

***You're a Wonderful Mom. End of Sentence!***

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***Another mom complemented me yesterday, and she put herself down. Why we need to stop making self-deprecating comments and celebrate how wonderful we are.***



Another mom complemented me yesterday.

“You’re a wonderful mom,” she said as she walked past me and my kids.

And then she did what we so often do as moms. She put herself down.

“You’re a wonderful mom,” she said. “You put me to shame.”

School is back in session. My daughter is now in kindergarten and I have joined the ranks of elementary school moms. My preschool-age-son misses his big sister during the day, so walking to school for pick-up in the afternoon is a family affair. It helps that the school playground and sports fields are open to the public after school, so we can run and play and let off steam before we head home.

Yesterday, my kids wanted to run in circles in the grass. Then they wanted me to spin them in circles, and they took turns with me holding ankles or arms and spinning them out in the air. We were all giggling and laughing and having a tremendously good time. And, for time-pressed-moms, remember that play with your kids counts as a workout! If you’re lifting and spinning a child, remember to roll your shoulder blades down and tuck your tailbone in a little, to stabilize your core – bend your legs a bit so that you’re lifting with your stronger lower body – and keep your elbows in to your sides so that you have stability in your upper body, while also working out your arms. Play counts as exercise and its way more fun than the gym, with no childcare required!

We were spinning and laughing when the mom walked by with her kids. Two of her kids stopped and watched. They said something to their mom about how it would be fun if they could spin, too. She kept walking, so they kept walking, and then she smiled and hollered across the grass to me.

I shrugged and smiled back and said, "I'm getting my workout."

I wanted to say something else, but I wasn't quite sure how to get it right, and by then she was further away with her kids, and my kids were asking for another spin, anyway.

So I'd like to say it to all of us.

Can we let go of our mom-shame?

I'm not sure why, exactly, as moms, we feel so much guilt. There is always something we could do better, something someone else does better. As I thought about this article, I thought about the things I don't love, don't excel at, notice other moms do better than I do. But then I decided to set the example, so I'm not going to give my laundry list of "what I don't do or could do better." We each have our own talents and the things we love. Our kids don't want a different mom with some other skill set. They want us.

We're raised to be self-deprecating. It starts when we're young. A friend says, "That's a pretty dress," and we say, "This old thing?" By the time we hit adulthood, it's engrained. A colleague complements your work and you point out the flaws or what you could have done better. We see comparisons, everywhere, reminders in every one of what we could do better. Motherhood doesn't create the tendency, but somehow it seems to reinforce it.

There is a passage in the book *No-Drama Discipline* by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson. It says, essentially, that whenever you beat yourself up about something you could have done better with your kids, to remember that you love your kids and are well-intentioned. If you could have done better, you would have done better. As you learn more and gain more skills, you will do better. It's such a kind reminder that we are all doing the best we can. We shouldn't feel ashamed because we're not doing what someone else is doing – we're doing what we are doing, and it's the best we can do.

If I'm spinning my kids in circles in the park, there are a thousand good reasons why you don't spin yours. My way is my way. Your way, and the one that feels right for you and your kids, is the one that you should do. It was so awesome to have another mom tell me I'm doing a wonderful job. I just wish she hadn't felt like my wonderful job diminished her wonderful job in some way.

So – mom in the school yard – back at ya, you're a wonderful mom, too. End of sentence.



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