

7 Reasons Your Son Is The Greatest Gift You'll Ever Give Yourself



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My son saved my life.

When I was pregnant with my first child, I really didn't care if it was a boy or a girl. I was so excited to become a mother, finally, that I imagined showering this precious baby with the kind of soul-searing unconditional [love](#) I couldn't imagine giving to anyone else.

Before that, I'd only known boys as the mysterious other: brother, father, [boyfriend](#), crush, boss, [husband](#). I loved them, hated them, feared them, but didn't quite understand them.

And then this boy, my boy, came into the world. My first son was quiet after he was born, looking around the hospital room with wonder, taking it all in. He's still like that 13 years later, except when he gets mad, frustrated, or fed up, the quiet shatters and the thunder rolls.

But when my son lets those emotions pour forth, so do the tears. His sensitive heart causes his eyes to well up from the intensity of it all, and I melt again and again at the sight of his precious face. And I realize he's the greatest gift of all.

1. He restored my faith.

When my son was born on a cold March day six months after terrorists destroyed the Twin Towers, not only was I smitten — my faith in goodness and humanity was restored.

2. He taught me patience.

The quiet shattered soon after he was born; he spent the first eight weeks of his life crying for two hours straight every night. I learned patience; I learned what [unconditional love](#) really meant.

3. He taught me to be reassured by the presence of another person.

I learned the power of holding this tiny creature close to my body in a sling, in a baby carrier, laying next to him on the bed or couch, him laying on my chest in peaceful slumber.

That closeness lulled him to sleep and reassured me, too. Even now, he'll climb into bed with me late at night and we'll discuss the latest episode of

whatever we're watching. But that closeness? That's my son's greatest gift to me: the reassurance that all is right in the world.

4. He taught and continues to teach me so many life lessons.

When I couldn't get him to sleep as a baby, then a toddler, I learned to let go of the need to schedule or control outcomes and cried along with him.

5. He brought me the realization that everything a person really needs comes from within.

He nursed until he was a year and a half old, taking equal comfort in being skin to skin as he did from plunging fist-first into the first birthday cake that I made him.

6. He taught me to listen and be content with what's right in front of me.

My little boy opened my eyes to new things, listening better than I did to endless readings of *Curious George* and *Thomas the Tank Engine*. He taught me to care about things like trains and Legos, to revel in sitting on the floor and creating something by stacking blocks one on top of another.

When he jumped on the couch cushions or piled them up for a waterfall that slid him down to the carpet, he reminded me how important it is to play. And every sunset I pointed out that *heooed* and *ahhed* reminded me what a beautiful world we live in.

7. He challenged me to think about how I treat others, to put myself in their shoes.

In my son, I see my own impatience sometimes, my hidden anger, all the things people once criticized me for. And because I love him so much, I stop and ponder how I would've liked to be approached rather than reprimanded and scolded. I try to get it right, to scar him as little as possible, and in the process, to heal myself.

He's me as much as he's himself, and we make a perfect pair — understanding one another and not understanding at the same time, so familiar it's as if he's my reflection.

Becoming this boy's mother made my life livable, valuable, full of wonder. Because we're in this together, through argument and through celebration.

I held his hand before he knew how to look both ways before crossing a street, and when I'm old I know he'll be sitting at my bedside, holding my worn hand in his, loving me as much as I've always loved him.