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Jenna Burd

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Pros and Cons of Motherhood

Jenna Burd

“You’re so caring, you’d be the best mother.”
“What a happy couple. Are you trying for kids?”
“Mommy and daddy loved each other very much, so they had you.”

Thoughtful compliments meant to endorse young women for fulfilling their sacred duty, says 54% of the next class of mothers (WalesOnline.) Regressive statements that unconsciously condition young women to fit a mold, says 46% of the next class of mothers (WalesOnline.) The majority of women welcome this feedback with open arms. However, the minority of the next generation of potential mothers trails close behind in size, and would feel repulsed by the nurture-focused diction society typically imposes on young women. Although women have gained some de jure autonomy over their reproductive rights through *Roe v. Wade*, de facto ideologies still remain oppressive. In other words, men and women feel societal pressure to grow up, settle down, and start a family. After all, being a mother is as much of a lifestyle as being a rapper, just with a whole lot less weed. Speaking of weed, let’s take Post Malone for example, one of the most famous rappers of our time. Post Malone sacrifices his personal needs, (which include constantly being higher than a kite and partying,) to his fans when he is on tour. He nurtures his talent when he makes music in the studio, the fruits of his labor. Similarly, mothers sacrifice high-paced careers, money, and traveling to raise kids. Mothers nurture their children, their fruit, and are tasked with raising them. But what if Post Malone never wanted to rap in the first place. Instead, he wanted to go to college, get his CPA and become an accountant. Society says, “Congratulations Mr. Malone, can you do my taxes?”

But what if a mother never wanted to be a mother. What if instead she wanted to dream big and exchange having a family with the hefty time commitment of being a high-brow attorney. She is capable. This is possible. But it’s bold. It’s unconventional. Unconventionality scares the shit out of people. Out of us. When we raise an eyebrow at a bachelor who wants to live in a sparkly

penthouse and filter ladies through the door, we are part of the problem. Settling down and starting a family isn't the only pastime for people in their 30s. We, Generation Z are here to initiate a tidal wave of innovation ready to rip through conventionality.

Should I be a mom? Pros and Cons List.

Key: (+) YES (--) NO

+ I am family-oriented. Since I grew up in California and all my family lives in Michigan, I rarely got to see them. So, when those special holidays rolled around, I treated them as sacred. You should've seen me running around with my head cut off at family functions asking everyone their ages, about school, work, friends, hobbies, girlfriends, about every little detail I could get to fill into those protruding gaps. In retrospect, I wish I was physically closer. I wish I could've been at my little cousin Aubrie's first Homecoming pictures. I wish I could've spent more time with my grandma before she lost her memory. If I had a child, I could gain these experiences back, and create more of that sacred time for years to come.

+ I am Jewish. If you haven't noticed, there aren't many of us left after the Holocaust. Often in minority religions and ethnic groups followers feel burdened with representing their group as a whole, since it's likely I am one of few Jewish people you will ever meet, at least in Indiana, which is predominantly Christian. So I've made the personal choice to assume responsibility to advocate and represent my people. Would it be selfish of me to not have children and raise them to God's light? Will I sacrifice an opportunity to pass on traditions and keep Judaism alive? If it's truly my duty to keep the light of God burning, I should have children and raise them as Jews.

-- I fucking hate being told what to do. "She's not stubborn, she's *spirited*," my mom used to explain to my school teachers. If society tells me I should settle down and become a baby vessel, I simply won't because they said so. Is this childish of me? Probably. But then

again, the image of me in 10 years on an airplane viciously rocking my screeching baby blob and shoving a pacifier down its throat trying to shut it up sounds like serious birth control.

-- I am an achiever. That is, according to my Clifton Strengths Finder Test results. I am hungry for a challenging, unpredictable, high-paced career. I did not work my ass off in school to be a stay at home mom. I want to see the fruits of my labor come into fruition. I know I can achieve excellence with my insatiable drive, and I don't want to sacrifice an extravagant gig for motherhood. Imagine this, you and your husband on a European summer holiday, sharing a chocolate croissant in Paris and hopping on a train to snag a Bavarian Pretzel in Germany. You don't have to worry about the well-being of your child tormenting a nanny for an entire summer. Your biggest concern is white or red wine. I want a lifestyle where I can have the flexibility and finances to travel often with friends and family, and I truly believe that having a child would inhibit that.

-- I want to be a cool aunt. I want to whisk my best friend's kids away on fun little mall dates and spoil the shit out of them and drop them off when we're done. Don't get me wrong, I absolutely love kids! I think they are a hoot. But if there's a way I can get the joy of parenthood without the dirty diapers and potty training, then sign me up!

+ The guilt. The guilt settles in when I talk about putting my needs before the needs of my potential child. From an evolutionary standpoint, it is vital that humans reproduce to keep the human race thriving. With the improvement in healthcare, education for women, and rise in childcare expenses, fertility rates have dropped 50% worldwide since 1970 (World Economic Forum.) My decision, along with the 46% of Gen Z that don't want to have children can create a ripple effect that inhibits population growth. Theoretically, if women who lack education and sufficient healthcare are carrying the weight of reproduction, future generations won't be as naturally physically or mentally strong. This could stunt natural selection of best features in the human race such as strength or intelligence.

-- I truly think I'd be a terrible mother. My personality is not suited to care for another human being. Let's be honest, my empathy is

forced. I'm aware that I have narcissistic tendencies and I challenge myself to put others first. I'm not confident that I can obtain a motherly instinct and unconditional love for my child. I'm not 100% committed to motherhood, the last thing I want to do is bring a child into this world and figure out that it's not a good fit for me. You can't just half-ass parenthood. That's absurdly unfair to a child.

Clearly, my brain is pumped with dissonance on this subject. Some aspects of having kids seem all sunshine and rainbows, but also I must consider the bitter truth. Kids are a lot of freaking work. To my advantage, I have several years before I have to decide if I want to bear children. Hell, I don't even have a husband yet! However, this issue is urgent in many women's lives as we speak, and they should know that there are other options. It's okay to not start a family and live a life dedicated to personal growth. It's okay to not have children and still feel driven to work with children and teach them about life. It's okay to never reach a final verdict. It is your life!

"You're so caring, you'd be the best mother."

"Thanks, but motherhood isn't in the cards for me."

Be bold.

"What a happy couple. Are you trying for kids?"

"No, we'd like to focus on our high-paced careers and marriage."

Be radical.

"Mommy and daddy loved each other very much, so they had you."

"Mommy and daddy chose the lifestyle of parenthood."

Rip through conventionality.

Works Cited

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