



“One of Those Moments”

A short collection of stories from mums attending the 2010 Women's Gathering.

The Brindabella Women's Group

offers support and a social, creative outlet for women with young children, in a friendly, relaxed environment

www.brindabellawomensgroup.org

On the 23rd May 2010, the second ACT Women's Gathering was held. One of the guest speakers, Emma Grey, is the author of the book " At Wit's End Before Breakfast - Confessions of a Working Mum", an excerpt from her book is below.

"We woke that morning to a flooded kitchen. While I was explaining the situation to my boss over the phone, Ellie clambered up the back of my chair and held a whirring Thomas the Tank Engine beside my ear. A long strand of my hair became progressively entwined in its wheels until the train was firmly affixed to my head.

At one minute past nine, the plumber landed on our doorstep. Why is it that tradesmen are never on time unless you are on the phone to your boss, wearing your pyjamas and a locomotive?

The inside of the door of the dishwasher was full of magnetic alphabet letters, which the plumber was kind enough to retrieve after he'd used a screwdriver to disentangle the train from my hair. Half an hour later I paid him one hundred and fifty dollars to tell me we needed a new dishwasher."

There is something reassuring about knowing you are not the only Mum with small children whose life goes to custard with alarming regularity and for the days when things aren't so great it is nice to be reminded of that. So, in keeping with Emma's book and her session we asked for submissions describing a time when mums have had one or perhaps a string of "those moments", something they can laugh about now but was probably not very funny at the time.

This short document presents the submissions received. Thank you to the ladies who shared their stories. We hope that you enjoy reading them and that they go some way to normalising the chaos that sometimes accompanies parenthood.

For some reason, I always assumed that by the time at least some of my children were in school life would be easier. As I quickly discovered though, this phase comes with its own challenges and wrangling a kindy child, a preschooler and an 18 month old out the door for a 9am start has its share of perilous moments.

We had been tracking quite well this morning but at 8.30 my needlephobic son Sean (4 ½) shows me in distress a splinter in his hand (from hanging off the back fence with a neighbour the day before). His sister Sarah (6), has discovered a certain pleasure in teasing her brother and promptly informs him that "splinters come from oranges" and that "Mum will have to dig it out with a BIG needle". Suffice to say, Sean is now in complete meltdown, hiding his hand and refusing to take his lunch to school which of course contained cut up oranges.

Meanwhile Conor (18mos), sensing the opportunity of a distracted mother and an open toilet door is now marauding down the hallway wearing a gigantic grin and brandishing a toilet brush. It is now 8.55am and it is only Monday.....sigh.....

Kellie E.

One day after school, while my youngest was in childcare, I decided to take my twin boys (5) to the Bushfire Memorial with a close friend of mine who was affected by the fires as much as I was. It was his first visit there, some 7 years after the fires hit town. I was a little concerned at the boys running around and being a bit over excited in such a poignant location, especially seeming as this particular friend is somewhat younger than me and has not yet experienced the specific 'joys' of parenthood. Before long, my concern at boisterous boy behaviour was superseded by my eldest twin uttering in a VERY loud voice from the other side of the Memorial, "I need to do a poo!" "Oh great!" I thought. There are no toilets at the Bushfire Memorial... and much to my relief; there were no other visitors at that time either. "Ok. We'll go find a loo soon" I yelled across the memorial, hoping that it was just a false alarm, while glancing at my friend with my cheeks beginning to redden.

"MUM! I need to do a POOOOOO!"

"ARRRGGGHHH! Really? Can you hold on?... We'll go in a min..." I was beginning to think I might have to find a friendly looking bush...

"MUM! I AM **DOING** A POO NOW!"

"Really? Now?"

"YES!!!!. NOW!"

"Oh god!"

What is one meant to do in such a situation? Face reddening further, I raced the 100 meters or so to him, swept him up in one arm and promptly deposited him in the nearby bushes hoping I might have got to him before disaster really struck! Well let's just say I did not succeed in that. What on earth am I meant to do now??? Oh how I wish I had nappy wipes tucked in my handbag like a well prepared, ex cub leading mum should have! Instead I had to make use of my well developed improvisation skills and the abundant, and well manicured, vegetation to deal with the situation at hand. Luckily no. 1 son did not fuss about the use of such materials and I soon had the situation sort of under control. We re-emerged from the bushes, my face as red as it could possibly get, smiling sheepishly as my friend quietly collapsed with laughter. Well that was embarrassing I thought. Couldn't possibly get worse from here.... Oh how wrong was I?

We headed back to my friend's place so the boys could play on the nearby playground while we had a cuppa and a chat. Luckily I had a spare change of clothes in the car that I told my son to make use of when we got there. He happily carried the fresh pants and undies up to the house with him and came inside with us. After shutting the door behind us I turned to find a shocked look of horror on my friend's face! Following his gaze I spied my son who had just removed his soiled and stinky pants, dropped them on the carpet and had promptly deposited his less than pristine backside onto the couch so that he could put his fresh undies on. Not my friend's couch either, his flat mate's couch... His also young and child unencumbered flat mate... Oh My God! I did not know whether to laugh or cry! To tell him to get up or stay put there forever so that I need not see what damage he may have done.... He made the decision for me, pulling on his fresh clothes and running off to raid my friend's cookie jar. As my friend dropped to his knees and yelled quietly to the heavens "Why? Why?" and held back tears of frustration, I quickly checked the couch... Thank god there was no damage to explain to his flat mate! I breathed a loud sigh of relief then we both collapsed in uncontrollable laughter. Thank god he still talks to me and he is waiting with baited breath until my son's 21st birthday party and he has promised to tell every single future girl friend my son has the story.

Kym S

We were driving along one evening at dusk and Eliza who was nearly 3, looked out the car window in wonderment. It was probably the first time she was aware of driving at dusk. She screamed, of course causing the driver to stress. "The moon is broken!" she screeched! "That's ok, Dad can fix it" she then said. At the time this was really funny, and has become something we all say when it's no longer a full moon. It was also funny at the time as my husband is NOT known as a fix-it guy AT ALL.

JB

I woke one morning to my 7 week olds hunger cries, it was only 4am, so I quietly crawled out of bed and headed down the stairs to feed him. Only to slip and fall on the way down, crack... I landed at the bottom of the stairs and had made enough of a racket to wake my husband who's first words were along the line of "I friggin told you this would happen" in a very cross tone, all I could whisper through the pain was "please get the baby", he was terribly cross with me as the week before I had moved back into our bed upstairs as I was really missing him but he was worried about me walking the stairs at night.

I crawled into the bubs room and onto the spare bed knowing I had done something nasty as the pain was worse than childbirth but had to get myself together to feed the baby, I managed to get onto my side and have my husband position him for a feed, a little under an hour later bub had had his fill so was put back into his cot. I still couldn't move so asked hubby for a phone and called a girlfriend, she is a specialist neurosurgeon, who promptly told me if I was calling her I needed to call an ambulance and hung up on me so I would. So I called the ambo's who came and I was assessed, after first being told I was "too fat seeing as I had had my baby 7 weeks ago" (insensitive male prat) I was put on a stretcher to be taken to RPA. By now they had made enough noise that the baby was woken and screaming, so strapped into a baby bjorn on my hubby and our 20 month old cowering in the corner due to the strangers in his house.

I was taken out the front where I hear "look that stupid b#*ch has overdosed" (oh what a lovely area we lived in) and loaded into the ambulance, leaving behind a very stressed husband and two sad children, I was just thanking my lucky stars that I had called my parents while I waited for the ambulance and they were making the 3 hour drive to help out, my husband had a major exam to sit in 3.5 hours time!

Anyway after a very eventful ED experience, which was full of embarrassing mother moments including a saturated gown and bed with breast milk and strangers eventually stripping me naked to express the milk off (4 male nurses and a midwife), it was discovered I had crushed a vertebra and would not be allowed do anything but walk and lie down for 8 weeks!

All in all I was blessed, my parents took us home and cared for the two boys and I, my now sheepish husband who made his exam and was shocked by the damage and ashamed of his initial behaviour, and I was made to slow down and really enjoy my children, especially the baby whom the first 7 weeks were a blur, time heals all, I am 1cm shorter but blessed by a happy and healthy family and have a very strong bond with both my boys, some things happen for a reason.

Deb F

At first, it was hard to recollect a particular day when I've had "one of those moments" or even a string of them. It's not that I'm perfect, far from it. I suspect it has more to do with purging them from my memory in an effort to start each new day as though the previous days' calamities never occurred. Somehow, beginning each day as a fresh page, gloriously blank with the endless possibilities of fun, loving interactions with my son helps me maintain my sanity as a stay at home mother.

But, it wasn't very long ago that one such "moment" nearly ended in disaster for my son and a mild coronary for me. I will share a story I am ashamed to admit to. It's the sort of thing I would have shaken my head at in pre-baby days and thought "Not my kid, I will do better."

We were visiting some close friends for a play date. It had been "one of those weeks" for me. Sleep deprivation plus working hard around the home and stretching myself too thin with over commitment to projects and friends had left me exhausted, emotional and in dire need of some other adult company.

The sun was shining and the temperature had briefly reached that acceptable warmth that invites you outdoors on a cold Canberra day. My friend and I carefully took our two boys outside and down a set of concrete steps for some fresh air. The boys played happily in the garden, running around on the grass, "feeding" the resident chicken and "talking" to each other as only toddlers can in a series of half formed exclamations and chortles.

I am still not sure exactly how it happened, only that it took mere seconds; but as both of us stopped paying total attention to the boys and focused on our conversation for a moment, the two 20 month olds climbed up the concrete stairs. I turned around just as my son was poised at the top step, leg outstretched and ready to begin his descent.

Of course, it was too late and I was meters away. Of course, I yelled "stop!" But he was already stepping off into the void. Luckily, he fell down face first. I say luckily because it is my understanding that the front of your skull is one of the thickest parts. He hit smack in the middle of his forehead, then tumbled down a couple more steps, collecting his friend on the way.

My girlfriend and I were moving so fast, we had scooped them up before they even stopped rolling, I am sure. There were tears galore and a few bumps, bruises and scrapes but no concussion, no trip to the hospital.

I know how lucky we were. I remember the talks from Kidsafe at our MACH sessions for new parents. I've read the parenting books and brochures on safety. I think I do my best as a mum to keep my son safe and happy. And still, accidents do happen. We are all only human. And while I don't laugh thinking back on it, I do remind myself to slow down, watch my son carefully and try to take time to rest when I need it so that I can carry on keeping him safe and happy – and maybe myself in the process too.

Gen T.

Watching rugby, son who was 7 called out "go blues!" to which daughter replied, "nah, go pinks!"

JB

Taking a friend's 4 year old to church one Christmas, running late as she wanted to wear a hat to church, explaining church, Jesus and God to this little girl. Got to church, service had already started, little girl throws open the doors, and shouts: "It's ok, we're here for baby Jesus!"

JB

A three hour flight with children is always a trying experience. New toys were purchased especially for the flight in the hope of keeping the kids amused. About an hour into the flight, the kids were getting challenging so I decided to break the monotony by going to the toilet. Yep, Miss 3 and I went. The usual loud protests were yelled - "No, I don't want to go to the toilet!!". "Well shut up and come anyway, come and keep Mummy company!" I think the bad parent glares from other passengers were starting.

Then it was Master 5's turn. I lifted the lid and heard that ominous falling plastic against plastic sound. Look in the bowl - NOTHING IS IN THE BOWL! OH NO! My prescription glasses have fallen INTO the bowl and disappeared down the waste pipe! (Ask most of my 4 eyed brethren and you will find that most of us have an irrational fear of losing our glasses down the dunny). My hand touched the bridge of my nose to confirm my fears about the missing glasses and I felt the frame. Huh! What the heck did I hear! In the split second it took to hear the noise, touch my nose and realise that I still had glasses, Master 6 let out a mighty scream.

Now I was already feeling ticked off. I just wanted the kids to go to the sleep so I could finish my book in peace, eat my can of Pringles and have a can of Coke. "WHAT IS WRONG MASTER 6!" I yelled above his screaming.

"My Transformer" he wailed pointing into the empty bowl.

"@#*\$ MASTER 6!!!!!" I screamed, "WHY DID YOU BRING A \$%&\$# TOY WITH YOU TO THE TOILET!!!!!"

Oh no, dilemma time. I'm in a toilet that other people have used and the only way to get the Transformer is to put my fingers into the waste pipe and see if I can retrieve it! (I need to say here that the VirginBlue toilets don't have the trap door like base that the QANTAS ones have). The kid is still screaming hysterically. Trying to remain calm after swearing at the 6 year old for the time ever, I rationalised that Miss 3 and I were the last ones to use the toilet and it must be a poo free zone as I couldn't smell any poo when Miss 3 and I went in. Alright, now the moment of truth. I put my fingers into the waste pipe and hope that the pipe is free from any poo skids. "OH @#\$%, I CAN TOUCH IT BUT NOT GET A HOLD ON IT!!!"

Master 6 is still screaming hysterically. "I can't get the Transformer, it's lost, now shut up and go for a wee!"

More hysterical screaming.

Okay, time to flush. Now I had visions of the transformer blocking the entire sewage system and having a poo flood racing down the aircraft aisle and our flight having to do an emergency landing because SOME IRRESPONSIBLE PARENT LET THEIR CHILD PUT A TOY DOWN THE TOILET.

Okay, one last try. By some miracle I was able to rescue the Transformer. Victory at last and no poo on the Transformer. I washed my hands and the transformer like there was no tomorrow.

Covered in a cold sweat, Master 6 and I went back to our seats.

Not long after we were seated, an air hostess starting talking to Master 6. "Wow, a Transformer! Can I have a look please?" He happily gave it to the hostie to have a look at. My only thought was please don't let him mention that the Transformer fell down the toilet and his mum rescued it. Thankfully he didn't.

Don't believe the hype about Transformers, they certainly can't get themselves out the poo. It took a mother to save the day!

Karen C

It was a Friday and it had been a busy week during which, amongst other things, I'd had the dreaded 'womens' doctor's appointment and a very bad haircut (I thought I said 'just tidy up the ends a bit, please' but the hairdresser (a man) thought I said 'Off with the lot!') while my good friend had looked after my two little boys. I was looking forward to meeting my hubby at some friends' place for tea after he finished work. It was around two in the afternoon and Master two was having a nap while Master four and I pottered around. I live on a rural property and am a volunteer with the rural fire service and I got a text message to say there was a grass fire and assistance was required.

I rang my Mum who runs the local store and she was able to pop over to look after the boys. I grabbed my gear and went to grab my keys from the table on my way out the door, but they were gone. I got a message to say the grass fire was under control, farmer was burning off, so instead Mum and I started the Great Keys Hunt. Master two soon woke up and the four of us searched for a couple of hours. The boys offered lots of suggestions and enjoyed the search everywhere both inside and out, including all of master two's usual hidey spots (in the VCR, in pot plants, under pillows etc). We found lots of things but no keys. I had to cancel dinner as my second car key was on my husband's key ring and we spent the next week continuing the search, replacing house keys and researching how much it would cost to replace both car keys (truly frightening).

Late the following week I wanted to print something. I opened the front of the printer and found my keys neatly tucked away inside!

Anna B