

# IF WE CAN'T HAVE IT ALL, WHY WERE WE RAISED TO THINK WE COULD?

By Lauren Bayne

I am an only child. Raised by a doting, loving, baby-boomer mother who did everything in her power to pave my way toward success. She grew up during a time where it was becoming more and more status quo for a woman to go to college, get a degree, and have a real career! Many thanks go to my grandmother and great grandmother for paving the ways to make this even a possibility.

But then something happened to the next generation. The baby boomer offspring were raised to believe they could have it all. And while a large percentage of baby boomer women did not choose to have a career, they sure weren't going to raise their daughters not to. What set forth was an emerging movement of girls like myself who chased the degree, the career, the title, the awards, the respect, while never really stopping to think about what makes them different from a man after all. Motherhood.

I've been fascinated for years by the journey of a woman and more so by her journey into motherhood. Who she was before, what her dreams were and how that may or may have not changed after a baby came into her life.

For me, it changed everything. Physically, emotionally, spiritually, I digested the world in a whole new way. And I constantly fought motherhood because I saw it as the enemy, or why I was no longer going to be able to achieve the professional goals I had set forth to accomplish. This was largely in part because of my personality. And there are plenty of women out there who are wired differently, who I admire and respect and applaud for their ability to have a career and a family. But for me, I wanted to go to the gym and mommy group and also start a business, get freelance writing gigs and work as an executive recruiter. I wanted to be on the preschool board and a corporate board. I wanted to rock him to sleep for naps and rock a new business pitch. I wanted to bathe his tiny toes and bathe in an after work happy hour. I WANTED it all.

So I abandoned my corpo dreams, started reading all the mompreneur books, fiddled around with blogs, attended work-life balance seminars and still kept coming to the same conclusion: If I want to be at the bus stop, if I want to see all of their performances, if I want to go on the field trips and help with their homework after school, something will have to sacrifice. And that made me sad, because I was raised to believe that I could have it all!

I mourned the loss of pre-mom me while I basked in the tiny breaths that came from the little human next to me. This constant tug-of-war between my professional goals and my maternal ones resulted in a lot of emotional anguish that I never wanted to put myself through again.

My mother was always supportive of whatever I decided, but then she said something to me I will never forget. "Honey, one day when you are old like me, you will look back and realize that your children are your success. THEY are your legacy. THEY are the most important work you will ever do."

I immediately shut her down and said, "That was your dream Mom, not mine, I want more for myself!" Knowing intuitively in my gut that she was right.

So what do baby boomer offspring like me do when we're raised to be more than moms?

I interview moms for [TX M.I.L.K.](#) because I'm fascinated by this exact question and I'm learning that my generation is actively working on a solution. I urge all parents with daughters to put motherhood into the equation when raising them. I wish I had thought more about what I would do professionally after having a child. I wish I had planned better. But the reality is, motherhood can't always BE planned. And what it does to a woman, no man can understand. And that's OK. Men have similar struggles, but the maternal experience cannot be replicated. I think it's a disservice to women to attempt to equalize this. And I feel badly for the men, like my husband, who are assumed to work the longer hours even though they want to be on the field trips too.

So what is the answer? I think it's evolving. And every mother's "All" has many definitions. But for me, I will raise my sons to study and work toward family-friendly careers. Professions that enable them to be home for dinner, to work with clients and bosses that understand the importance of the spelling bee and soccer practice. And to never forget their children are the most important work they will ever, ever do.

Thank you Mom.