



Hindsight Ain't Always 2020

Description

Ah, yes. Another year has almost passed. But not just any year. January is next week, which means that January is next week, next month, next year, and also the start of the next decade. It's easy to see why so many people are bombarding social media with a **new decade, new me** quotes. I must admit, I am one of them. Although I haven't been posting those kinds of quotes, specifically, I have found myself spending a lot of time reading quotes and articles about self-healing and self-reflection. Like so many of you, I, too, am very much looking forward to this new decade. It's a new chapter, in a new book, and it presents itself as a brand new opportunity for me to find and discover what it is I actually want for myself and my life. For the past almost 13 years, I have spent virtually every waking moment focused on motherhood. With three children all close in age, the chaos never ends. Not to say that kids **not** close in age don't bring chaos; but by the time I had my third child, my eldest was 3 1/2, so it wasn't like I could give him jobs to do, or ask him to help in any way. Perhaps some of you guys would have been able to do good for you. Your 3 year-olds must have been perfect saints. Mine, however, was rambunctious and all over the place and almost 10 years later, he still is.

But now that my kids have gotten a bit older (my youngest will be 9 in a couple of weeks), it has dawned on me that during all of this time, I paid so much attention to those around me my kids, my ex-husband, my friends that I forgot to pay attention to me. After dropping my kids off at school, I would promptly sit on the couch, catching up on reality TV, while sorting laundry, picking up after the kids and doing dishes. By the time I realized how unproductive I'd become, the hours had whizzed by and it was time to pick up my kids from school and resume my motherly duties. And now here I am a decade later and I still have no clue what I want to do with my life. I do know a few things like I want to find a job. I want to volunteer and give back to the community. I want to take care of my own mental health so that I may be more present when I'm with my kids. These are all great goals so what's preventing me from actually pulling the trigger and going after them? I read a quote a while back that said, **If you want it, you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse.** At first this might seem like a simple concept. Quite the contrary, however. It's actually one of the main struggles I've faced for the better part of my life. oh, I don't know my entire life? Don't ask me why if I had the answer to that, my therapist and I would have worked through it ages ago. I suppose the short answer is probably this: While learning how to navigate motherhood, I forgot how to navigate my own life. Because let's be honest there is way more to

a mother than simply being a mother. We are also people. We have goals and aspirations and desires, but for many of us, we move them to the back-burner because most of us feel that in order to be a successful parent, we must completely immerse ourselves into our children's lives. Before you shake your head and hit the comment button to tell me how offended you are by that statement, let me clarify. I am in no way implying that working moms aren't dedicated to their children. Quite the opposite, actually. Moms who work 1, 2, 3 jobs to support their children are in a hero class of their own. I'm referring to the SAHMs who either left their careers in order to care for their kids, or those who didn't even figure out their identities **until** they had children. I am one of the latter. Until I became pregnant with my first child, I worked a regular 9-5 job. Years prior to this, my then-husband and I agreed that once we had children, I would stay home and care for them. As old-fashioned as that may sound to some, to me it made perfect sense. After all, why pay someone else to raise our children, when we had the financial means for me to do it, myself? So I did just that. I left my job and have spent over a decade caring for them, helping cultivate their personalities, and making sure their needs were met and doing what I could to help them flourish as individuals. And it has been, and continues to be, the most fulfilling job I have ever had.

I suppose had my husband and I not divorced, I would still be in that same position - fulfilling my duties as a wife and mother, completely oblivious to the fact that during those years, I became so consumed with my identity as a mom, that I completely forgot about my identity as a woman. As a regular person. As a someone capable of making a difference outside of my home. And now that I am a single mom, it has become apparent to me that, while I cherish all the time I still currently have afforded to me to spend with my children, it has also become apparent that now that the role of "wife" is no longer part of the equation, what is left? While my kids are in school, or with friends, what am I doing for myself? The answer is absolutely nothing. Pause - I am not referring to the self-care that comes with traditional pampering - massages, shopping, girl trips, etc., although I do make sure to get my nails done twice a month, and the gray hairs on my head covered once a month. I'm referring to the kind of self-care that hits much deeper. The kind that allows one to rest their head on the pillow at night, feeling accomplished and proud of the contributions they've made that day - stressful or otherwise.

So here I am - mere days away from a brand new decade, and I see it as a start to a new life - something greater and more fulfilling than I could have ever imagined. Now the question I ask myself is, *"How the hell am I supposed to accomplish this? How do I begin? Where do I begin? How the hell am I going to make money? What is it that I even truly **want** to do?"*

Like I said previously, I have not had a full-time job, aside from motherhood, in almost a decade and a half - this is a daunting realization, to say the least. I haven't updated my resume, or written a cover letter since I began my previous job back in 2003. No joke. So, my first thought was, "Go to some job sites and just see what's out there." Now, keep in mind, because I have been out of the traditional workforce for so long, and because my kids have varying school schedules (annoying), my availability at this point is only part-time. I could do freelance or contract work, but in any case, I don't have the flexibility that most employers are looking for when hiring. On top of that, my experience at this point would make me only eligible for entry level positions. This combination of restrictions has left me with job opportunities that I haven't accepted since high school and the first two years of college. Not to sound like a total snob, but there's just no way. There is just NO WAY.

I've also been searching in fields that appeal to my skill set — content writing, editing, proofreading — anything in the arena of writing. And thus I run into a whole new problem — the chicken/egg effect. Every single job opportunity, and I mean **every** single one, requires a resumé listing your experience. Well, I don't have any. No one cares if "mom" is listed. Even though, if you put it into perspective — "mom" should be an EXCELLENT job title to add! It shows that I have the capability of multi-tasking and doing damage control, which means I'm great at public relations, and have the ability to sell like my life depended on it. (If you've ever had to get your toddler or child of any age for that matter to eat their veggies, then you know precisely what I mean). I have patience and discipline and a knack for seeing the positive in almost any situation. I am punctual and an outside-the-box thinker! I am a problem solver, and I work well with others. Who *wouldn't* want someone like that working for or with them? And yet, because direct deposit has never been available for these skills, and because I can't ask my 10 year-old to write me a letter of recommendation, here I am. Writing a blog post about the trials and tribulations of motherhood, and the difficulties I've been facing trying to find employment.

I reached out on social media, asking for help creating a resumé with such a lengthy gap, and several people responded, offering their expertise. To those people, I am so grateful. A few people also messaged me to suggest I work for myself or start my own business. While this idea certainly appeals to me, I immediately found myself asking, *"What does that even mean??? How do I simply work for myself?"*

Unfortunately, until I have figured out how to answer those two questions in a manner that will make sense to me, I can go no further. But I will say this: Each and every one of us has an opportunity to start something new. Something worthwhile. Something that will give us an identity beyond that of "mom". The fact that a new year and a new decade is on the horizon is irrelevant, although like so many others, I am using this date as a marker for a new starting point for myself. It is time I put myself first. I have realized that I have been missing something profound in my life, and for a long time, I couldn't pinpoint what it was. Recently, I have found that the reason I couldn't find what was missing, was because it hadn't gone missing at all; it had merely been buried deep within me. And as I sit here, ending this post and hitting Publish, I am barely scratching the surface. Perhaps I need a stronger shovel.

Stay tuned!..

**No dad's feelings were hurt in the publication of this post.*

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