

Dear Mamas,

My name is Jazmine, and I am the proud mother of two, Makenzie (7) and Javion (2 months). I am honored to be a part of this year's Mother's Day campaign with Mamatoto Village to share my experience being a mother over the years. I want to share with you how and why I chose to parent differently and the liberation I feel doing so. It is such an enlightening difference from how I was parented, and I hope you find some comfort and joy from my liberation for your journey.

Firstly, I want to start by saying that when I found out I was pregnant, I prayed hard for my daughter despite the negativity around me eight years ago. I was a 23-year-old senior in college in a toxic relationship and living in a toxic household. You would think, "Girl, why would you want to bring a baby into that type of world?" My only answer would be that I knew my child would put me in a better position emotionally, spiritually, and physically. I knew I needed my child in order to free myself from where I was, and I was 100% correct.

Fast forward about 15 months after I gave birth, I parted ways with my relationship and took a break from my family. It was just my baby girl and I, and for the first time, I was on my own. From then on, I knew I wanted to parent differently than what I was parented. I understood that my parents did what they knew, but it was different times now, and I never wanted to cause my baby any more trauma than necessary. I adopted a Gentle Parenting approach to parent my daughter, with a lot of communication and the ability to feel feelings in my household.

I remember growing up not being allowed to communicate my feelings, being deemed disrespectful for "talking back" and "not staying in a child's place."

I remember being frustrated and resentful for having to be quiet or risking getting physically disciplined. I grew up fearful, and even when I had a great opinion in the real world, I kept quiet because that was what I learned in my household. I absolutely refused for my children to go through life fearful of speaking up in the real world, and I realized communication, respect, and kindness are characteristics learned from the household first.



Therefore, despite how upset I feel when my daughter expresses why she said what she said or did what she did, it is extremely important to hear her out and let her explain herself, not only for my understanding but it creates a safe space for her to be able to come to me about anything without fear of punishment or physical discipline.

Adapting to this new form of parenting gives me a sense of pride and admiration for myself. I feel confident that I am not conforming to generational ignorance and bad habits with my children. Watching Makenzie grow to be a confident, outgoing, kind, and respectful human gives me so much peace and joy, and I am so excited to see how parenting this way will be for my son. I look forward to continuing to create a safe space for my children as they grow and develop into the individuals they will become.

I want to leave off with some words of encouragement because parenting is probably the hardest job you will have in life. I know that parenting while healing from trauma is one of the most difficult things anyone can do. Still, I want you to know that you and your family will be the best versions of themselves because you chose to break those generational curses and heal what was once broken. You chose to be strong, vulnerable, and love yourself enough to want to be healed. Your children will see the love and strength you have for yourself and for them and grow to emulate that in their lives. I make mistakes and feel mom guilt, as any parent does. In those moments, I quiet my thoughts and pat myself on the back still because I know that I am doing the very best I can do, and with the love, care, affection, and communication I pour unto my children, they will be the best version of themselves for this world. So when this world gets overwhelming, and your kids are screaming non-stop, and you just want to scream to get that frustration out, just know that you are doing the best you can, your children see that and will always appreciate you for it.

Happy Mother's Day, Mama. You're doing amazing!


Jazmine

