

Sample - Chapter 2

Take the Profile to Discover *Your* Parenting Style

# (un)Natural Mom

Why *You* Are the Perfect Mom for Your Kids



Hettie Brittz

## The Counterfeit Call to Be “Natural”

Generations of mothers are passing on the family quilt and silver tea-spoon collection along with ideas that make many moms feel entirely inadequate. Myths have crept into our collective motherhood narrative like moths into a hope chest. Modern mothers keep adding new demands to the old list of standards without crossing out some things that need to go. When these demands are not clearly written in the Word of God, they often fall into the category of man-made rules that become crushing burdens. I am sure this growing list begs for some editing.

Throughout the ages, women have had to prove their chastity by bleeding on the honeymoon sheet (even though not all virgins bleed), their fertility by having sons soon after marriage (even though we now know that men are responsible for the male chromosomes), and their womanhood by being fulfilled by motherhood alone. Talk about a bar set high!

I intend to purge seven myths from the hope chest that I will someday pass on to my daughters and maybe even a daughter-in-law. These issues may be only mine, but I'm breaking out the mothballs anyway.

## Myth #1: Every Woman Must Be Naturally Maternal

One of the frowns in my collection came in my late teens, when I was looking for ways to earn extra money. I chose vacuum packing cheese and weighing cold cuts in the supermarket deli over babysitting. Why would a “normal” young woman prefer to take inventory of perishables instead of honing her mothering skills among the bibs and baby blankets in a nursery? If asked this question in so many words, I could have given many reasons, but they wouldn’t have led anywhere. Who would believe that raw chickens needing to be skewered for the rotisserie oven felt more urgent to me than a baby bottle needing to be refilled? Even before we are old enough to marry and be mothers, we are often expected to have our eyes on that milestone. I didn’t, and I know I’m not alone.

Theodore Roosevelt is quoted in *The World’s Famous Orations, Volume 10, America III* as having said the following about women who do not have motherhood as their primary aspiration:

The existence of women of this type forms one of the most unpleasant and unwholesome features of modern life. If anyone is so dim of vision as to fail to see what a thoroughly unlovely creature such a woman is I wish they would read Judge Robert Grant’s novel *Unleavened Bread*, ponder seriously the character of Selma, and think of the fate that would surely overcome any nation which developed its average and typical woman along such lines.

Unfortunately it would be untrue to say that this type exists only in American novels.<sup>1</sup>

These words were said in 1905. Remnants of this viewpoint still exist more than a hundred years later, couched in subtler phrases. The woman who aspires to things outside of married life and motherhood is often left out in the cold. If she openly postpones her child-rearing years, she may be urged to attend a course at church to correct her thinking. Of course, if her decision is the result of pain from her own childhood or fears about the future, a biblical course may be the best investment in her healing and freedom. Still, little space is left for the possibility that something other than mothering could be God’s Plan A for her.

Instead of being guided and mentored to readiness, she may hear that marriage is primarily for reproduction, a belief that can invalidate her God-given sexuality. But what about the possibility that marriage is ultimately a mysterious and wonderful covenant that mirrors the union between Christ and his bride, the church? From this metaphor, we can mine new meaning and pure examples of love, intimacy, sacrifice, companionship, and delight. Marriage is preparation for the wedding feast to come, and a childless marriage can beautifully portray many eternal truths.

A married woman who delays motherhood might be guided to do so by God for reasons others might not see. In His sovereign knowledge of all that awaits us, God might graciously take her through a challenge before adding the responsibility of child rearing to her life. Some women are relieved their children were not born before they discovered that aggressive tumor or their spouse’s infidelity—crises that demanded their full attention and would have been infinitely more difficult to navigate with a baby on one’s hip.

The pregnant teen or the never-married mom might find herself in a special Siberia. Some Christians will disqualify her from being part of the bride of Christ. Her children may be declared “under the curse” and labeled “unplanned,” as if God writes the life stories of only some but not others. I have to plead that we at least owe her this mercy: to allow her to identify with scared and shaken Mary, the Hebrew teen in an age of stoning, pregnant out of wedlock with a baby she could not explain. (She’s the only teen who could honestly say, “I don’t know how it happened. We didn’t do anything.”) Like Mary, any untimely mom has to submit to God eventually and find her own way of singing, “The Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name” (Luke 1:49 NIV).

Married women who intend to delay or avoid motherhood, but find God has other plans, face their own challenges. A mom once introduced her daughter to me as *The-Surprise-Gift-Courtesy-of-Heel-Balm-That-Contained-Antibiotics*. Before we judge her, we should wonder what a shock it must have been to get pregnant when her only goal was softer feet. Had she known that the antibiotics would render her contraceptive ineffective, she may have chosen cracked heels. Of course, if approached with tenderness and understanding, she might come to credit God’s perfect provision, and not the heel balm, for her beautiful daughter!

Many women need to know it’s okay to wait until they feel emotionally ready to have children. When such moms are gently and patiently guided through their insecurities, the wait will be worth it. If they’re bamboozled into motherhood, it will be too easy to blame others when difficulties arise. Those mentored with realistic expectations are more likely to embrace even the darker days.

## Myth #2: Every Mom Must Get Pregnant Naturally

“But I *am* maternal!” some women will exclaim. “I want a baby so much it hurts. It’s just not working out for me.”

This is where all the Hannahs of the Bible (1 Sam. 1–2) and of today get branded *unnatural* before their mothering journey even begins. From what I have seen and heard, the hormones used during assisted procedures can drive a woman fairly close to insanity. The process is anything but natural, though it is all in the service of nature. Then the great cost, the wait, the stress, the spike of joy at the pulsing image on the ultrasound screen, and the breathless anticipation while a second, third, or even fourth beating heart is counted. Then more waiting, more painful procedures—and still no guarantee. Only God can call life out of our mortal and manufactured matter.

In our first years of mothering, my best friend and I shared baby news regularly, especially sad news. During her second honeymoon, she stepped on a stonefish in Mauritius. A spine became lodged in her heel bone and sent toxins through her body, leading to an immediate miscarriage after the trip and several since. She was in the doctor’s office when I called to announce I was pregnant with our third baby. It was a year after her last unsuccessful assisted-reproduction procedure, but since then she had miraculously become pregnant naturally with twins. We would be pregnant together! Before I could tell her the wonderful news, she told me she had started bleeding that morning, rushed to her doctor’s office, and arrived with just the one baby still showing signs of life. I stayed on the phone with her as she watched the heaving white heart-blob in the center of the other

twin's tadpole body. Within seconds all movement stopped. I left the news about my pregnancy for later.

She went on to have two more babies but lost count of the miscarriages in between. She is the bravest (un)Natural Mom I know. She stands tall among women who have experienced much shame and pain—women whose bodies finally behave naturally as well as those whose never do.

The confrontation with the fact that one's body has something wrong with it, so that what is supposed to happen spontaneously just doesn't happen, is excruciating. Even if the trouble isn't in her own body, a woman tends to feel responsible. Some women admit they don't enjoy trying for a baby anymore. Childhood dreams of motherhood can begin to show cracks after someone has been subjected too long to something so unromantic and medically complex.

Unfortunately, this honest pain can evoke sermons that add insult to injury. If a woman seems to try too hard, she might be told that motherhood clearly isn't meant to be; if she gives up when it becomes too hard or expensive, she might be accused of lacking faith.

I have known mothers of every temperament type to go through the valley of childlessness. Each traverses the terrain differently, and each is criticized by moms who have different natures. But our individual designs predictably explain why one mom gives up, another never mourns the miscarriages, and a third chooses to approach a surrogate. The initial myth—that there is something wrong with a mother who can't conceive naturally—expands to suggest that whatever a woman does to deal with her pain is also wrong somehow.

I pray that these Hannahs never have to deal with the artless answers offered by well-meaning but sometimes ignorant mothers:

- If you can just relax, it will happen in good time.
- God must feel you’re not ready.
- Perhaps there is a curse of infertility on your family’s bloodline that you haven’t broken.

Some of these admonitions may be true, but oh, how much it hurts when others speak words that add to our feelings of inadequacy!

The mom who chooses the adoption route, whether she can or cannot conceive a baby, experiences a pregnancy of its own kind. The approval by the adoption agency may be her “double pink stripe.” Instead of ultrasounds, she goes in for visits at the orphanage in Africa. Her pregnancy can last for years. She also has a readied room, a baby bag by the door, and a supply of formula. Her waters break when the adoption agency finally calls with good news. This unnatural pregnancy is supernatural in my book.

### **Myth #3: Every Mom Must Give Birth Naturally**

The list of natural-birth boxes for an expectant mother to tick seems to have grown exponentially since I took prenatal classes. We had just two options: vaginal or cesarean section. You could be proud of yourself if you opted for the first. You were hailed as heroic and felt a sense of cave-woman pride. If you could forgo the spinal epidural or narcotics drip as well, you were even higher up the gauge of guts.

By my second pregnancy, I had gathered many opinions from Natural Mothers, whose circle I gained access to because my daughter had been born without the aid of drugs. They didn’t need to know that a phobia of needles was the reason and not my bravery or



commitment to all things natural. These moms must have thought I was ready for the next level. I was encouraged to tear naturally rather than have an episiotomy. Tear naturally? So that my chances of being naturally incontinent would be higher? They were serious. Also, they suggested that a water birth was a much more natural experience. I should ask for that option and include family members. This was where I said something that got me dismissed permanently from this league of Natural Moms.

By my third pregnancy, I had figured out a few more helpful natural advantages. I was ready to imitate ancient nations in selected respects. I was not going to lie down as I did the first time but instead harness gravity and cooperate with nature by remaining upright until the baby threatened to fall out. Being the competitive type, I wanted to improve my record. The first birth took thirteen hours, the second seven. My goal was to more than halve that to three hours max. I walked briskly up and down the corridors with my doula on my heels. (Do I get one naturalness credit for having a doula?) She lifted my hospital gown every now and then for inspection until I literally had to be picked up onto the bed to give maybe three pushes in total. New record—check!

But some degrees of natural are just beyond me. I recently stumbled upon a blog with the title “I Regret Eating My Placenta.” Apart from being something I can imagine one regretting, it seemed worth reading just to answer the nagging question “What?!” To my surprise, one can eat it raw, cooked, or powdered and turned into capsules. Several celebrities have done it. It is supposed to have anti-depressant and blood-health benefits. According to the article, it was the last stage of a truly natural birth. I had to concede that it doesn’t get more natural than that.

Does the extremely natural birth plan make one more natural than the mom who had everything planned but was woken up by her water breaking at twenty-seven weeks? Is she unnatural if she has to have a cesarean section to save a baby who had the cord wrapped twice around his neck? Was I more natural than the mom whose baby was simply too bulky and had to have his shoulder broken, resulting in his collarbone sticking into his little lung, nearly killing him? Is this process not all beyond our control? Is it not just by grace that some of us have a so-called “natural birth” with no medical interventions?

There can even be grace in not putting your household through a natural home birth. I am convinced that if I had birthed any of my babies in a bath at home, there would have been casualties among the spectators. For example, my son can't even look at raw tomatoes without being nauseated. Considering all that motherhood demands of a mother, is it so wrong if she opts for something as close to her definition of *painless* and as far from her idea of *dramatic* as possible? Does it make her a bad mother if she selects a cesarean because she hates surprises, fears an out-of-control process, and has a husband who works on an oil rig and desperately wants to plan his time onshore around the birth?

Every mom's nature and life story call for a special birth. Should your nature call for all things natural and earthy, you should by all means go that route. If needles and white hospital sheets would spoil the day, then you should be free to find a way around those. The less we deny ourselves the choices that suit our personalities and resist the ways our bodies give birth, the better the memories of those important days when we enter into motherhood. I am convinced that the

inclusion of a diversity of birth stories in the Bible, of which Jesus's may have been the most uncomfortable, makes it clear that God does not prescribe some culturally dictated notion of the ideal birth. Neither should we.

### **Myth #4: Every Mom Must Be a Natural at Breastfeeding (and Continue for as Long as Possible)**

It still is one of the yardsticks with which mothers measure one another. We make all sorts of inferences about the duration of breastfeeding. The mom who starts off with the bottle right away tops the list of criminals. We feel she robs her baby of health advantages and is probably selfish. We forget that the reasons for not breastfeeding are as diverse as the moms themselves. A mother who contracted HIV through a blood transfusion would be selfish if she did breastfeed her baby, for example. And when a mother needs to take medication that could harm her baby, the bottle is the only option.

Harsh judgment in this department also goes to the mom who doesn't pump milk for her child when she returns to work, instead weaning the baby in advance. But not all employers support breastfeeding mothers. Also, not all mothers have the ability to do quality work while being interrupted every few hours to pump milk. Some do. The wisdom to know yourself and what you can sustain is crucial.

There is an assumption, on the other hand, that the mother who wears her baby and feeds on demand for the first two or even three years of her baby's life is selfless, the ultimate Natural Mother. I certainly do hold these moms in the highest regard. Many truly believe extended breastfeeding to have undeniable health benefits. They

enjoy the physical closeness with their babies and toddlers. Some, on closer acquaintance, will admit to many insecurities in other areas. Some don't know how to wean and don't have the heart to ever let their children cry. They don't sleep well, feel trapped, and want their bodies back.

The bonding and health benefits of breastfeeding are supreme, yet we seem to forget that bonding is not just biological and physical and that health depends on so much more than what we digest in the first years of life. Attachment is an emotional and even spiritual process that can take place in many ways. It can even be repaired later in life if it did not fully form in infancy. The mom's frame of mind, facial expressions, subtle moods, and stress levels often play a larger role than the actual feeding method in establishing a loving attachment. That is why adoptive moms can bond just as well with their children as birth mothers.

How the attachment forms is also affected by the baby's temperament. Not all babies enjoy constant physical touch, after all. Although my eldest daughter needed more than I naturally gave, my son needed less than I wanted to give. (Bathing with him would have been the worst idea. His sensory issues made bath times his enemy. It would have been bond destroying!) In both cases, I had to understand my own nature and theirs in order to make the bond secure.

The La Leche League, a nonprofit organization that promotes breastfeeding, has a long line outside its doors. Blogs and websites for breastfeeding moms abound. Postnatal classes and follow-up visits to the clinic nurse are dominated by questions that contain terms such as *foremilk/hindmilk balance* and *the football position*. If breastfeeding were as natural as they say, we would not need all these terms, tools,

and teachers, would we? Let's just admit that even this basic action is complex. The more we are told that anyone can breastfeed, the more helpless we feel when we struggle. An approach that allows for all biologies, allergies, life stories, and affinities would be such a relief to (un)Natural Mothers like me.

## **Myth #5: Every Mom Must Be a Natural Homemaker**

A pastor and his wife once hosted our family while we were traveling in England. They had two kids and stood there in church in a tight bundle that just screamed “close-knit nuclear family.” The mom was the most content woman I had ever seen. She was also the keen observer who noticed the first signs of my looming miscarriage. She gently insisted that I go home to South Africa to rest but didn't say why. She hugged me, and even though we were roughly the same age, I felt mothered. She had dog hair on her sweater.

When the pastor opened the door of their home, I quickly gave my kids the forbidding owl eyes and pursed lips that say, “Not a word!” Magazines and newspapers, puzzle boxes, and board games were stacked on every level surface and laced the walls all the way around the living room. Even the stairs had items stacked on both sides of every step, leaving just enough free space to step in the center. Dog hair everywhere confirmed that vacuuming had been out of the question for quite some time.

The dining room table held a gigantic sugar bowl, a gallon of long-life milk, a supply of clean bowls, and maybe five boxes of assorted cereal. Dirty dishes rose in a tall tower beside the kitchen door. When invited into the kitchen to be shown where we could

prepare our own breakfast the next morning, I understood: there simply was no space for the dirty dishes inside.

Every counter, both sinks, the lid of the trash can, and three of the four stove burners were covered. Heaven forbid one should accidentally turn on the wrong burner! (Or maybe someone should. The kitchen begged for a brand-new start.) While pointing to the one burner and then to the eggs and bacon in the fridge, the friendly pastor took a new pan from its box, plopped it onto the stove, and said, “There you go!” I’m sure it was impossible to get to the used pan to wash it.

Back in the living room, our hostess had one child in her lap and one curled up next to her, giggling. She got up only once to show us to our bedrooms. It was clear they weren’t freshly made, but she gave us the warmest invitation to sleep anywhere.

At the time, my daughter occasionally still needed a night diaper, but being an (un)Natural Mom, I forgot to take maximum precautions. I will admit here in writing that when she woke up to a wet bed, and I to morning sickness, I gave the damp bed one dismissive look, hugged my daughter warmly, and said, “Sweetie, it’s quite all right. Nobody will notice.” I bagged the wet pajamas to be washed in the next town and added the damp sheets to the overflowing laundry basket. I’m convinced the loving mom of this house would have done the same thing.

One could easily judge her, but a closer look at the stacks of apparent laziness would reveal worn-out children’s books she clearly read as many times as the kids wanted to hear them, educational toys with sticky fingerprints that told of free exploration and ample playtime, and board games with the rules scribbled on the outside,

revealing that she actually cared more than one would think. Every child's favorite bowl was in the clean stack on the dining room table. Looking where one really should be looking—in those children's faces—the primary evidence of their mother's love was clear as day: they looked like purring kittens.

Remembering this home always helps me feel a little better about not being a housewife of note. I rarely cook. All two electric stove plates and four gas burners are exposed at my house. The counters are almost bare. My friends, upon seeing the huge stove and oven after we moved in, almost without exception exclaimed, “Aaaagh, what a waste!”

There comes a time to face it, if you are one of us. Look at yourself in the mirror and think of something you can do really well, such as, *I can identify seven types of garden bird*. Say it out loud, followed by the bold admission “I'm not a great homemaker.” Repeat until the urge to go for choux pastry, pasta making, wedding-cake baking, cross-stitching, tailoring, and macramé classes dissipates. I am not suggesting you intentionally try to be the opposite of the Proverbs 31 woman; rather, I advocate contentment with who you are. Then, if you choose to learn a skill that will serve your family, it will come from a place where what you offer gives life and love.

I descend from a long line of seminatural homemakers who have each found a few worthy dishes, clothing patterns, and crafts that serve their families well. It doesn't hurt to find at least one hot meal, one dessert, and one baked goodie you can actually produce fairly consistently, just to grant your children that essential wistfulness when they're in college (or married to an even more clueless cook) and say, “How I miss my mom's homemade food!” No need to overachieve. Sincere love and an emotional haven are worth so much

more than a perfect house and a gourmet meal, though at times I still wish I had it in me to provide all four.

As for those who enjoy cooking from scratch and take pleasure in seeing a piece of fabric become an outfit or decoration, their children are fortunate to have them as moms.

## **Myth #6: Every Mom Must Find Parenting Natural**

I have an email from an (un)Natural Mom. She has three degrees listed in her designed signature. Her writing has impeccable grammar and spelling. Yet she poses a question that reveals just how completely stumped she is by the daunting task of parenting a three-year-old girl: “Is it wrong to still have a story at bedtime even though she misbehaved this morning?”

This is a woman who can accurately predict the change in size of an international steel order of millions to the nearest hundred if she agrees to a 16 percent discount instead of 14 percent. This is a woman who flies to China on her own to negotiate deals with people who don’t speak English. She never asks for help. Her gut tells her all she needs to know. But when it comes to her child, her gut is silent. She’d like someone next to her on her daughter’s bed giving advice about whether to read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* tonight.

This mom is embarrassed, judging by her apology at the end of her email “for asking such a silly question.” Is she doomed? Are her kids? I believe not. I believe she knows when to guess, when to trust her gut, when to ask doctor Google, and when to log on to a parenting portal. There should be no shame in occasionally feeling lost. She’s a natural at finding solutions, after all.



Eyewitnesses in my home have seen me look up issues in the alphabetical index of parenting books *I wrote*, looking for what I once knew were possible answers to everyday parenting problems. It's common knowledge that your first baby takes half your brain cells and your second the rest. I had three babies. I need reminding. Reading what I wrote years ago sometimes blows what's left of my mind.

I've always had trouble turning knowledge into practiced skill. Moms like me should be encouraged to keep asking for wisdom, which is far supreme to information. Our slowness in learning the art of motherhood should not be held against us. Isn't it wonderful that in the Bible, James tells us God's response to our many questions will never be "Shouldn't you know this by now?" This is what I understand James 1:5 to mean.

## **Myth #7: Every Mom Should Keep All Things Unnatural Away from Her Family Table**

I confess that I am not a health-food fanatic. I once tried a diet that did not allow margarine, refined carbs, or any sugar or preservatives. I scared my teens when they watched videos taken of me in those years: "Mom, is that you? You look like a boy. Everything's like, uh, flat!" Only women who share my issues with certain body dimensions will understand how utterly blissful those words made me feel, but I also reached an important conclusion: not all natural eating leads to a natural body.

Perhaps not all "natural" eating leads to natural parenting, either.

*Natural* has become a word that, when stuck on a product label, kicks sales into the next bracket. Add "100% Natural" and, well, you may just have an item that flies into mothers' baskets all by

itself—right next to the zero-additive natural fruit juice; the stone-ground, unbleached, GMO-free wheat bread; and the organically grain-fed, free-range, skinless chickens.

Call me a cynic, but I just don't think the words *natural* and *organic* automatically mean something is all good. Every time someone wants to sell me something 100 percent natural in exchange for an item already in my basket, they try to convince me that the chemicals in my food will kill me. I should read the list of unpronounceable ingredients on the back of the guacamole jar to see for myself why the poisonous stuff has a shelf life till doomsday. Their organic product, on the other hand, will be much better for me, even though it will probably start going bad as I walk out of the store since it has absolutely nothing but avocado in it. Whenever this happens, I have an urge to ask, “So it is completely natural? As natural as snake venom and marijuana?” If I'm in a really bad mood, I might want to ask if she's ever had teeth extracted naturally or if she'd like to go back to the age before razors and hair remover and embrace a jungle of natural body hair. I've never used any of this ammunition, though, because I know that the heart behind wanting to give me better-quality food is sincere.

No mom should be approached in the church aisle by a mother who wants to sell her a more natural way of mothering—not any more than a mom should be stopped in the grocery aisle to be sold a more natural jar of guacamole. I did not become defensive about my grocery choices from a single confrontation with one who stands for all things natural. My stance is a reaction to many unsolicited and often unfounded assaults by those who make food rules into spiritual laws in spite of Paul's appeal not to do so (Rom. 14:2–3).

Between my husband and me, we have passed on to our children every genetic marker for most forms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. They have displayed every ADHD symptom, from the dreamy kind to the run-around-the-house-so-fast-you-look-like-a-picket-fence kind. Of course we started our attempts to treat this with a natural approach, which included more love, more routine, more exercise, more therapy, less sugar and preservatives, limited screen time, and expensive natural supplements. It seemed to be working for our daughters, but not for our son. After many years of very little progress, we took the unpopular medicinal route. To this day, I count this experience as the biggest parenting mistake I have ever made (not the medication but the leaving it as a last resort).

I had avoided a pharmaceutical solution because I was told by an internationally acclaimed Christian speaker that medicine would permanently lock demonic water spirits into my son's brain. I was told he would become a drug addict in later life. I was told he would escalate from needing one tablet to needing handfuls to control all the various side effects. I was never told to pray and go with what God led me to do.

Thanks to the writings of Christian doctors in this field, and a brilliant pediatrician, I was able to put the facts behind these misconceptions—and behind some horrific true stories—into perspective. Contrary to what I was warned, our son takes only one capsule per day for his ADHD; has caught up on the delays caused by the condition; has gained emotionally, socially, and physically; and is hungry for God and not filled with demonic water spirits. He once said it well: “Mom, the meds just give me a step back and a second or two to make an intentional choice to act like myself.”

My husband and I appreciate that many parents disagree with giving their kids unnatural substances, even medicines, in order to be natural. Blessed are those who never have to. That too is grace.

My family’s health is important to me, and I believe that every mom should have her family’s physical well-being on her heart. Health is broader than food, though, and includes adequate exercise, limited screen activity, time outdoors, rest and good sleep, a clean environment—the list goes on and on. Every mom can do only so much.

We appreciate the large number of parents who are passionate about ensuring healthful habits and nutritional eating in their own families without pressuring others to copy them.

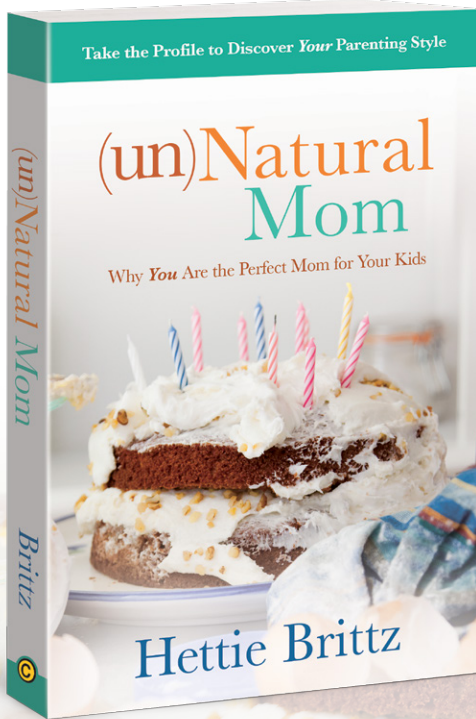
The trending emphasis on organic food stems from well-founded concerns, but it is often beyond one’s budget. When someone makes something into a gospel truth but it happens to be bad news to the poor, I always wonder, *If so many people live on less than I do, how can the organic-food message be the parenting equivalent of the good news?*

You might wonder what any of these myths have to do with temperament and parenting styles. The passing on of these myths—or the resistance to them—has everything to do with temperament. It is a certain personality that makes rules and loves them. It is a certain personality that prescribes them to others. It is a certain temperament that believes in myths and accepts the bondage they bring. It is a certain personality that rebels against anything that even looks like a one-size-fits-all blueprint (yes, I confess!), and yet another that read the beginning of this chapter and then moved on. Remember how you felt reading the chapter, because your reaction is part of

your natural design. It is also an important part of breaking free and setting others free so that we can each walk our own journey with authenticity.

## **For Reflection**

1. Have you ever believed any myths of motherhood? Which have especially made you doubt yourself? (It might be a myth not covered in this book.)
2. Think about a mom you know and admire. In what ways do you feel like you should be more like her?
3. Think about a mom you've judged because her parenting choices are different from yours. Why do you think mothers judge each other?
4. Was there anything in this chapter that challenged a belief you hold about motherhood? How might your experience as a mom change if you let go of that belief?
5. Which truth about mothering would you want to pass on to the next generation?




# Who *You* Are as a Mother is Just Who Your Kids Need

Hettie Brittz helps us discover that God has made every kind of mother to reflect something of Himself. Including Hettie's popular parenting style profile, this practical and grace-filled book frees you to stop trying to be a "natural mom" and become the mom God has equipped you to be.

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