



Insights from the hood
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Description

The six phases of parenting

By **Mona Andrei**

A journey usually begins with an unassuming first step in a specific direction. Other times, it begins with the sudden realization that you're sitting in the middle of a mountain-sized pile of dirty laundry. This specific journey is also known as 'parenting'.

... I like breaking things down into manageable chunks because it helps with that overwhelming feeling that often hijacks our days.

And while parenting may seem like one long journey that lasts the rest of your life, it can actually be broken down into phases. To be more precise, six phases. I don't know about you, but I like breaking things down into manageable chunks because it helps with that overwhelming feeling that often hijacks our days.

So without further ado, let's dig in, shall we?

Phase 1: Observing

This phase actually begins way before we become parents and often long before our bodies have even reached puberty. It's a phase of noticing. Noticing that babies are cute. Noticing that we like playing with them even more than we like watching TV. There are no official stats on this but I'm going to go ahead and say that this is perhaps because we feel an affinity to babies, having recently been that age ourselves. Case in point: Our parents' friends come over with their new born and all we want to do is hold them, feed them, take them into our room and set them up on our beds next to our dolls and serve them tea.



'... we KNOW that our babies are going to be the non-crying, non-whining type. How do we know this? Because we're going to be the perfect parent with the perfect baby. Of course, we are!'

Phase 2: Wanting

At some point in our hormonal coming-of-age we meet a boy (or girl) and our brains explode. Suddenly we can imagine ourselves with a baby of our very own. We're hanging out in the local family restaurant with all our young friends and more than see, we can hear all the babies around us. They're crying, whining, but this doesn't affect us at all because we KNOW that our babies are going to be the non-crying, non-whining type. How do we know this? Because we're going to be the perfect parent with the perfect baby. Of course, we are!

Phase 3: Conception

Realizing that another human is growing inside of us is hardly ever like how they show it on TV. No one walks up to you and says, "OMG! You are glowing, girl! You must be pregnant!" Instead, it goes something like this: You're meeting friends for breakfast and within seven minutes of being seated, your soul is attacked by the overwhelming aroma of everything. You quickly push your friend out of the booth to make a quick get-away to the bathroom so that you can wrench out a lot of nothing. Head down and embarrassed, you make your way back to your friends. No one says anything because no one knows if this is a "good thing" or not.

'The best part of the pregnancy phase is the surprise baby shower... it's hardly ever a surprise because you keep catching your significant other on the phone with your best friend and now you're wondering if they're having an affair.'

Phase 4: Pregnancy

The best part of the pregnancy phase is the surprise baby shower. It's also the unbest part. First of all, it's hardly ever a surprise because you keep catching your significant other on the phone with your best friend and now you're wondering if they're having an affair. Secondly, this "party" is supposed to be for you and yet you're the only one that can't drink the white sangria. (I was going to add a 'third of all' but I think you get the picture with the first and second points.) But it's not all bad. You get to unwrap a bunch of presents for your impending bundle of joy, which will keep you busy for the remainder of your pregnancy as you wash, fold and unfold and refold and unfold and refold until the special day.

Phase 5: Labour

The day has finally arrived. And even though you've spent much of the last nine months asking everyone you know (and don't know) about contractions and what do they feel like, you suddenly understand everyone's evasive behaviour to what you thought was a simple question. BECAUSE IT FREAKING HURTS. The good news is that while giving birth to babies is something women have been doing since way before the invention of Sudoku on our cell phones, the experience comes with its own set of hormones that make us forget about the pain. This is why we go on to have more babies. (Nice play, creator of humans. Very strategic on your part.)

'You'll believe that every other parent is doing a better job than you and you'll wonder if you'll ever get



to enjoy another hangover.'

Phase 6: The rest of your life

Being a parent is perhaps the most important job you'll ever do. That said, rest assured that you will screw up. You'll yell when the windows are open and know that your neighbours are judging you. You'll resent your kids for the amount of homework they bring home from school. And you'll order so many pizzas that the take-out counter girl will put your order through as soon as she sees your number on call-display. You'll believe that every other parent is doing a better job than you and you'll wonder if you'll ever get to enjoy another hangover.

Then one day you'll realize that your aptitude for parenthood isn't the problem. The problem is in your ability to pour a sticky layer of self-doubt into everything you do. And then you'll be tucking in your kids one night and little arms will reach around your neck and whisper, "I yuv you, mommy" and you'll realize that being a parent is the best unassuming step you've ever taken and that you never want this journey to end. (Although you may still secretly wish for help with the laundry.)

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Excerpt from Mona Andrei's soon-to-be-released book, **SUPERWOMAN: A Funny and Reflective Look at Single Motherhood** (Cynren Press 2019)

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Mona Andrei is a digital copywriter, writer, and social media strategist with over 20 years of experience, both on the advertising agency and corporate sides of the communication spectrum. When she's not working on client projects, she likes to write irreverent posts for her personal blog, [Moxie-Dude](#), where she writes about life updates gone wrong. Or right. She's undecided. You can connect with Mona on [Twitter](#) or email her at Mona@MonaAndrei.com



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