

How to test the patience of a parent – to the Limit!

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If you are a parent you will know that it is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have. But have you also found that from the minute your child is born there is always somebody ready and willing to give you “their” advice.

Unfortunately most of the advice is not asked for or wanted.

Whether it is your mother, aunt, grandmother, your neighbour down the road, or the postman, everyone is only too willing to tell you, "You're not quite doing that right," "Well I wouldn't do that if I were you," "Well in my day..."

Even your best friends who are parents themselves make you feel guilty when they say, "Well I didn't do that with my children." And you look at their children and they are models of perfection and you then worry that yours will turn out delinquents because you forced them to eat all their brussel sprouts.

There also seems to be a multitude of books written on the subject of child rearing, most of which seem to be written by either Psychologists or Paediatricians, who I suspect have never had any children of their own.

When does anyone ever say, "You are doing a great job you have lovely children keep up the good work."

Have you also noticed that before you had children you were not usually noticed, you could blend in anywhere, but once you have a child with you, everyone seems to notice you and wants to make your acquaintance. Usually at the most inconvenient and inappropriate times.

Supermarkets are particularly good for this. Picture the scenario, you are with your baby, who has just at that moment decided to wake up and scream.

You have a heavy shopping trolley, you need to get to the bank before it closes, and you are struggling to stop your toddler from picking up and eating every chocolate bar within it's reach - which the supermarkets so cleverly place in easy reach, and low down for this very reason.

And also to stop them from toppling over a very precariously balanced five-foot stack of baked beans. If this wasn't stressful enough just at that moment someone decides to come up to you and start cooing over your children.

They want to know names, ages, sexes, and will you be having any more! Sometimes they will part with information about their own children or worse still their relations.

You finally manage to politely escape and breath a sigh of relief, only to find another person in the next aisle is waiting to pounce. And just wait until you get to the checkout!

There also seems to be an unwritten code as to how you should dress children even in this enlightened age.

By this I mean blue for a boy and pink for a girl and heaven forbid if you dare to break this code. I have lost count of the number of times my two daughters have been referred to as boys because I choose to dress them in blue. When I politely correct people as to the right gender of my daughters all I receive is a hurt look and a silent "Well how was I supposed to know if you will dress your child in the wrong colour!" If a child wears a beret does that make them French!

Just being in a public place seems to make you fair game for prolonged stares, comments, and advice. You can't even go for a walk in the park on a summer's day without someone coming up to you and telling you that you should put a hat on your baby, or a walk on a winter's day without someone telling you that your baby should have something warmer on. As an adult you wouldn't dare go up to a complete stranger and tell them they needed to wear a warmer coat! Well would you?

You are walking with your toddler and they are happily playing safely some distance away but clearly within your eyesight and a complete stranger tells you that you need to keep a closer eye on them.

Have you ever been on the receiving end of "Ooh isn't your child small for their age?" "Ooh isn't your child big for their age?" "Well I think your child should be doing this by now, is there something wrong with them?" or, "Well I'd take them to the doctor if I were you."

You go for a quiet meal in a restaurant and the people on other tables seem more interested in you than their own meals, they even stop eating to turn round to look at you. Even the waiters and waitresses start flocking around you - not I might add to take your order - but to coo over your children.

Almost everywhere you go people seem to stare at you, transfixed by your children.

But why is it then, that when you are struggling to get onto a bus with a heavy pram, baby and toddler in tow, trying to get through a heavy swing door to enter a building, or your child has just thrown themselves onto the floor in a fit of tantrums, that nobody bothers to lift a finger to help you!

Suddenly you become invisible again, except for a tut and a mutter as people step over your prostrate screaming three year old.

Where are all these people and advice givers at five o'clock in the morning? When you've been up all night because your child has been ill, to help you because you are exhausted due to the fact that you have been up every two hours breastfeeding, or to comfort your toddler who has had a particularly bad nightmare?

Where are they to help wipe tears and put a plaster on a grazed knee, to take a worried child to it's first day at school, to help sooth the pain of a screaming baby with colic or teething pain.

I think the moral here is,

If you are a criticiser and advice giver, ask yourself why you need to do this – is it because you think you made such a bad job of bringing up your own children?

If you are a child watcher - have some of your own, then you won't have the time to watch other peoples ;-)

And finally -

If you are a parent - you are doing a great job, you have lovely children, keep up the good work!

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Julie is a qualified Midwife and Nurse – now practicing Allergy dowsing and therapeutic massage. She promotes environmentally friendly living and natural Health remedies. You can find out more about her new book –“101 tips for environmentally friendly living” and sign up for her regular newsletter at;
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