

Creative Motherhood

You're a creative woman. And you're a mother. Whether the newest little person in your life is your first child or you've added to an existing brood, by now you know that the experience of having an infant brings you back to the barest essentials. Your focus is clear: keep everyone — including yourself — alive, fed, clothed, and reasonably clean. (And here the word “reasonable” may stretch into uncharted territory as the shower you used to enjoy every morning is now a twice-weekly occurrence.) During the first few months of your baby's life, anything beyond these barest of essentials is a bonus — like clean dishes, or having a coherent conversation that doesn't include a graphic description of bodily functions.

As your infant becomes an older baby and then a toddler (and is hopefully sleeping through the night) your bandwidth increases. Still, there is precious little time for taking care of everything and everyone requiring your attention.

Given these high stakes, where is the space for scratching out a few lines of poetry or finishing the painting you started last year? As a person whose creative expression is an essential part of your being, how do you traverse this strange landscape, where part of you wants nothing more than to dwell in the intense joy of early mothering — and another part of you wants to count the days until you get your life “back”?

This e-book isn't about *why* creativity is important. I don't need to make a case for why it's so essential that you stay in touch with your creativity. You know all that. You know that being regularly creative correlates with being a better you, a happier mother, a lighter self with an easier laugh. I know you don't need convincing.

I also know what it feels like to teeter across the parameters of creativity and motherhood, which are often seemingly in conflict. As a certified creativity coach and the mother of five children, I have distilled in these pages six practices that worked for me, along with wisdom from inspiring creative mothers that I interviewed over the years in person and at my community blog, www.studiomothers.com. Just as early motherhood itself casts a stark light on the essentials, the six practices are specific, and these pages are concise and prescriptive. You don't have time for anything else.

Every baby is a unique person, and each mother is equally individual. Some of what is outlined here may not work for you. As at the buffet of life, take what you want and leave the rest.

Develop a Creative Practice

You may be a highly ambitious person who is eager to finish a novel, open a well-stocked Etsy shop, or have a solo show next year. If your domestic and work situations — and the personalities of everyone involved — make these goals feasible, go for it. But if, like many of us, your early years of motherhood are filled with intense demands on many fronts, and making progress toward those large creative goals feels like a trip through the spin cycle, take a deep