

## Letter from the editor: Stop the Mommy wars

Posted by [Joy Shrum-Reporter](#) On 08/02/2017

**Hollywood, MD-** If you're not aware yet, I should tell you that I am the mom of a five year old with autism and three year old triplets. My life is nothing short of crazy. My kids are very high energy, spirited, opinionated and they always keep me on my toes.

Parenting is hard enough, whether you're the parent of one or ten. If you're a parent trying to raise your children in this day in age, you're always reading about how you should parent. What you should feed your children, how they should be disciplined, how much TV they should watch. I could go on and on. It seems everyone has an opinion about how you should be raising your children. I admit, I'm guilty of it, too.

The mommy wars are real. I see it all of the time, especially on social media. Often times I do find myself coming to the defense of other parents because I get it—kids can go from zero to crazy in 60 seconds. They're unpredictable. They find trouble. They can make you want to rip your hair and two minutes later they're curled up in your lap and they remind you, again, why you love them so much.

So what's the point of all of this? I just want to say thank you. Thank you to the other mom who didn't sit in judgement the other night when she saw me struggling with my brood. Thank you for offering a helping hand. Thank you for reassuring me that I wasn't alone.

Earlier this week, I bravely decided to take my four children and my 8 year old nephew to the pool. I don't often do this alone but my husband is away at training for six weeks and I wanted to enjoy the last few weeks of summer. As always, the kids were excited to head to the pool. As soon as we got there, they could barely sit still long enough to remove their shoes before splashing into the water.

For the first 30 minutes or so, things were going relatively smoothly. Aside from the fact I was yelling at my little ones to walk at the pool and not run, it seemed it was going to be a pleasant evening. Yep, I should have known better.

At one point my oldest eyed the "big" pool and despite my continuous demands for him to stay in the "little" pool he raced over and jumped in. (He was wearing a puddle jumper so I wasn't overly concerned). I went after him, leaving my little ones behind with my nephew. Go ahead---I know you want to judge me for that decision. (Again, they were all in puddle jumpers) Unfortunately, I can't be in two places at once. So I jumped in the larger pool to fish out my son. That's when my two little guys decided they want to join us. So as I'm trying to gather them up, my oldest spots the diving board! Oh no—here we go!!

He takes off like a thoroughbred out of the starting gate and doesn't break his stride, even with my repeated pleas to stop and the lifeguard blowing his whistle. The diving board was roped off that night. If you think that was a deterrent, you have never met my son! He, instead, went around to the side of the diving board, climbed on up and raced to the end and jumped in!

I immediately dove in after him. I dragged him out of the pool and firmly told him we were leaving. So here I was dragging my very heavy 5-year-old over to our seats, all the while trying to tell my little ones it was time to go. Of course they don't want to leave either. After several minutes of me trying to round them up and raising my voice more times than I can count, I had them all out of the water. Now for the real struggle—getting them all to the car while my oldest is having a meltdown.

So here I am, three upset little ones, my nephew doing his best to help me out, arm full of towels and shoes and my oldest refusing to leave. I grabbed the back of his puddle jumper and was literally caring him out like that. Suffice it to say, there was no way I was going to get him to the car like that.

In swoops another mother. One who saw the whole debacle unfold. She kindly asked if she could help and I graciously accepted her offer. She helped round up the little ones, who eventually cooperated and headed to the car. She then relieved me of the towels and shoes I was carrying so I could properly carry my oldest to the car during his temper tantrum.

Before she stepped in to help, I took a look around and noticed several people staring at me, the crazy mom at the pool. I wanted to burst into tears. I'm sure some were passing judgement on my parenting techniques. I'm sure others were sympathizing with my predicament. At that point, none of that mattered. What mattered was the need to get my children safely back to the car and back home.

As we walked back to my car, this lovely woman assured me that all parents have experienced this before. Sometimes, you just need to hear that. You need to hear that you're not alone. You need to be assured that your children aren't the only ones who act like this. You need to know that at the end of the day you're doing your best.

Now maybe not everyone's children act like mine. All children are different. All of my children are different. I have to handle them all in a slightly different way because I know what works with them. Sometimes absolutely nothing works because they're young children and they have minds of their own.

I wish more of us, myself included, stopped judging and would lend a helping hand to a mother (or father) who is clearly trying to do their best. We should be lifting each other up, not tearing each other down. We should take these opportunities to teach our children a valuable lesson.

So again, to the woman who offered help, thank you. I wish more people were like you.

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