

“An Open (and Honest!) Letter to All New Moms”

When I started this project I was going to write what I called the comprehensive guide for the new mother. The book was going to cover all topics relating to motherhood from pregnancy, labor and delivery, recovery and surviving being at home. I started writing this book when my firstborn son was a baby - that was fourteen years ago. Fourteen years ago I had looked for a manual to help prepare me for motherhood and all that it entails. I couldn't find it. I intended to provide it for the mothers who came after me.

Turns out there are thousands of books on the subject today. As I wrote, I tended to spend more time on some topics than on others. I felt that I had some great tips for being in the hospital and tips for labor and delivery but I seemed to spend more time on what happens after you have a baby. Ironically, there were fewer books available to help a new mother *after* the birth of a baby. As I wrote more, I tended to write about the “motherhood experience” specifically as it relates to women of my generation.

I do not presume to speak for all women. All women of our generation have different thoughts and feelings regarding this experience we call “motherhood”. The fact remains, though, much about caring for babies has not changed. Nor is the job of taking care of a baby very different from the experience of women of past generations.

How could I share this knowledge and at the same time provide women of our generation what they need the most during this point in their lives, solutions?

Number one, help them. Specifically, teach women how to get their baby to sleep through the night. This age-old question has been asked time and time again. Everyone's got an opinion. And then again, sometimes there is no opinion. Some of the books say you just won't get your baby to sleep through the night and that's the way it is. Not so, I say. Just read on about the baby schedule and the baby commandments to help your baby sleep through the night. Why is this important? Well, besides providing a new mother with her long lost sanity, it is the first step toward her being able to adjust to her new role. Adjusting is so important because with the birth of the baby there automatically turns a new chapter in her life. Whether she is ready or not, her life will change.

The next topic I wanted to share was an issue that reared its head for me as a new mother. Do other mothers feel the same way about the “motherhood” experience and more specifically “Why do people have

children in the first place?” Knowing that another woman has had the same feelings can get a new mother through her day.

This experience of motherhood can be a lonely one. Women are afraid to broach this subject with each other for fear of being labeled a “bad” mother. It turns out this sentiment has been carried down through the ages. I provide some interesting research on Friedan’s “The Feminine Mystique” and draw the connection between women of our generation and the previous generation as they relate to the role of housewife.

In addition to the great change to her life in being completely responsible for another human being, a woman has now automatically become a housewife. Maybe she decides to stay home maybe she decides to go back to work, either way; her perspective is going to be different. If she’s home, she may be shaking her head and missing the workings of an office, of financial dependence, of coffee without interruption. If she’s at work she may be suddenly limited in her ability to give her all to a job. She may be having trouble adjusting to the pangs of guilt she may feel for leaving her baby in daycare or with a nanny. The book provides discussion on these various issues and some tips and affirmations a new mother can employ to keep herself confident in her decision, whatever that decision may be.

Most importantly, and what women today want the most, I believe, is answers. Our generation of mothers is so busy that they want to know what works and they are not afraid to try it. With the busy lives they lead, new mothers are interested in flourishing. They want to continue in their careers, continue to look and feel good, and continue to have healthy, stimulating relationships with their husbands. To do this they need the tried and true tips and rules to survive this phase of their lives.

In order to uncover these tips, I interviewed hundreds of women and (some) men from the East coast and the West Coast to get the information I sought. I asked questions of whomever would talk to me - friends, neighbors, family members, my mother, my mother-in-law, my mother’s friends, women on playgrounds, and strangers on planes for over fourteen years. Their insights as well as my personal experiences and research are in this book.

Finally, I wanted to provide this vital information in a simple, conversational way that would appeal to new mothers. And, of course, nothing appeals more than humor. The book is written in a humorous context because, as you have already learned, any experience is better with a little humor. I sincerely the new mother’s who read the book find the help they need to reach all their goals.