

How God Transformed 1 Teen Mom's Life

I am 'Mum' to three amazing biological children. Sir J, age 14; Lady M, age 12; and Little Miss, 7. You can stop pulling that puzzled face; these are not their real names—just how I refer to them in order to respect their future online identity and privacy.

My initiation into motherhood didn't begin with a pretty white dress, two rings on my finger, a Christian husband who'd vowed to love me for life, or a mature and well thought out approach to "family planning."

Nope, it was quite the opposite actually. Instead, as a drug-addicted, just turned 19-year-old, partying at a bar with friends renowned for its biker population, I met my Prince Charming. Actually, I met some random, heavily tattooed, good-looking bad boy who was a prospect for the Hell's Angels. And so, with the knowledge of his first name, and age (27), I accompanied him home ... to play chess, you see. Soon after our first introduction, we began "dating" (I use the term loosely). And a few weeks later, BOOM, I was pregnant! Just like that. Who knew chess had such life-changing consequences!

My relationship with Biker Boy was never going to last. We were worlds apart, and although he didn't think it was a good idea for me to have a baby at such a young age, he still respected my decision to continue with the pregnancy and raise this unexpected child. And so, we parted ways. He alone, me with burgeoning belly.

As a single, pregnant, 19-year-old woman, self-detoxing from a cocktail of drugs, my journey into motherhood was never going to be easy.

I was the only child of divorced parents, living in a low

socioeconomic area. Teen pregnancy was the norm, and I was acutely aware that I'd just become another statistic. But I made a decision: I was going to be different; I was going to break the mold; I was going to break the poverty cycle! I might even study to become a lawyer! Yes, I would make a difference indeed!

And so my baby boy arrived, and I was a mum. Motherhood came easily for me. And I don't say that with even a hint of conceitedness. Truly, it was just the only time I had ever, and have ever really, known what I was doing (I was still in my teenage years; I was aware all this could change!). But I guess that being so young also meant that I had the advantage of ignorance. Yes, advantage.

I'd never read parenting books, I certainly had no "mummy friends" to swap notes or make comparisons with. It was innate instinct and Holy Spirit baby rearing. Thankfully it was during the early stage of my pregnancy that I decided to do things God's way—most of the time.

Remember how I was gonna break the status quo? Yeah, I showed them! I got my law degree while being a single teen mum! I lie. Actually, when my son was 14 months old, I became pregnant, again, after an über short-term relationship. Sigh. Some behavior patterns prove harder to break than others. Though this time, I'd not hooked up with a biker. Instead he was a chef, a young man the same age as me, who decided he wanted to do the right thing and make me his wife. And he did. Exactly six months after we began dating, just in time for Lady M to arrive.

I spent pretty much the first 10 years of motherhood trying to prove to everyone that I wasn't a complete mess-up, that despite my background I could raise healthy, intelligent, obedient, polite and caring kids.

It wasn't until Jordan, aka chef boy, and I had been married

five years and settled into our instant-family-married-life, that we felt as though we had the right to plan for a third child. We knew we'd disappointed so many people, especially from Jordan's side.

Let's be real: It's not like you really want your son to fall in love with some chick from the wrong side of the tracks, let alone one who already has a kid! Don't get me wrong, people were supportive, but we weren't entirely stupid—we'd heard the whispers, seen the tears, felt the vibe. It's not like people were excited for us

Choosing to have a baby, in wedlock, with mindful planning was an entirely new experience. That pregnancy was when I really stepped into the role of motherhood and felt like I'd earned it, not that I'd had to prove I was worth it. I finally owned motherhood, along with my own mothering style, quirky as it often seemed to others. For I have always believed I am not raising children, but instead raising people who will become adults and therefore must learn the responsibilities that come along with it. Yes, ironic and somewhat hypocritical coming from me, but I'd learned these lessons the hard way, so it was best I do all in my power to prevent my kids from doing the same.

Motherhood became a symbol of responsibility, maturity. But it was around this time I also realized, that mums are allowed to have their own personality. We are allowed to have a life outside of our children. It's actually OK if your kids aren't the absolute center of your universe at all times!

I'm going to take it a step further, it's OK if your husband is in fact your primary priority, above the kids! Yep, just said that. And no, I'm not talking from some submissive, anti-feminism, wife point of view—quite the opposite. I speak purely from an equal, friendship, partnership perspective.

And so the traditional thoughts of motherhood, martyrdom and

baking that I'd long held onto started to dissipate.

I can no longer answer the question of what it means to be a mom, because it takes on all forms.

There are a handful of phenomenal older (not old!) women in my life, who mother me spiritually and emotionally. I have childless friends who carry fearless and nurturing mother traits that will never be used on biological or adoptive children of their own, and yet they mother. I have two amazing kids from my church family, who call me "Mom" and another who calls me "Mama B." I am not their mother, and yet there are some levels, different with each of them, on which I mother them. My heart aches for injustice that has been done to them, and I know God has placed upon me a burden to speak life back into the parts of them that have been neglected and broken.

There have been times during my marriage when I have experienced heartbreaking personal circumstances, and in those moments, some of the greatest and most healing mothering came from my husband.

It is only within the last three years that I have been able to identify and relate to Father God. Up until that point, I just couldn't trust a God who might be a Father. And do you know what? God never asked me to see Him that way. Instead, up to that point, for 30 years He mothered me! He is not threatened by our disbelief or anger.

To be a mom is to see a need in the life of someone else and fill it. What form that takes, how that looks, which gender enacts it, I don't know. But I know it's far more diverse than can be expounded upon.

What I do know is this: The best mothers I have personally come across are those who are intimately tuned in to and obedient to the Father's Heart. And you know what? The Father's Heart and a mother's heart aren't too dissimilar.

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