

That time I found peace as a mother

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And Then I Got Pregnant

Sometime after my third child turned one, I was feeling pretty good on the parenting front.



I was making strides in my career, I was set to embark on my first-ever solo vacation with my hubby, all-you-can-drink swim-up bar included, and for the first time in six years, I was neither pregnant nor nursing a baby.

My husband and I were almost giddy with excitement and I reveled in my newfound freedom, watching myself almost as if I was an alien from outer space, as I was able to hold a friend's newborn baby, sniff him blissfully and then hand him right back without so much as a swoon from my uterus.

Yes sir, I had arrived at the ever-sought-after, rarely-found point of peaceful parenting.

And it lasted approximately two weeks before I got pregnant again.

I spent a good part of my first trimester hovering between embarrassment at my "unplanned" pregnancy and mourning the loss of my carefree status as the mother of three kids who could all walk and talk and almost all wipe their own butts. (Two outta three ain't bad, right?) I finally

got my stuff together around week 15 when I started feeling a teensy bit better physically and started to get excited for all that joy that only a new baby can bring.

But I also resigned myself to being OK with the fact that I wasn't going to embrace it all — that I was going to have a hard time trying to figure out childcare from scratch all over again with a newborn, that I probably wouldn't magically have an easy time breastfeeding and that I would once again experience the burning bicep pain of constantly holding a baby who isn't fond of being put down.

And mostly, all of those things have come true. It has been challenging to welcome a fourth baby into the family, but I also have to admit that I failed to take into account how incredibly, incredibly awesome it would be to have this little person around lighting up our entire world. I was so focused on all of the hard work it would be to add a new member to our family that I forgot that no matter what, seeing her smile and watching all of the love pour out of her siblings as they fought over who got to hold her would more than make up for the tough moments.

But in the interest of full disclosure, I will confess that I haven't hit my mothering stride again since those few weeks when I was cocky enough to think that I was all over this parenting gig.

Which got me thinking: Was that the whole point all along? That just when you think you've got a handle on being a parent, the kid has the audacity to grow into the next stage and you're starting all over again?

That the only real thing you can count on as a parent is that you will most likely always experience a mixture of joy and hardships, triumphs and struggle, pleasures and pain; and that if you want peace — well then, you're going to have to look for it in the most unexpected of places.