

insights



Mother's Day Reflections

by Michael Grose

Mother's Day is a time of recognition, celebration and reflection. With this in mind I asked the Parenting Ideas expert team members, who also happen to be awesome mums, to share their thoughts about parenting and mothering. I think you'll love what they've written.

Kate Johnson

Parenting and teaching children on the autism spectrum

How many children do you have? What are their genders and ages?

I have four amazing children. Three boys aged 12, 6 and 3 and a girl aged 8.

What do you love about parenting?

I love seeing my children grow into their personalities and being part of helping them find their spark. I love the simple things, whether it is girl-time doing the shopping or chats at night on the bed with the younger ones about their day. I love seeing them push through and achieve things that they thought they couldn't. One thing I am big on is being present and being there, whether it is at their school event days or cheering them on where possible from the sidelines. And I am a big fan of a warm hug.

Martine Oglethorpe

Technology, education and parenting

How many children do you have? What are their genders and ages?

I have five boys aged 17, 16, 14, 8 and 6 and I have a little girl who passed away at 5 months of age.

What lessons did you learn from your own mum?

My mum taught me the importance of family and of friends. To always make time for dinners, holidays and time spent with those you love. She taught me that nurturing our relationships throughout life will always give us the greatest rewards. She taught me how to entertain well, to always have extra food and drink and to always have my door open to others. She taught me the value of being generous and the importance of helping others in need. She taught me the importance of finding work that you enjoy and how this can enrich your role as a mother. And she taught me that being a mum is the most amazing gift you can be given. Sometimes it's clouded by the most crushing of fear, but ultimately it offers us the greatest of joy.

Sharon Witt

Resilience and parenting adolescents

How many children do you have? What are their genders and ages?

I have two children. A daughter, almost 18, and a son, aged 21.

Best piece of mothering advice you've received?

The best piece of parenting advice I have received is to not stress too much. We are all doing the very best we can on any given day with what we have. Sometimes, we will be exhausted and if all we can manage for dinner is scrambled eggs on toast, then that's okay. Don't beat yourself up and certainly avoid the comparison trap. Don't compare yourself to other parents and what they are doing. Remember, parenting is a full time gig, 24/7. Just do your best and make sure you look after yourself too.

Dr Jodi Richardson

Wellbeing and mental health

How many children do you have? What are their genders and ages?

I have two children: a 10-year-old boy and an 8-year-old girl.

Best piece of mothering advice you can give others?

One of the most important ideas to teach our kids is that it's completely natural to feel a whole range of feelings, that all feelings are okay and that all feelings are normal. It's important for them to know that while feeling happy is wonderful, no-one feels happy all the time. Teach them to notice and name their feelings, to tolerate the discomfort of difficult feelings, to express their feelings in healthy ways and that, although some feelings feel hard to bare, they always pass. All of these lessons are priceless.

Our facial expressions, tone of voice and words all contribute to the empathy we share with our kids and are central to validating how they're feeling. Whether we agree with them or not, our validation shows them that we get it and that we know it's hard. Validation is a first step to helping them feel understood and able to begin winding back their emotional responses.

This is all great advice and wonderful reflections about parenting and being a mum from the Parenting Ideas team. This Mother's Day, I invite you to reflect on what you enjoy about parenting; to think about the lessons you've learned from your own family of origin; to consider the great advice you've received along the way and to think about the learnings that you can share with others. It's good to sit back, take stock and be grateful for what we have, what we've experienced and what we can share with others.



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's the author of 10 books for parents including *Thriving!* and the best-selling *Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It*, and his latest release *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children*.