

Why You Shouldn't Strive to be 'Normal'

Dear little peanut,

I pen these words on Monday, in celebration of your whole big first week of life. I'm practically ancient compared to you, with my wrinkly elbows and a tummy that made me a little depressed when I tried on skirts yesterday.

I need to tell you something, and maybe you'll be quick to learn it and a whole lot happier most days than I am:

You are different from everyone else.



I was just at a family reunion of ours, and I think the family may be shocked to know how much of the time I spent in misery, saying to myself, *Why can't you be normal like all the rest of them?*

A wife and husband went on a run together and then jumped into the lake for a swim. *Why can't you be more athletic like her?*

A cousin-in-law played for hours with my nephews in the lake. *Why can't you be sweeter with little kids like she is?*

An aunt in her 70s went zip-lining. *Why can't you be more adventurous like her?*

A mother-in-law set up Minute-to-Win-It Games. (I shook hands with my son, in agreement that I would pay him \$10 if he could deflect attention from me so I wouldn't have to play. NOT JOKING. I owe him \$10.) *Why can't you be more playful like them?*

A brother-in-law whipped together breakfast. *Why can't you be*

better in the kitchen like him?

One night I burst into tears in bed next to that preacher man of mine. *"Why can't I just be normal like everyone else?"* I cried. With his six years of training in psychology and 20 years experience in professional counseling, he laughed. A guffaw really. (And can someone tell me why we spent 10 years paying off the debt for his master's degree, if that's all he learned to do in that school?)

"Honey, tell me who is normal. Who is it that you think is normal here?" he asked.

Here is the secret he told me. Let me whisper it in your ear, precious baby, while I inhale the scent of your Johnson & Johnson lotion:

No one is normal.

So you too, sweet little Madelyn Paige, are not like anyone else.

God is an artist, and a true artist creates something new every time. He does not have His people made in a factory line. Instead, He puts his finger to His lips and says *Hmmmmm* a lot while he is making a person—knit one, pearl two. Nine months of detail work.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,*

I know that full well. (Psalm 139:13-14 NIV)

There will be lies—that you have to be like somebody else in order to be valuable. But you are simply a one-of-a-kind masterpiece, and all we expect is for you to just wake up

every morning and be yourself.

And little sister, you don't have to be good at everything. My word, you do not have to shine at every single thing. **You'll shine in a few ways, and those will be the little glimpses of God's handiwork we get to see every day.** That's enough for us. By the way, we already think you're perfect.

I don't want you to grow up too fast—let's keep those dimpled handles for a long, long time—but I sure can't wait to see who God has shaped you to be.

It's gonna be good.

I'm clapping already.

Happy Every Day, my lovely girl.

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