

TOP 10 LIFE CHANGES OF A NEW PARENT

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I've never been so happy or so surprised by how things change when we have kids. Moms, I hope you laugh. Because amidst the deep, profound, sacrificial love that doesn't *feel* like a sacrifice, we enjoy our glass of wine and giggles because it's so fun to know that other people "get it." We have to laugh on occasion together about the crazy things we do for our sweet little ones who are our very hearts walking around outside of our chests. So here it is, my top 10 life changes of a new parent:

1. **The "mama bear" instinct.** I have now identified a "could be" weapon in every room in my house in case there was ever an intruder. I might be smaller than an actual bear, but I. Will. Take. You. I once brought up this newfound *paranøia* protective instinct, and literally 5 other moms expanded on this. By the end of the conversation we had discussed action plans for fires, intruders, tornados, and escape routes. Yes, crazy. The pregnant first time Mom quietly listening in the corner seemed a little freaked out. My guess is she has her plan now too.
2. **My kid is going to wear nothing but Gap, Crazy 8, and other trendy stylish**

adorable boy clothes... enter super hero obsession. Sometimes they don't even wear fully respectable collections of clothing, they just wear costumes. We once delivered dinner with Roman wearing a lion costume... and he roared the whole way there. Girls do this too, it's just princess stuff. A couple of weeks ago I took care of my friend's daughter, and she came wearing a princess nightshirt and purple leopard print pants... sort of matched, but probably not ever going to end up in a Gap ad. She quickly found my 4 inch silver heels (jackpot) – which she walked around in for an hour. She rocked them better than I do.

3. **Did that just come out of my mouth?** The best moments are the ones when other people hear these crazy comments, and we say them like it's normal – it's usually their response that causes us to realize how insane it is that the circumstance warranted our words. "Hold on Mom – 'Cruz, do not lick the tree!" I like this one a friend sent me: "Brooks, would you please take your foot out of your brother's mouth?" Did I seriously have to say that? Yes. Just yes.
4. **You can fall asleep anywhere.** Our first date after having Roman was a movie. Because it required nothing of us. I can tell you nothing about it because I was doing the mouth open head bob until I finally crashed head lopsided over the back of my seat. More than one Mom I have spoken with has fallen asleep in the grocery store parking lot, because hey, the kid is sleeping, I'm tired (understatement of the century), and it's quiet. Groceries can wait... ZZzzzzz. The lazy boy recliner has been used as a bed for more nights than I care to mention. Best purchase I ever made. But as easy as we can fall asleep, we are easily jilted back into reality... enter #5.
5. **If there were a sneeze at 3 in the morning, REM sleep couldn't keep me from knowing which child it was.** We aren't always totally lucid; but we have remarkable insight when it comes to our kids. It's like a 6th sense. I have a friend who mentioned she frightened her husband with the zombie like movements and sounds she made as she jolted out of bed into the general direction of her crying child. There could be a party going on downstairs and you wouldn't move, but if your baby coughs, you are up. Sometimes this freaks out our husbands, but I regard it as a super power.
6. **I went from happy go lucky to type A almost overnight.** It would shock and

amaze people what us moms carry around in our purse/diaper bag. And I mean, you can't go to the zoo without packing diapers, a change of clothes, snacks, sanitizer, drinks, the stroller and your sanity (just the essentials) without a little forethought. And getting this done and your kids ready successfully requires masterful levels of speed, agility, negotiation, and the reflexes of a ninja – because someone is probably running in the opposite direction that you need them to be and for reasons unbeknownst to man, you were not born with a 3rd arm. And don't forget - you have to get on this effort ASAP or you're going to be late and wait in line behind all the daycares bussed in by the thousands. Get. On. It

7. **I can wipe away snot from my toddler's nose with my scarf/shirt/whatever without breaking conversation.** I mean, hey, it's washable, right. Wait... right
8. **We bounce a lot.** Babies are surprisingly happier when they are bumping around like a Mexican jumping bean rather than being gently rocked (which is what we imagine before their sweet entrance). We start adopting this walking bounce that puts our precious little ones to sleep and generally keeps them happy pretty much everywhere. I once went into the grocery store and completed probably 2 aisles with "the bounce" kid free before realizing I was actually doing it
9. **Potty training.** Really that should be enough of an explanation. I mean, we have to *train* our children not to let loose and pee just anywhere. And the irony for our boys is that seemingly seconds later, we're telling them they can pee outside on a whim. Because they're boys. Girls are way classier. Please stay that way, girls. Future daughter in laws, my boys are going to need your sophisticated ways some day when they burp and say "excuse me from the bottom of my heart," and then pee by a tree. I'm sorry. I love you. Please forgive me and come to my house for Christmas.
10. **Breast pumps are actually not horrifying** – As a single girl with all the freedom in the world I watched one of my besties using this thing and was totally horrified. Kind of felt like she was a cow being tortured. My opinions shifted quickly after my first was born and this glorious invention was my bff after a couple bouts with mastitis (which would be way more effective than waterboarding). But as amazing as the pump is, it makes you wonder if you

might be just a little crazy. I mean, when you are sleep deprived, sitting there doing nothing but producing milk and just trying to stay awake since you are pumping at 4 in the morning, this crazy suction noise starts kind of sounding like words... or songs. I know, insane. But try NOT singing "[pump up the Jam](#)" at some point and ask yourself if you're completely lucid. What I love is that I got several messages from Moms giving me perspective change insight, and it was around 3 in the morning. Facebook is alive and well past bedtime for nursing moms. Back to pumps. Working Mom's might have it the worst – legally your employer has to honor your need to pump during regular intervals throughout the day; and so you're given a quiet office with shades drawn. But you know the whole time you're just hoping and praying that nobody walks in on you because God knows you're never going to get the professionalism back after that encounter. I find it applaudable (pretty sure I just made up that word, but it *should* exist) that a woman can one minute be a total boss, working deals, making calls, approving orders, etc.; and the next minute attach a suction cup to her nearly exploding boob. How do you switch hats so quickly??!! Applause.

For the sake of smiles, I encourage you to continue the fun. Tell your stories, share your insights, make us laugh. Nothing matters more than truth and eternity, but in the still quiet moments, we need to laugh.