

Accepting help.

Hi Mum,

Firstly, I'd like to offer a huge congratulations! A congratulations on everything you've been through over the past nine months (give or take), a congratulations on the last few days and most importantly, a congratulations on the beautiful bundle you've brought into the world. In the first few hours after my little boy was born (two and a bit years ago), I felt like Superwoman! Like my husband and I were the only people on the planet (aside from our new little man) and the bond between us was incredible!

Please remember that all births and all babies are different! I know it sounds so cliche but it is the absolute, honest truth!! I say this because if you don't have the same feelings that I had after birth, that is completely ok!

In the weeks (and months) after the birth, please be kind to yourself. Don't expect too much from yourself or from your little baby. Please also remember that this new little person in your life is extremely resilient and can tolerate the natural mistakes you'll make. These mistakes are made with the best intentions and that's what matters ... we learn from our mistakes!

Please accept help which is offered to you by those closest to you. You will be tired, you will be confused and these people want what is best for you and your little one. Please accept the (not so obvious) help from complete strangers ... in the earlier months, you'll probably get a lot of 'knowing' and 'understanding' looks from people, let that warm your heart. You will encounter people (some close to you and possibly even strangers) who tell you how things should be done. If you can, listen to their stories, take what you want from them and if they aren't helpful to your situation, let the words they have said disappear into the distance.

When being seen with a newborn, you're bound to hear (mainly from strangers) "enjoy every minute". Please don't worry if you don't! Who could possibly enjoy being a kind of tired that you never knew existed or fighting with your partner about what's for dinner (again cos you're tired). One thing I urge you to do is take photos of everything and when you look back, you can appreciate and even laugh at the moments you didn't enjoy at the time.

As someone who experienced fairly significant maternal anxiety, I urge you to talk to people, let them know how you feel. If the people you were hoping would listen, don't quite understand, please seek help from a kind, understanding professional ... they are out there and they are magnificent. There is absolutely no shame in asking for help or admitting there is a problem.

If you do feel down and you are worried this feeling will never go away, please believe me it will. Don't put a time limit on it. Continue to be kind to yourself because when that fog does lift, you'll still be tired, some days will still be very testing but you'll have a little person who asks for kisses and cuddles, says a brand new word every day and laughs at you like you're the funniest person on the planet just for snorting like a pig or doing a silly dance.

That's enough from me. You've got some resting to do and some newborn cuddles to be had.

Lots of love to you, mum xx