's favourite flowers were Daffodils. I love having them in the house this time of year to remind me of her.

As well as being sent an £80 voucher to spend on my mum, I was also very kindly gifted a [Smartbox Afternoon tea gift experience box for two](#). The Smartbox contains a voucher, which is redeemable at lots of different venues across the country, and entitles the recipient to a wonderful Afternoon tea experience, along with a friend. I plan to take my mum up to London for the day once the weather is a bit nicer (there are lots of super venues you can redeem your voucher at there, as well as all over the UK) and we can both enjoy our Afternoon tea together and, hopefully, do a spot of retail therapy, just

the two of us – which rarely happens these days. She doesn't know about this yet so I will present her with the voucher on Mothers Day along side all her other lovely gifts – I can hazard a guess this will be the highlight present for her, she really loves going for afternoon tea!



These gift experience vouchers are a brilliant idea for loved ones who don't want 'stuff' and would rather have a nice day out or an experience instead.

“Things come and go, but memories can last a lifetime”.

Whatever you're up to this Mothers Day, and whoever you're spending it with, I hope you all have a lovely day and I am sending all my love to those who aren't looking forward to it quite so much. May your day be filled with love...and hopefully a bit of booze too!

Disclosure: I was gifted an £80 Debenhams voucher and an Afternoon Tea gift experience in return for this review. All words, thoughts and opinions are my own.

[Oh My Blog \(March 2017\) –](#)

Featuring Two Hearts One Roof

Oh My Blog is a monthly interview series, where fellow bloggers come together to answer a series of questions on a specific theme. This is a chance to get acquainted with a whole range of bloggers, some of whom you may not have heard of before, and learn a little more about them!

Each month has a theme and this month, the theme is Mums (because it's Mother's Day soon!) and I'm hosting the lovely Chantele from Two Hearts One Roof.



1. Introduce us to your mum. What's her name? What does she do? Reveal her age if you dare!

My Mums name is Julie, she is in her late 50's, she has done many things in the past hairdresser, beauty therapist, children's ward receptionist and now a cleaner in a special needs school.

2. What's the one thing your mum always used to say to you?
Count your blessings and tidy your room!

3. Someone's playing your mum in a film. Who is it and why?

Lol! Angelica Houston, I've always thought she looks a bit like my mum (although mum will probably kill me for saying that!) It's the hair!

4. She's won the lottery. What's the first thing your mum buys for herself?

A BMW Z4! She has one on lease and loves it, so she would be straight to the garage to get herself a new one. She loves driving!

5. What embarrassing story about you does she always tell when you meet new people?

She doesn't really tell any embarrassing stories to be honest.

6. What are your plans for Mother's Day this year?

Actually I will be away in California for Mother's Day this year, it's my first as a mum as my little dude was born in June. I think Mum will be having a meal out with my sister but not sure what I'll be doing, Will have to see if hubby plans anything for me

7. What's her favourite TV show at the moment?

Spring Watch or Great Train Journeys!

8. What's the biggest or most important thing that your mum inspired you to do?

She supported me and Jon when we started our business (www.crossjonesphotography.com) .

She didn't inspire us to take the leap to launch the company but she was definitely a huge factor in us being brave enough and financially able to do it.

9. Your round at the bar! What's your mum drinking?

Dark Rum and Coke

10. What's the biggest different between you and your mum?

She's an obsessive cleaner and I'm not! Lol Jon does most the cleaning in our house.

11. Most important question of the lot. What is your mum's stance on 50 Shades of Grey?

Does she love it? Hate it? Not even know what it is?

I believe she read the first 2 chapters and thought it was crap so didn't bother with any more of it.

12. What's your favourite memory of your mum?

Probably the day she met her grandson, he's the first grandchild and I've never seen her so proud or besotted.

13. What do you think your mum was like as a kid?

She was probably a good girl I think, but probably a bit

bossy.

14. Cast your mind back a bit; what was the thing you did as a child or teenager that made your mum the angriest she has ever been with you?

Oh tough question either moving my boyfriend in at 17 (I'm married to him now! So we were pretty serious!) or me not getting the grades I needed to get into Cardiff University the first time round (which she blamed on having said boyfriend).

15. Finally, what's the BEST piece of advice your mum ever gave to you?

Don't waste time on people who aren't worth it.

If you enjoyed this post, you should check out more of Chantele at her blog and social media channels.



Blog: [Two Hearts One Roof](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Pinterest](#)

[Youtube](#)



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.

The Potty Training Poem...

Before I start, a disclaimer. Any similarities that are found in this poem to my life, or that of anyone else's, is purely co-incidental.

Oh, who am I trying to kid, of course it's about my sodding life!

Potty training.

Literally and metaphorically, a shit time in your parenting life...

The time has come my little one, for you to use the potty,
Life is so much better when there's no poo upon your botty.
This part is where your wee comes out and this part lets you
poo,
and when you've mastered the potty my child, you can sit upon
the loo.

"Wee-wee coming" the cry rings out, the toddler needs to pee,
"Go-go-go" the mummy yells, as she whips him off her knee...

Down come the trousers, as quick as a flash, then onto the
potty he goes,

“Wee-wee gone” says the little one, a false alarm I suppose.

“Uh-oh!” says the toddler, with a grin on his face, he’s stood
in a puddle of piss,

“Oh sodding hell!” the mum says in her head, “how the chuff
did my life become *this*?”

“Don’t worry darling!” she says out loud, forcing a smile from
within.

“Fuck this shit”, she says to herself, “I’m off to crack open
the Gin”.

“Poo-poo coming!” the toddler now yells and the mum runs as
fast as she can,

she slides on the floor like a ninja and whisks him away to
the pan.

“Uh-oh!” says the toddler, a smirk on his face, a distinct
whiff of faeces appears,

a peek down his trousers reveals a huge stinky turd and sadly
confirms her worst fears.

“Where do we poo my sweet little boy? On the potty or in your
trousers?”

The mum tries her best not to shout, “What the fuck!” as she
deals with this stinkiest of encounters.

Her nostrils offended, her stomach is churned, the stench will

not sod the hell off,

How can a person so small, cause such a stench which makes
you gag and cough?

Weeks pass on by, and with each one that does, the training
doesn't get any better,

She begins to think her child's pissing on things, merely to
upset her.

The sofa is covered in stains and weird smells, "Is that stain
on there chocolate or poo?"

She gives it a sniff to investigate more, "Ah, it's definitely
the latter. Ewww!"

The mum decides that maybe her toddler just isn't ready for
potty training yet.

"I mean, to be honest this child of mine doesn't care if his
nappy is wet."

She decides that it's best to just call it quits before her
patience is thinner than thin,

so she puts him in a nappy, heads out to the kitchen and pours
a fecking massive Gin.



Interior design addition by my toddler. Piss on the sofa...

One of the most fun times in your parenting career isn't it,
potty training?

Intravenous Gin. It's the only way forward...

Happy 60th Birthday Mum!

I can't let today pass by without giving the creator of me a mention.

My wonderful Mum is 60 years young today.

How time has flown by quite this fast I've got no idea. Seriously, I don't know how these kids can be driving around and drinking in in pubs when they were only born last week in 1998?! It's utter madness I tell you!!

To me, my mum doesn't seem to have have aged one jot. In fact, she was the proud owner of a very special perm for many years and she looks older in some of those photos (yeah, you know, the ones from a few weeks ago in 1992?) than she does now.

Sorry mum ☹☹☹

I'm also in complete denial about her, and anyone else I know for that matter, getting older.

What does age mean really?!

It's just a number.

60 is the new 40 so they say!

But if I listen to my mum, she tells me about the odd ache here, the odd niggle there, I do come crashing back down to reality and remember that the years are ticking by. We are often so swept up in watching our kids grow and change that it's very easy to forget that as they grow older before our very eyes, our parents are doing the same.

Unrelenting time.

I almost punched someone square on the nose the other day when I heard them say Toy Story was 21 years old.

“Are they having a chuffing laugh?! 21 years old?! Computers were only invented 10 years ago!!!”

I will never take my mum, or any of my family for granted. I know full well how lucky I am to have her/them and I am thankful every day that I came to be a part of this very special little family...though they may not say the same about me ☐☐

#soontobetheblacksheepofthefamily

So, for you mum on your 60th birthday, here's a poem...obviously.



When I grow up...

When I grow up, I'd like to be,
a nurse or a doctor or maybe a tree!!!
That's what I would say when I was 4,
when I was ignorant of what life could have in store.

When I grow up, I'd like to be,
a dancer on stage for people to see!
That's what I would say when I was 13,
when I was carefree, young and ever so keen.

When I grow up, I'd like to be,
a teacher so children can dance and feel free.
That's what I would say when I was 20,
when ambition was high and I had opportunities aplenty.

When I grow up, I'd like to be,
a mum to my own little family.
That's what I would say, when I was 25,
when life gained much more meaning and you're trying to
strive.

When I grow up, I'd like to be,

just like my mum, she's my idol you see.

That's what I say now, each and every single day, thank you for bringing me up this way. You're the most wonderful mum I could've wished there to be, and I'm thankful you're the one that belongs to me.

Love you Mum

(even when you had that bloody perm ☹☹)

Gem.x



A photo from the other day, you know, 2006... ☹☹