

Being a Parent

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Twenty-nine years ago, when I was just a few months away from becoming a mother for the first time, I thought I was making a twenty year commitment from which I would retire once my child was independent and on her own. Three years later with three children at my side, I still blindly thought that motherhood was a career that would eventually wind down and I would magically revert back to being a non-mother again someday.

I suppose some of my thinking came from my relationship (or lack of one) with my own mother and I also believed that someday, I would no longer be needed by my children hence my worth as a parent would automatically be reduced. Funny though that as my capacity as a nose-wiper and nursemaid ended my role as a teacher and soft shoulder grew. I've learned that parenthood never ends; it just changes and for that I am forever grateful. We learned to parent from our own parents who in turn learned from theirs. Some parents are better than others and some are nurturing teachers while others are not. If we are lucky, where our parents lacked, other parent figures came into our lives and picked up the slack. Parenting until recently was really just a happenstance, sometimes a sense of knowing and more often hit or miss. In this day and age prospective parents can take courses from building self-esteem to proper disciplining to effective communication among other topics. It would have been wonderful to have access to those when I was growing up with my children however, I did my best and they are all well adjusted and productive despite my lack of parental education.

The most rewarding thing about being a parent is reaching that phase in life when you are still needed, though in a reduced capacity and you now become friends. I will always be a Mom, a source of advice (though often unheeded) and now I am also a confidant and a friend. I love this role and when I look in the mirror and find new lines on my face instead of being horrified, I am grateful because I know that every one of them was earned. I am also grateful that this is one "job" that I cannot retire from and my early beliefs were misconceptions after all.