



What is a
Mindful Mama?

By Nicole Obenshine

many mamas

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my mama

Before I get into the bulk of this book with my story and opinions, I want to make sure I first thank *my mama* who has been the biggest influencer, cheerleader, companion, and support system of mine. She is the strongest mama I know and without her I would not be where I am today, personally or professionally. Her challenges in life have inspired me to persevere through anything that comes my way, even if I have to use her shoulder to cry on first. She is truly the wind beneath my wings and I am forever grateful for her presence in my family's life. I can only hope that all of you mamas have your own mama to lean on like I do. A mama's love is the most precious in the world, and you will only know it once you are a mama yourself. Thank you mama, for everything. I love you.

pre mama

My whole life I was always a “maybe mama” I had names picked out since I was 8 years old, and loved playing with my plush animals and baby dolls. I was always a cuddly, nurturing soul growing up and the “mom” of all my friends. However, as I got older and started college, the words “I am never having kids” were spoken quite often. I was so career driven and focused on becoming stable and successful in my own right, that kids were not an option. Also, I was terrified (beyond belief) of the thought of carrying a child, birthing a child, and all the “medical stuff” involved. I had a huge fear of needles, blood, and pain. So like many things that I tend to compare in my life, it was an internal battle between logic and emotion.

I graduated college at 21, and then something unexpected happened at 22. I met the love of my life. Perspective really changes when you now can picture your life with someone else. That was never a “necessity” while in college earning my degree. John hit me like a brick wall, we met and were married in 3 months. *Now there’s a whole backstory to that, but I’ll leave it for another time.* I was able to visualize us becoming a family, making memories, and growing old together. I knew he would be an amazing father, even if I wasn’t so sure I would be a great mother. Although we may have tied the knot rather fast, I still wanted to make sure we were “ready” before diving into the world of parenthood. Nothing can mentally prepare you for a newborn, but financial stability can be achieved. I called it, “In a home of our own with full time careers and some money in the bank ready.” That day came the summer of 2015, I was turning 25.

pre pregnant mama

I am a planner, and I believe in the law of attraction. The universe will give you exactly what you are asking for. So when we began trying in summer 2015, it was so that we would have a May/June baby and my mama would be off of school so she could help me, logical right? Well after 12 months of trying naturally, it was more like a really bad guessing game. I had some “cycle issues” and inquired about some fertility questions. Our initial consultation was August 22, 2016. I had made that appointment based on the assumption that I would get my monthly visitor about 10 days prior since I had been tracking and even though it was all over the place, it was a good guess. WRONG! It was Day 5 of my cycle, and that is the perfect day to begin a “fertility cycle.” *Synchronicity at its best.* So the whirlwind began, blood work and ultrasounds were my new BFF. I got over my fear of needles pretty quick during this time. It made me stronger, and more confident that I could go through pregnancy.

First cycle came and went, it did not work but I was not too upset because we hadn't planned on jumping in so quickly. Second cycle began, and I had a trick up my sleeve. When you “trigger shot” you will “falsely find a little plus sign on the stick.” Thus far, I had only ever seen negative pregnancy tests. I wanted to see a positive one, so I could visualize and meditate it becoming a reality. So on 10/1/17 I did just that (the day after my 2nd IUI), and had some fertility crystals that I had on me at all times that helped with conception, also I ate some fresh pineapple. My mind was completely focused on positive results.

The universe responded in a BIG way. I had an instinct that I was pregnant, and went to my monthly Reiki Share at the Center of Life in Balance, 10/11/16, where my instincts grew stronger. The next day, I began spotting and took a test, *it was negative.* I was upset because I really thought all my positive efforts would pay off. I told my mama that day, and even spoke about if the 3rd time does not work, maybe I would take a break so that I wouldn't be “super pregnant” during the summer. Again, I am a planner. Deep down I still knew something wasn't right. Later that day, I received a text from my sister, which ultimately led her to telling me she was pregnant, unexpectedly. To my surprise, I was thrilled for her, I was not worried that I was not pregnant this month, I knew my time would come. It was incredible sharing this experience with her.

pregnant mama

I began my 3rd cycle blood work and ultrasound on 10/14/16. Each afternoon after your appointment, a nurse would call with your “metrics.” That day, all day, I was anxiously looking at my phone awaiting this call, because I still had hope that they were going to tell me I was pregnant. It was about 60 hours of a gut feeling from the time I woke up spotting, to the time I got “the call.” Indeed, I was pregnant, the tears began and I was then in fear of something going wrong. You know, that feeling that will NEVER go away. I was overjoyed, and called my husband, my mama, my sister, so many coworkers had found out because I was at work at the time. From there my pregnancy journey began. It was a lot less eventful than the actual conception. I had almost every “annoying pregnancy symptom” you could think of, but nothing too bad. A few food aversions, four weeks of morning sickness, swollen feet, and heartburn, all day-everyday. I lived on Zantac. I had great check-ups, and my little “bean” was completely healthy.

My due date was 6/24/17, but I knew he was coming more towards the beginning of June. Bean was a boy, and finding his name was probably the hardest part of my pregnancy. My Snoogle was my best friend since about 13 weeks and my meditation and self Reiki really helped me feel confident throughout my entire journey. I felt so connected to my little boy, and had hired the BEST DOULAS in the world to be by my side(Wise Birth Choices-Morganville NJ). We had built such a trusting relationship, that when the day came, that my water “leaked”, 6/4/17, *I knew I could do this* and have a wonderful experience. Well, 36 hours of BACK LABOR, doctor’s telling me that it was just false labor, and that I couldn’t be induced because I was only 37 weeks, my little munchkin made his debut. From Sunday to Tuesday, I labored at home, being sent home from the hospital twice because I was not dilated. Then finally, around 12 noon on Tuesday, I was 4 cm and admitted. I had an epidural at 8cm, and after 3, no joke, 3 pushes, Dylan John entered the world at 7:35PM, 7lbs 13oz -20 ½ Inches.

postpartum mama

I had an amazing birth, and a great experience in the hospital. I was healing fine, I had amazing support, and I felt so empowered. My little munchkin was happy, healthy, and home in about 2 days. I was initially breastfeeding, but it did not come natural to me like it did my sister. Dylan became jaundice about day 4-5, we spent the day in the ER waiting for labs, because it was a weekend and normal ones were not open. We supplemented formula and he was better within a couple days. I had the support of my doulas to begin breastfeeding again, but a few days after, something went wrong. Something in my brain switched empowerment to fear and anxiety. My husband went for Chinese food, and I had visions of knives and Dylan. I can't explain what I felt, I instantly called my mama. She then spoke with my doulas and set forth a plan of action, it was a Friday night, so Monday I went to my OBGYN, and he recommended a therapist that specialized in Post-Partum Mood Disorders. The visions didn't stop all week, and I did not want to be alone. I tried to use all my techniques of my practice, and they worked temporarily but I also had a newborn that needed my care. I stopped breastfeeding, tried to get some more sleep, and gave into treatment (medication) after about 2 weeks where the visions then transpired into hurting myself. It was the scariest thing I ever been through. Birth had been nothing compared to the way I felt. I was a "text book" Postpartum OCD case. I had to accept that I was okay, the baby would be okay, and that I had amazing support through this time. After a few weeks on medication, and weekly/biweekly therapy appointments, and daily meditation/Reiki, I felt better and was able to enjoy these precious moments with my baby boy. Please, I beg of you, if anyone feels off in anyway after having a baby, ask for support, do not be embarrassed, do not be scared they will take your baby. The professionals know when it's just PPOCD, or if it's complete psychosis. My main fear is that I would be fine one day and then just snap the next, it doesn't happen like that. Just be upfront about how you are feeling, there are so many options for support now. You are strong, and it is temporary. I never would have expected that the hardest part of pregnancy was after the baby came.

meditative mama

Now that you have a brief understanding of who I am and some insight of my journey, let's get into the reason I am writing this. I want to share my vision with anyone who will receive it. I want you all to give yourself permission to accept these words non-judgmentally. I want you to give yourself permission to feel any way you need to while reading them. I want you to give yourself permission to understand the impact you have on yourself and your children each and every day.

Meditation can be as simple or as extravagant as you want it to be. If you need to set up your space, put on music, light candles, and have no distractions around you- then do it. If you need to just take a minute to yourself and breathe a few times a day- then do it. Meditation is personal to every mama. The most important thing about meditation is that your intention is to quiet the mind, and focus on your breath. Become okay with the silence. Meditation is a technique that I truly wish they would teach from childhood. It should be a practice in schools just as important as the Pledge of Allegiance. There is no religious query attached, some religions may practice it more, but the art of meditation is that it is not attached to anything. If you can slowly integrate a few minutes of your day to it, and gradually increase the time, you will begin to experience all the benefits it has to offer. I am so excited as a mama, I get to teach my son how to practice meditation from the minute he can understand. I have been meditating and doing Reiki with him on my chest or in my lap since he was born. He also keeps me accountable.

motivated mama

Like I mentioned earlier, I was a career focused lady for a good chunk of my young adult life. Still to this day, one of my priorities is providing for my family. My husband and I both work full time like most families in America do. I have always been motivated to live within my means and teach my children a good work ethic. In my current occupation I see a lot of young, newly employed “kids” right out of college, and the lack of professionalism and common business etiquette is astonishing. One goal of my parenting is to instill positive values of interpersonal, communication, and professional skills. There should be a sense of self-esteem and pride in any work that you do. Children should also feel less entitled for certain opportunities, and more grateful for them. I also had to learn this lesson as a college graduate who wanted to make 50K as soon as I entered the workforce. Incorporating these values from an early age will set them up for success. Teaching the laws of the universe at an early age as well, can definitely give them an advantage for success throughout their lives.

messy mama

I seem to have my life together in certain areas, like finances and well- that is probably about it. Honestly, in most cases, I am, what I refer to as a “conflict of logic and emotion.” I am Obsessive Compulsive about organization and control of things, however I am messy and lazy. I am very left brained, however envy those right brained individuals. I am very organized and highly effective at work and coincidentally the baby’s room/stuff, but my bedroom and kitchen is a train wreck. What I have learned since motherhood, is that- it is OKAY. My son still loves me even though the laundry gets piled up. My son still smile’s like I am the sun shining back at him even if my hair is in a ponytail. My husband still manages to eat well even though I am not a 5 star chef. Basically, the world still turns and everyone will be just fine, so please don’t be so hard on yourselves. Everyone has their struggles and no one has the perfect clean home all the time. Give yourself a break mamas.

millennial mama

In case you have been living under a rock for the last 20 years, you know that our world has been consumed by technology. Now, I am definitely obsessed with the instant gratification of Google, and my phone is permanently attached to me at all times. However, it is not what I want to instill in my son from age 1. He is already at 6 months, aware of my phone because it's constantly taking pictures of his super cute face. That does not mean I condone having an IPAD attached to children's hands to distract them while at dinner, or keep them quiet in a crowded place. Kids will be kids, I feel like we are SO worried about other people judging us that we will do anything to keep our kids quiet and the right perception. It is 2017, so the value of them being technologically savvy is important for their education and career paths, but that does not mean it should rob them of their creativity as a child. I was fortunate enough to grow up in the "perfect" time. Technology had evolved around the time I was entering into high school, therefore I was able to have a "normal tech-free" childhood, but also learned all that I needed to know about it to be successful. My mindful mama moment with tech is that it should, like anything, only be used in a positive manner for our children. "LIKE" if you agree, just kidding.

malicious mama

Most of you may have other “mamas” in your life that are critical, judgmental, or just plain mean. Whether they are family, frenemies, or nosey strangers, I am sure we all encounter them when we enter motherhood for the first, second, or umth time. These negative beings in our lives can truly affect us in our vulnerable state of postpartum or even after. Please, please, please do your best to let go any comment, criticism, or action from them. It is much harder than it sounds, I will be the first to admit. It is a reflection of them and their character- not you! I personally had a rough situation arise a mere 4 days after my beautiful little soul entered our lives. It persisted to become exponentially worse until he was about 4 months old, it still isn’t “resolved” but I have (struggled) to not allow the negativity to enter my energy field, or his. I reiki him before and after every encounter. Wish love and peace on those who treat you the worst, because they obviously need it. Don’t let them destroy your energy, it’s not worth it. Rise above, and turn those malicious mamas into miniscule mamas.

modern mama

There is an internet “meme” that I saw soon after I had my son, it said “How to be a Mom in 2017: Make sure your children’s academic, emotional, psychological, mental, spiritual, physical, nutritional and social needs are met while being careful not to overstimulate, under stimulate, improperly medicate, helicopter, or neglect them in a screen-free, processed food free, GMO-free, negative energy free, plastic free, body positive, socially conscious, egalitarian, but also authoritative, nurturing but fostering of independence, gentle but not overly permissive, pesticide free two story multilingual home preferably in a cul de sac with a backyard and 1.5 siblings spaced at least 2 years apart for proper development and don’t forget the coconut oil.” “How to be a Mom in every generation before that: Feed them sometimes”

Now if you are still with me, I found that funny yet accurate to an extent, but also oversimplified. However, the point is, the world we live in is full of expectations and opinions. The reality is that energy, love, and the necessities are all you need for a good life. Mindset is truly it “IT” factor. Teach your children to be grateful, teach them how to treat their bodies like they actually like them, and teach them to be kind to others. If you can do those 3 things, the rest will all fall into place. Either way- they will be OKAY. As modern mamas we do have all these expectations, but we also have the power to shut them down.

mighty mama

We must remind ourselves just how strong and powerful we are. Just a reminder from me- and I have these moments to myself pretty often, WE GROW HUMANS. Let's not downplay the amount of energy and consciousness that entails. We do it without even thinking about it, I know when you are pregnant, the baby is ALL you think about but you do not say to yourself "grow a finger, make the blood flow, etc." your body and the baby just does it. That is beyond the common thought for most of us, but when we take a minute to reflect, we are the mightiest creatures on this planet.

With that being said, I know many of us doubt ourselves, myself included. I am out of shape and need to truly stop being lazy and treat my body like the temple it is. I too often allow crap to enter it through my emotional-eating, excuse-making mouth. We truly can do ANYTHING we put our minds to. That is why this year, I am going to master yoga. I owe it to myself to prove how amazing I am. Yoga is challenging but also so rewarding. I know it will not happen overnight, but if I persist, it WILL happen. I challenge you mighty mamas, to do the same. Not necessarily with yoga, but with anything you currently doubt that you can accomplish. You can do it.

magic mama

In tandem with the previous page, I want to make it clear, you are all Mighty Mamas. This is how you should view yourself. However, to those aforementioned humans that you grow, you are Magic Mamas. You are their heart and soul, their everything. It is truly magical to experience the love between a child and their mama. I think sometimes we need another reminder of this. Your baby does not care how tall you are, how your hair looks, how much money you make, if you use generic brand or designer, to them- you are it. It is your responsibility as a magic mama to reciprocate this energy. Be a role model, show them how to be kind, how to love, how to be strong and confident. Please do not try to be a magician and create these false illusions that society, government, religions, and media portray in our world. Just be magical, do not tarnish your beautiful pure and sweet souls that you have created. This is very hard, we cannot shelter them from reality but we can show them that it does not need to consume their world. Show them how to think, be creative, learn, relax, explore, question, and flourish, regardless of the world we live in. Be magical.

miindful mama

So here we are, the answer to what a Miindful Mama really is. During this book you have been able to read about me, my experiences, and my recommendations about motherhood and life in general. I hope you were able to gain some useful insights along the way. If at the very least, you were able to realize something wonderful about yourself as a mama, I can call this a success.

Being Miindful means being aware of yourself, living in each moment, and being grateful and happy along your journey. It means you are able to let go of what does not serve you in a positive way, but take control of your choices and never doubt yourself. And if you doubt yourself, accept the fact that everyone is flawed at times and that's perfectly fine. Pick yourself back up and remind yourself just how amazing you are. Any mama, can be mindful. It is a choice, it is our right.

Another question that you may want answered is, "What is with the double ii in Miindful?" Well, I wanted to subtly remind us all that we are now not just an "I". We are responsible for ourselves first, however we are also responsible for our families and children. Therefore, the "ii" is both "I am" and "I have". You are blessed and hopefully seeing that little sign, resonates with you in ways that only you can explain. Miindfulness is personal to each of us. It is the most personal self we can ever be. Being a Miindful Mama, is the gift we can all give to ourselves and our children.

my sincerest gratitude

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