

MOTHERHOOD - Raising Daughters

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When asked the question of how you raise your kids in times of Covid the simple answer is - the same as you did before Covid - with love, consistency and lots and lots of patience!

It is the law of the universe that change is inevitable. Water that does not flow will decay and humans that are stagnant and remain in their comfort zone do not grow.

When lockdown was announced, our family greeted the news with apprehension but also some excitement.

We realized very quickly that many things needed to change, and we were faced with both challenges as well as wonderful experiences.

Our first challenge was that our helper had gone home leaving us to take care of all the cleaning, cooking and washing. We created fancy schedules and task allocations where everyone was responsible to complete their chores at a certain day and time. You can only imagine what the first few days looked like! It felt like world peace would be easier to achieve. There was negotiation, task swapping and lots of crying. But here is the good thing about change -

when you are consistent and you persevere, the task becomes easier and quicker. By the third week things began to flow and we became more aware of our home and surroundings and developed immense gratitude for our helper, as well as appreciation of our home.

Our second challenge was home schooling. There were arguments about computers and lots of technical challenges, but we tried to remind the girls that the majority of South Africa are not as lucky as we are to be in a private school and have readily available Wi-Fi and computers. Each child tried to make their learning environment as comfortable as they could and after a few days everyone was relatively comfortable and committed to their work. The person who benefited most from home school was me! Staying at home meant I didn't have to make school lunches and no more hours in the car schlepping from one extra mural to the next - Yippee!

My oldest daughter is in Matric and this has been an interesting adjustment for her.

There is obviously a sense of loss. This was supposed to be a time that she would be spending with her friends, having fun and beginning to achieve independence. There have been days for her when it's hard to stay on track, when there is so much uncertainty about the future. I am proud of how she has been so consistent in her studying. What I have learned from her during this time is that success comes only by challenging yourself and not competing against others. It is about keeping your goal in sight and taking each day at a time.

On a personal level, I try to live by the saying

*If I am not for me, who will be?
And if I am only for myself, what am I?*

And if not now, when?

I read more, exercised every day, listened to lectures, signed up to different courses, started painting and even learned how to knit! More than the physical change, I also learned how to sit with my emotions and not ignore them. I learned that it was ok to be sad and angry sometimes and to do small things that made me happy. Kids learn from watching your actions and your behavior and I realized that by expressing what I felt and remaining calm the entire energy in the house would shift.

This has also been a time of gratitude. We do not live in isolation and we can't ignore the pain and suffering of people in our country and community. We have tried every week to do something small for others whether it is organizing food or soup packets or giving charity. The act of giving has been uplifting to us during this time

We have come to appreciate living in the now! It's good to look forward to the future and remember the past but what you have in reality is only the moment that you are in.

It has been about appreciating small things like sitting on the patio for lunch every day, snuggling in front of the TV to binge watch series or laughing at ridiculous Tik Tok videos.

In this unprecedented time that we find ourselves in, it is all about how we choose to view and perceive the world. I am a big believer that this is a world of abundance and that goodness and opportunity can be found everywhere. For me it's not the end of something but rather the beginning of a new and exciting era where I have the opportunity to improve and reinvent myself.

I wish everyone good health, take care of yourselves and do more things that give you joy every day!