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To The 30-Something Moms

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Wife, mom, writer, prolific tea drinker, blogger at Littles, Love and Sunshine



CATHERINE DIETRICH

Dear fellow 30-something mom,

I see you in the supermarket, I see you at the playground. I see you at the school drop-off, I see you on the train and in the kid-friendly restaurants. Sometimes you see me too, and we exchange a little smile, an eye-roll, an "I get it" moment.

More often, you don't see me — you are chasing your toddler down the aisles, watching your pre-schooler like a hawk as she climbs higher than you'd like, admonishing your kid for pinching her brother, reaching for a wet wipe, mopping up a spilled drink.

A few days ago, I was at our public swimming pool, and if ever there was a stark metaphor for life as a mom in her 30s, the public swimming pool has to be

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it. There we all are: the stereotypes we swore we never would be, wading knee-deep in the kiddies' pool, eyes locked on our littles — and genuinely delighted by their antics.

Although we may be there in pairs or groups, our conversations are piecemeal, we cannot relax. Our focus is entirely on our children. We are tired. We are distracted. Our tankini-clad bodies are battle-scarred and utterly not what they used to be.

Up on the hill are the shiny 20-somethings. They are flipping through magazines, chatting to their friends, Facebooking and selfie-snapping on their iPhones. They are rested. They are toned. They are magnificently oblivious to what is coming their way in the future. They don't even see us. Or if they do, they swear they will never be us.

It's okay. We were there once, and we know better than to be offended.

You see, the truth is, we 30-somethings have let ourselves go. No. We have let our SELVES go. We have small children and for the next little while, our SELVES will not come first. We will be sleeping (or not) according to the timetables of our toddlers and/or newborns and/or a combination of the above. Our hair will not be washed as often as we'd like.

Sit-ups? What sit-ups? We will be wiping noses and bottoms and messes from the walls. We will be cooking what feels like continuously from breakfast to supper time and not leaving the table until at least a forkful of peas have been eaten. We will spend hours a week kneeling by the side of the bath and then reading "just one more" bedtime story until we pass out on the edge of the toddler bed.

We will be fluent in the language of *Paw Patrol*, *Sofia the First*, *Peppa Pig* and *Doc McStuffins*, and will use said characters shamelessly as threats, bribes or as digital babysitters so we can dash upstairs to grab a shower. We will find ourselves negotiating with terrorists even though we swore we never would. We will answer to "Uppy" and "More" and "I don't want to", and we will say "What's the magic word?" more times a day than we ever imagined possible.

This is 30-something. It's not easy — and that's the truth.

But there is another truth: Up there on the hill, nestled subtly amongst the 20-somethings, are the 40-somethings. They too are rested. They too are toned. They are alone, quietly reading a book. They see us, and they are sympathetic but also a bit smug. They've been there and done it and they know it doesn't last forever. Girls, 40-something is the holy grail. 40-something is coming.

The decade we get our SELVES back.

Not that I want to wish away the time. Although 30-something so far is a bit of a blur, it's also a kind of magic. Never again will I feel a squidgy cheek rest on my chest in the middle of the night. Little arms reaching up to me after a fall. The delicious baby smell and the little pairs of skinny jeans and sparkly trainers. The scooter rides and monkey bars and the bed time stories with a small person in



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the crook of each arm. Hearing “I want Mommy,” and “Please can you help me?” and “I want to huggle you.”

Yes, 40-something is coming, and it’s going to be bliss. But don’t let it come too fast. If I’m to lose my self for a decade, motherhood sure is a delicious thing to lose it to.

Love, Catherine

A version of this post originally appeared on [Littles Love and Sunshine](#).

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**Amy Barr Galbraith** · Ohio University

Here's the inside scoop from a 40 something: We're sitting around the pool sans kiddos- b/c our teenagers are out driving, dating, drinking, etc. They don't want to be near us, unless we are paying 😊 We're talking about how to keep them safe, how to handle high school dramas, and college prep. We're talking about our slow metabolisms, foods we can no longer eat, and gray hair. I remember those 30s and often wish I could pick up one of my snarly teenagers and snuggle them till they giggle and kiss the back of their necks!

*Disclaimer: It's 10:08am & I'm able to write this b/c the teenagers are still sleeping. Some peace is coming 30 somethings, buckle up and hold on tight!

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**Christina Matthews** · University of Kent at Canterbury

Some of us didn't even get started until our 40s, so no smugness will be forthcoming until our mid to late 50s...

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**Deanne Robertson**

I am about to turn 41 and have a 5 year old and a 3 and a half year old...no resting for me any time soon!!

Like · Reply · 49 · Jul 14, 2016 12:56pm

**Tammy Brimmer Kocher** · Chaska, Minnesota

I'm with you sister.

Like · Reply · 2 · Jul 14, 2016 8:26pm

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)**David A Toops** · Tolan Machinery and Polishing Co. at Retired

Let me thank you 30 somethings, because without a 30 something in my life so long ago I would not be the 73 year old man I am today. My 30 something lived to be 95, and her children were always in the forefront of her life. Now as a 70 something, I have two 40-somethings, that I continue to keep a non-intruding eye on, because that's what parents do. Do not rush to be 40 somethings, these 30's are the most important years for your children, and will always be the genesis of the pride you feel for a job well done. God Bless 30 somethings.

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**Nancy Roche** · Chestnut Hill College

Thanks for that. My 30 something mom taught me lots. She was good kind. And strong into her 90's.

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**Stine Gry Kirkeby** · Allerslev, Storstrom, Denmark

Damn, now I'm crying even more. That so beautiful

Like · Reply · 10 · Jul 18, 2016 4:03am

**Roshni Slowsk** · Legal Marketing at Private contractor

Beautiful 📱❤️

Like · Reply · 1 · Aug 7, 2016 11:39am

[Show 6 more replies in this thread](#)**Darcy E Vondrasek-Ellis** · Curie Metropolitan High School

I am that 40 something and it is not the holy grail as I am a full time Mom with a full time salaried job that sucks the life out of you because you're working more than 40 hours a week and trying to juggle family life at the same time. I am sleep deprived and actually wish I could choose on just being a wife and a mother rather than wearing all of these hats.

Great article but 40 something is not the holy grail....When I retire,that will be my holy grail!

Like · Reply · 118 · Jul 13, 2016 1:05pm

**Karina Marriott**

Amen! I was thinking the same thing. Just like the 20 somethings can't know the 30's the 30 moms can't claim to know the 40s are the holy grail. It still not easy.

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