

Finding time for the quirky things that matter on Mother's Day

May 8, 2015

For some reason this past week I decided to jump on the Quirky Momma bandwagon. I like to think I'm kinda quirky. I like the word, quirky.

If I'm being quirky, at work, I can claim it's because I'm working, not quirk-ing. None of that makes sense I know, it's been a long week of school and home activities and doctors and dentists and all those activities that will never make the quirky mommas' 101 activities that are in the bestest, funnest-ever book. (You can buy it here. Nothing I mentioned is in it.)



Hugs are good for you. Photo: iStock

Which gets me to wondering how any mother (happy Mother's Day, yes, there's a reason) finds time to do anything on the website. Make a cereal bracelet. (Mind you, there is a box of stale Cheerios in the pantry.) Make vaporising shower cubes. (Mind you, this could be counted as multitasking, cleaning sinuses and hair at the same time.) And my favourite 25 of the best wine cork crafts for kids. (Had plenty of volunteers to help me "collect" the wine corks, though those damn screw caps might delay us.)

It all sounds wonderful (and please, please, don't get me wrong, the website is actually great fun, and full of information and fantastic ideas, both for activities and parenting) but it's just that sometimes the ideal of motherhood and parenting doesn't live up to the reality.

Which brings me to my two other favourite mum comparisons this week. Kate Middleton and this fantastic post from BuzzFeed: 31 birth photos that will take you back to the moment you became a mother. Much has been written about Kate Middleton's post-birth

appearance on the steps of St Mary's Hospital. Everyone is asking how did she do it? Well she didn't, did she? The firm did it. How many of us look that good 12 years after giving birth, let alone 12 hours? I would have loved to see, and I truly hope Wills actually took some, photos of Kate looking like the mothers in the BuzzFeed post. Slippery, sweaty, bare skin, attached to tubes, in the bath, bloody, in hospital, at home, but every single one of them, ecstatically happy.

And then there was the post from the **Children's Medical Research Institute**. One in 20 children are born with a birth defect or genetic disease, and cancer is a leading cause of death in children under 14. Watch the video, have a good cry, I dare you not to, and, if you've been one of the lucky ones, go home and hug your children till you start crying again. If tragedy has struck, I have no words, I lay no claim to knowing your heartache, just know that you have a piece of my heart too.

Which sort of brings me to the whole point of this. For no matter how busy and full and overwhelming and stressful and crazy and demanding motherhood is, you forget it all when you're able to hold your babies. Even if your babies are 14 and just about 12, or 37, or just hours old. Whether your hair has been blow-dried and coiffed by London's best, or whether your already thinning mop is plastered to your forehead and drenched in sweat. Just to be able to hold them is a true blessing and makes everything better. Pain, heartache, stress, is all relieved when you have your baby in your arms.

Indeed, Quirky Momma came to the rescue again here, with a post about how research has shown that children need 17 hugs a day. OK, there is no evidence, but one quirky momma tried it and everyone benefited. If you do your proper research, however, you'll find that hugs are good for you. They've been shown to release oxytocin, lower your blood pressure and alleviate fears. One interesting study showed that adults too can benefit from hugs and that "loving contact" before a hard day at work can help reduce the effects of stress. There's even a cafe in Japan where customers can pay for a cuddle if they find themselves alone and in need of some physical contact. And just a hug, not a happy ending.

Until that's me, I'll be content with hugs from my babies. On this Mother's Day, I don't want slippers, or flowers, or appliances (although the kettle has been leaking lately) ... all I want is hugs – 17 a day might be a good start. And breakfast in bed might be nice too.

But that is all. A proper, squeeze-the-life-out-of-me hug. Because you are my life.