

5 Ways Mothers Give Away their Power

Dear Mama,

You have more power than you might think.

You are the master of your domain, and the domain is you and your child(ren). Master, not to be confused with dominance and control. By master I do not mean that you are here to control your child, but you are in 100% control of the decisions you are required to make for your child.

There are so many ways that we as mothers give away our power and authority to people and systems as a given, without thought, because we don't realize there is any other way. We allow our bodies/souls and our children's bodies/souls get overriden by people who we think know better than we do when it comes to our lives and the lives of our children. But they don't.

As mothers we are constantly being thrown shame about our choices as a parent, no matter what we do. Now, it is important that we talk openly about evidence based practices that are proven to have better outcomes for our children, but many cases, people want us to just go with the status quo. Just do what was done to them, the way their parents did it. Don't ask questions, don't be too loud, don't speak up, don't question the "experts," ignore that gut feeling. You know, the one you might get at a doctors appointment or sending your kid off on the first day of school. We are told these feelings are "normal," and that every mother goes through it. I agree, they are common, but they are not normal. Our world has made living for systems beyond our community and the opinions of some people priority over what we intuitively know. To the point that the felt sense of that intuition is gone for many people. We are filling our kids bodies and heads with things that we don't even have the slightest clue what is it, because we think we have to. That there could be another way, doesn't even occur to many people.

This isn't about convincing anyone to do things my way (how boring a world that would be!). But if you don't know that you have choices beyond the mainstream world, then you aren't actually making decisions from a place of truth and desire. You are living on autopilot and not considering the impact of living a life in accordance to the status quo, whose only agenda is to keep you relying on it.

So what do I mean by giving away power?

Well, your power is your deep internal knowing, and then the actions that support it. It is standing up for what you know to be true and not fearing the potential backlash from those who feel confronted by how you live. Actually, you might feel fear, but you do it anyway,

because you cannot function living for others and out of alignment with what you know to be best for you and your family.

I see mothers give away their power to others all the time. Sure, there are going to be women who live by the book. They do what they are told, trust the “experts” no matter what, never venture far from their predetermined path as a mother and will insist that they are not run by fear and not giving their power away. That is fine. I am not speaking to them. I am speaking to those who know something feels off. They get that feeling that things aren’t right or they want to change something, but that something goes against everything they are told to be okay and right about raising children. I am here to tell you to listen to that. It is ok, and very empowering to never feel confused or afraid in your choices as a parent. I love how much freedom I have there, and I have that freedom because I don’t listen to other people and have cultivated a deeper trust within myself. I truly believe that if you have that, then it almost doesn’t matter what you do, that faith and confidence will carry you. Even if you do everything totally opposite than what I personally believe to be true, if you feel so good and right doing it, then your family and children will feel that.

Here are 5 places I see mothers giving away their power, where they should not, ever, anymore:

Doctors during pregnancy

This isn’t about how I think you should be pregnant and give birth, but it is true that 99% of women follow a predetermined agenda once they see those two blue lines. From that point on they are under the control of a doctor. They see it as them working for the doctor and not the other way around. Remember, this is your body and your baby. Your caregiver works for you. If you don’t want to drink a nasty glucose drink, you don’t have to. If you don’t want to be induced, you don’t have to. If you don’t want to labor on your back strapped to a bed, you don’t have to. If you don’t want an episiotomy, you don’t have to get one. If you don’t want your baby taken out of your sight, she doesn’t have to be. If you ever have that “bad” feeling about ANYTHING, listen to it. I cringe when I hear a woman say, “my doctor won’t let me...”

If that is the case, then I wouldn’t hesitate finding someone who works FOR YOU and honors your wishes. I understand that there are special circumstances where a woman has to do something she didn’t originally desire or plan, but this isn’t what I am talking about.

Women have so much choice and power around how they bring their babies into the world. Exercise that right. Question and research everything.

2. Parenting experts.

The problem with listening to the experts is that they come from all ends of the spectrum.

Some will say never ever leave a baby alone to cry, others will suggest you go in the nursery just to clean up the vomit, make no eye contact and get out (ok, that is just cruel, but that line of thinking actually exists). Sure, I think it is great to find people who support what you intuitively know, and refer to them in times of confusion, because you trust them and their opinions on such matters, which is different than giving away power.

Ultimately, you know what feels good and what doesn't. Yes, it is true that sometimes we have to feel our feelings to allow for freedom on the other side, and because of how many of us were raised, feeling our feelings can be uncomfortable, which means feeling our child's can be even more uncomfortable.

So how do you know the difference between "good" uncomfortable feelings and "bad" uncomfortable feelings? I would say the answer to this is that the "bad" uncomfortable feelings are persistent, nagging and have a flavor of guilt associated with it, whereas "good" uncomfortable feelings are fleeting and you will often feel refreshed or renewed after having let yourself feel it all the way through. There also isn't much doubt in your decisions when you have "good" uncomfortable feelings that need to be loved and felt. It all feels very clear, but it still FEELS, and that is okay.

One example is parent's confusion over sleep and letting babies cry alone. Many feel if they pick up their baby or sleep near their baby then they are somehow spoiling their baby. On the other hand, they feel terrible letting and listening to their baby's screams. This is a perfect example of listening to our intuition and how it often goes in the exact opposite direction of what the "experts" tell us (not all experts, of course). It is rather sad that we believe a vulnerable baby can have too much love and care, or be made to feel too insecure. Or to think a baby's needs go away at night. Understanding child development and listening to our intuition will make examples like these pretty clear.

3. Your mother-in-law, or your own mother.

This might sound a little harsh, but it needs to be said.

I often see mothers posting in mom groups about how to deal with a mother-in-law or their own parent strongly disagreeing about how they do something as a parent. They complain about their beliefs and ask for advice on how to get them to "see their point of view."

Honestly, the problem isn't your MIL, the problem is lack of boundaries on your (the mother's) part. I get that some women deal with really nasty MILs and mothers. It still comes down to boundaries and confidence. If you know your deepest truth and you are confident in carrying it out as a parent then there is no need to convince anyone or make them see it your way (unless they ask or are curious, of course!). If anyone in my family (or friends) wanted to give me a hard time on a regular basis about how I do something then I have no problem setting a boundary, whatever that would need to look like. I think my own

mother knows this about me, which is probably why she doesn't give me a hard time, despite the fact she might not agree with everything I do. Seeing her grandchild and having a relationship with him is more important to her than questioning my choices. That said, I love having open, respectful conversations about it when she wants to.

I do believe some people just like the drama and want to appear right (been there!), but if you just honestly want to be left alone about your decisions then I promise, you can make that happen.

You also don't need to give away your power by doing something that you feel uncomfortable/unsure about just because that is how your mom raised you and you don't want to upset her or make her feel guilty. I know some women are very aware that if they did something opposite of what their mothers did, then that is indirectly telling them that we are not okay with how it was done to us, and that could feel offensive to our own mothers, and we don't want to hurt them, of course. It is actually more unkind to go along to get along with your mother and protect her from feeling the truth of who you are and what you believe. It prevents potential growth for the both of you. You are not giving her the opportunity to possibly learn from her mistakes that she wasn't aware she was making at the time.

4. Pediatricians

This goes back to my number one point, but I see mothers putting up with pediatrician bullying so much more. I see women dreading going to check-ups because they don't want to feel bullied into giving an injection or medication that they feel uncomfortable with or still have very little knowledge on. It is horrible how much we shame women for questioning substances that they must choose to put or not put in their child's body. No matter what you choose, I think we can all agree that it is totally legitimate to know what you are consenting to give your child and possible side effects. To not ask about any of these things feels totally irresponsible, but we treat women who question as the irresponsible ones.

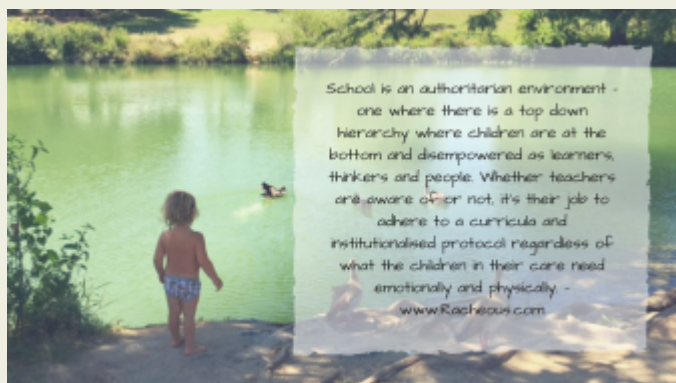
Mothers remember, you are not obligated to keep a care provider who makes you feel horrible. You are also not required to attend check-ups until and unless you feel good about going. These experiences can and should be mostly care free and without stress and dread. If you find yourself feeling that way every time you go to the doctor, I would start to consider another game plan. We personally do not see doctors unless I feel that I cannot care for my son on my own and I need the opinion and help of someone who I trust. I can weigh and measure my son myself and I don't need to be told that my clearly healthy and happy child is, well...happy and healthy.

5. Schools

Somewhere down the line we fell for the belief that once our child turns five then we give them away to a system who can supposedly better raise and educate them than we (or the world) can.



We turn them in to a life of much less freedom and bodily autonomy for the safe bet that when they come out, they will be “educated,” because they can’t possibly learn outside of the starkness that is the school walls. We fall for the lie that learning can only be done one way, at one place, for everyone.



Once again, we are told to abandon our power as mothers and hand our children’s lives and education over to strangers, but we are told these strangers are “experts” so we feel justified in this decision. We tell ourselves they must be educated, even though in reality there are far more experiences and resources available in the rest of the world than are within the confines and limits of schooling. We tell ourselves that our children must be socialized, even though that is all we ever got in trouble for as kids in school. We know very well how much socializing is discouraged in the school environment.

I know my condemnations of schooling will get a lot of backlash. I am not so much saying what you should and should not do. I am simply suggesting you know the reality of your choices and question why you have chosen (consciously or unconsciously) this path, because that is all it is. *A* path. Not *the* path. It is not in any way a given or required. It is a relatively new created system designed to create 9-5 workers for a capitalistic society.

Why have you chosen it? Was it a conscious choice or simply the next step in what you consider of living life? Are we considering how much of our time, attention, energy, and life we give away to the schooling system? We are on their clock all year, and having to constantly make sure we get in assignments, wake up at a certain time, abide by their laws and rules, etc. These things affect the entire family unit, not just children.

Again, if you think you made the best decision and your children love school, then maybe you don't need this message. My message to you is still that you have more power than you know, and if you ever feel off or that your child isn't thriving in this environment, then your job isn't to ignore those feelings or "fix" or medicate your child or put them in a special class with other children who are acutely aware of a broken system. Your job is to change the environment, not change your child.

Sometimes we resist this notion because it would require us to take a good, hard look at our deeply held beliefs. It would require us to realign our priorities and make big (but often very necessary) changes in our own lives. And oh it is so much easier to try to change our child than it is seeing them as people who are reflecting back at us what we need to see and change about ourselves, but that is why children are so great and magical. We just have to look and listen.

I know these ideas are not always easy to hear, nor are the results always happy readers. Luckily, I am not in the writing business to make people happy. I am in it to tell the truth and express that which I am most passionate about. I am curious your thoughts on empowering ourselves as mothers and taking back our rights to our own lives and bodies. What is available to us when we live our lives fully and truly for ourselves and the needs of our children, rather than assuming what life with kids is supposed to look like? I would love to hear your thoughts!