

# A proposed truce for the ‘Mommy Wars’

You probably won't see my favorite new commercial during the Super Bowl this Sunday night, but this is the one you shouldn't miss. I usually skip through ads, but while waiting for a YouTube video to load on my phone, this one caught my eye.

Anyone who's ever had, been, or known a parent can take something away from this humorous, yet thought-provoking, take on today's raging "mommy wars."

The commercial takes place on a busy playground and includes just about every archetype of motherhood, waving their flags of allegiance to "stroller mamas," "working-outside-of-the-home moms," "attachment parenting," "SAHDs" (stay-at-home-dads), and other maternal types fiercely battling over their preferred parenting methods. Dirty looks, name-calling, and other shaming techniques are hurled across the playground-turned-battlefield like cannonballs and grenades, while the innocent babes sit by and watch.

It's not a far cry from the real world. From the second you announce you're expecting, deeply personal questions come flying at you from everyone from your best friend to the customer behind you at the post office. That big round belly prompts such unsolicited advice as, "Breast is best," to "You're getting an epidural, right?" to "The problem with kids today is that they aren't spanked anymore." I learned quickly that the best tactic in these situations is to quietly agree, despite your true feelings, and excuse yourself from the situation.

Registering for baby gifts is much trickier. Every barcode that meets the scanner reveals a decision you have made about how to raise your child; a way for someone else to make a negative judgment about you. All yellow and green clothing? You're waiting to find out the gender? You're clearly not a "planner." Pink or blue everything? You're impatient. Cloth diapers? Gross! Pampers? You don't care about the environment. A stroller? You're pushing your child away. A sling? You're smothering your child. A breast pump? Why are you even bothering to nurse your child if you clearly don't have time? Bottles and formula?!?!

You are:

- a. selfish
- b. ignorant
- c. immature
- d. KILLING YOUR CHILD!!!

Over the past five years, I've received enough criticism about the decisions Patrick

and I have made for our boys for me to develop a serious complex! Even our decision to send our children to Catholic school has come under fire. But, when I find myself questioning my ability to be a good mother, I turn to God. He brings me peace and assurance that my boys are healthy, happy, strong, and lovely. (I imagine I'm not alone in this.)

SPOILER ALERT: At the end of the Similac commercial, one of the babies begins to roll down the hill in her stroller because her mother is so caught up in the competitive parenting game. Another mom notices, and the scrum of battling mothers shifts its attention to the baby in distress, stampedes down the hill after her, and collectively save the little girl.

I realize that the commercial is for Similac, which is a baby formula company, and that some critics might say they're just trying to create an excuse for bottle-feeding mothers to feel better about themselves. If the naysayers feel that way, they're missing the point.

The point is this. Parents like you and me love our children with every ounce of our being. We just choose to do it differently. If we can focus our energies on seeing to our own children's needs as best we can with who we are and what we've got, realize and accept that "there is more than one type of good mother,"\* and keep each other's children safe from the real dangers in this world, we can end this useless war.

\*As quoted by Violet Crawley, Dowager Countess of Downton Abbey, in Season 4 Episode 1 of Downton Abbey.