

Mum's Manifesto

Remember that scene with Tom Cruise in Jerry Maguire when he started writing that manifesto? Well that was me writing this. When I came up with the idea of writing a Mum's Manifesto, the ideas poured out of me and I stayed up well past my bedtime to get it all out on paper (11pm – which is seriously late when you have a pre-schooler that doesn't sleep and 6yo twins that wake at 5.30am).

If these words speak truth to you, I'd love for you to share your thoughts using the hashtag #MumsManifesto. You can tag me on your fav social media too. I'm @TalesofaTwinMum on Instagram, Twitter & Facebook.

I will seek out better hiding places to sneak chocolate while I feed my kids fruit for pudding.

I will not compare my kids' ham sandwich triangles with other kids' organic, fat-free, sugar-free, home-baked lunches.

I won't cry when my three-year-old decides to empty the entire contents of her drawers so she can put on her 15th outfit of the day. Although I will allow myself to sniffle as I put everything back into her drawers. Again.

I will be strong when I see the laundry basket has been stuffed to the brim with clothes my boys haven't even worn. The bin is full because they've 'tidied' their bedroom. This is good. #Iamwinning.

I will try my best to read the mind of my three-year-old at breakfast time so that I understand when she asks for "horn-flakes" (Cornflakes) she is actually meaning Crispies or Cheerios, thus preventing the daily argument that I got her the wrong breakfast ready. Again.

I will remain cheerful in the face of epic tantrums. Even the ones that are so bad they take out all three of my kids at the same time.

I shall not iron. Ever. Anything requiring an iron can stay hanging in wardrobes. Life is too short. #bantheiron

I will welcome five hours of sleep as though it was nine hours. And I will accept that this is my new normal for at least the next decade. I will also invest in a better concealer and a big pair of dark sunglasses.

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I will not feel bad for checking my phone. It's part of life for our kids, and without it we wouldn't have Angry Birds and five minutes of peace.

I will allow my kids to sneak into my bed sometimes because they won't be this little for long. One day they won't want night time cuddles and this breaks my heart into tiny pieces, so for now it's OK. Even when they sleep horizontal with their feet in my head.

I will. Try. Not. To. Shout. I will try as hard as I can. And if I fail? I'll forgive myself.

I accept that I cannot keep all of the balls in the air at the same time. Work, family life, home-cooked dinners, socialising, freshly-made packed lunches, a clean and tidy house – mostly I will attempt all of these but the reality is I can only keep up one or two of them at a time. And that is OK. That is normal. If my focus needs to shift temporarily - due to a work project or a family activity - I promise not beat myself up about the other areas that are suffering. My house can wait. The kids can eat tuck shop. We can have a few take aways. Good friends will understand. The world won't stop spinning and my 'normal' will reset once the busyness has passed.

I will encourage my children to follow their dreams and shoot for the stars. I will explain that people can sometimes be negative if you follow an unconventional path, but that it's OK to be different – the journey is theirs alone and it's alright that other people don't understand it.

I promise not to lose the plot when my boys put their school shoes on the wrong feet. And I promise not to cry when I realise they're wearing each other's shoes. Again.

As my kids wake me up at 5am (again), I will look forward to the day when they're teenagers and I can get my own back.

I will encourage my children to think outside the box when it comes to their career. They don't have to be trapped in a system - there are ways they can innovate and blaze their own trail in the world. I will remind them to listen to their gut, follow their passions and do what makes them happy just as my parents always did with me (I was too stupid to notice their amazing parenting until I became a parent myself. Note to self: I must regularly remind my kids how awesome my parenting is so they don't have to wait 32 years to find out).

I will accept there are places that it's easier to avoid if I'm out solo with three kids. I won't apologise for saying no to invites to places that I know won't end up being fun for any of us, or which will put one of my kids in danger of being lost or me in danger of losing my mind.

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I will be happy that my kids are eating fishfingers and baked beans, because fishfingers are made of fish (which is good for you, right?) and beans are vegetables. This is infinitely better than living on biscuits, so I am a good mum and my kids are healthy.

I will not compete with working women who do not have kids. Their time, energy and sleep levels are always going to be at least 100 times mine.

I won't listen to productivity or time management advice from anyone that a) doesn't have multiple young kids **and** b) isn't the main carer. Getting up at 5am is my normal – it does not give me an extra two hours to get any work done. And if I decided to do the meditation or calming yoga that you recommend, the kids would be feral before breakfast.

I promise to never look under the sofa. Ever. If I avoid it long enough, my husband will always clean under there eventually.

I will try not to apologise to the kids when I need to go off to work. I am working because I love what I do, it provides for my family, I want to set a good example to them and I NEED to do it for my own well-being. I will instead be positive about going off to work to show them it's a good thing for all of us.

I will not ever step on Lego. I'm hoping that by writing it down, the power of the universe protects me from this evil injury.

I will take time out. Even if that means locking myself in the bathroom for ten minutes 'me time' to use the toilet or to hide in the shower each day.

If I overhear a parent snapping at their child in anger, I will understand that this was a fraction of their day and I won't judge them on that. We all snap when pushed too far – it doesn't make any of us bad parents.

I will not cook an extravagant meal and expect my kids to eat it. The amount of time invested in making a meal has a direct correlation to how much they're going to hate it.

I will not feel sad when I have to throw yet another apple away that has been to school and back too many times. At least it got out of the house and had an adventure before it hit the bin.

I shall try not get broody when I see little squishy newborn babies that can't talk back, trash the house or run away. Three is my magic number. Any more may push me to insanity.

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I will make up for the chaos of weekday school-run mornings by making a huge family breakfast on the weekend. I will take any excuse to eat pancakes, even if I do have to make them myself.

Lusting after pin up hunks in vampire-related TV shows is not only totally acceptable for thirty- something mums, it's actually compulsory.

I will try my best not to compare my kids to other people's. My kids bounce off each other and the walls in such a unique way that there is no comparing them – they are in a league of their own.

I won't feel guilty for vacuuming the dining room table and I will proudly clean my house with babywipes.

I won't argue with my husband when he finds the washing I did two days ago still sitting in the machine as he hunts for a clean work shirt – he doesn't understand that the way to get your clothes cleanest is to wash them, forget about them and then re-wash them a few days later. #truestory

I will accept that boys cannot wee without missing the toilet some (pretty much all) of the time.

I will try not to go up to a new parent of twins and open the conversation with "it gets easier." It does, of course, but they don't need to hear that right now.

I will try to remember to tell other mums when they're doing a great job because I know they don't hear this often enough. If you've made it to the end of my Mum's Manifesto, that means you. Yes YOU. You're doing an awesome job - don't ever let anyone else tell you otherwise.

This is my #MumsManifesto.

Have I missed anything? Share any ideas you'd like me to add to the manifesto on social media (I'm /TalesofaTwinMum across FB, IG and Twitter) and when I update the document, I'll add your manifesto quote and social handle.

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