



The Mommy-Muse Is In: Empowering Your Journey into Motherhood  
January 27, 2009, Dr. Nicol Turner-Lee  
*Diary of a Single Mom*

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Christy: Good afternoon, welcome to **The Mommy-Muse Is In: Empowering Your Journey into Motherhood**. I'm your host, Christy Cuellar-Wentz. I am passionate about enlivening the resourcefulness and creativity of everyone making the profound transition into parenthood.

I provide specialized support for the unique demands of new motherhood through **Mommy-Muse.com**, including online counseling, e-books, *The Official Mommy-Muse.com Blog*, and a wealth of good stuff on my resources page and online counseling, custom designed for parents just like you. Do yourself a favor and take a look at my eBooks, packed with information to empower your life; the *Mommy-Muse Tool Kit* and *The Belly Dance Prescription: Shake Your Hips and Depression* are ready for instant download, right now.

Today, I am delighted to introduce you to *The Diary of a Single Mom*. Global non-profit organization One Economy joined with director Robert Townsend to launch a powerful new, online series on the Public Internet Channel. *Diary of a Single Mom* premieres today, illuminating the challenges and triumphs of three women struggling to create lives that sustain them and their families.

If you haven't heard of One Economy yet, you will be glad you are now. They are using innovative approaches to deliver the power of technology and information to low income people. More than fifteen million people have used One Economy's online tools and resources to build better lives.

Here to share this amazing new series with us is Dr. Nicol Turner-Lee. She manages One Economy's Midwest programs and has years of experience in community organizing, community technology, and organizational development. She even founded the Neighborhood Technology Resource Center, a non-profit organization that provides technology training and Internet access to low income residents in Chicago. This one is recognized as a leading community technology center. Welcome to the show, Dr. Nicol.



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- Dr. Nicol: Thanks for having me. I am so happy to be here, today.
- Christy: I'm so glad that you are. Can you start by sharing with us what inspired One Economy and the Public Internet Channel to tackle this topic?
- Dr. Nicol: You gave us a wonderful acknowledgement; I have to say, Christy, on your introduction. We're a non-profit that's all about using the power of technology to empower people. There are so many things on the Web, right now, that people can go to, to find a job, to find healthcare. We are all about public purpose media, media that is relevant, that helps you to get action in your life. The *Diary of a Single Mom* came – there are ten million single moms out there.
- Christy: Ten million?
- Dr. Nicol: Ten million, I know it's a lot. A lot of those single moms have children. Technically speaking, today, we're not doing a bad job, moms, out there raising our kids. We have that day-to-day issue of work-life balance. We have issues of affordable healthcare. We have issues of "Can I make it on my housing budget that I have allocated for my family?"
- We were inspired to create this content, with Robert Townsend, that really helps women see that they're not alone. They get to see people, and in this case, they're actors, who really begin to help personalize this experience and to give a voice to those women who are out there.
- Christy: That is so excellent! I sometimes hear people talk about single moms as though they're a minority, somehow. You know, in my experience working with moms around the country, this is really not the case. I've actually read that something like 23% of households are headed by single mothers.
- Dr. Nicol: That's right. It's a growing trend. We all make choices in our lives. In the series, for example, these are not your typical single moms. They are a variety of women out there.



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There is Ocean, who is the main character, who is a woman who has had her share of social issues, tried to stay on the correct loop, stay out of crime and all those other issues.

There is Lupe, another woman who has two children, trying to negotiate between how she works with the child's father. There is also another character who is, essentially, a widow, who has been left to raise her grandson.

We're trying to touch the continuum of women who are out there that just don't have a voice, right now, and are sitting home. I'm married, but I have those issues, too. I sit home, sometimes, and I say, "Oh my goodness, how am I going to balance all these dynamics of my life," and we really wanted to use online media, very powerful tool right now, to get women to say, "I can make a change. I can do something different. I can align with other women across the country," much like you've done with Mommy-Muse. "I can get out of this, and I don't have to feel stigmatized in the process."

Christy: Exactly, I think this has the potential to be so empowering. What would you say is the main message of *Diary of a Single Mom*?

Dr. Nicol: The main message for us, because we want you to watch it, but our main message is once you watch it, we want you to act. We've created, and that's why these are "webisodes" and not appearing on cable television. They're not on TV, per se, right now. They're on the Web because the Web has the power to bring people to resources.

As part of our major campaign, called the Public Internet Channel, we're really about creating content that rests in this one space. You'll get to see the *Diary of a Single Mom*, and there are eight webisodes involved with the series. We just launched, today, the first webisode, which is called "Life Raft". We're going to be releasing these a little bit at a time, over the next few months, so people begin to see how you go on this journey.



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One of the beautiful things about what we've done is we've put what we call a "Make it Easy" toolkit, right next to the webisode. The toolbox will allow the viewers to connect to resources around social issues like getting a GED, finding a job, finding healthcare for my child. It's not as if you're watching it and you're just being entertained. You're actually able to click on that tool kit, once you say, "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired," or "I can do this," and you can click on the toolkit and begin to take action in your life. That's why the Web is such a powerful medium for us.

Christy: My goodness, this is the first time I've heard of a series that's being done in this way. There may be others that I just haven't heard about, but that sounds incredibly powerful. People are going to be able to watch these webisodes. How long are these, are they half-hour?

Dr. Nicol: They're about twelve minutes. We've studied the attention span of people on the Web, [Laughter] particularly mothers with children.

Christy: So, you kept it short, which is good. [Laughs]

Dr. Nicol: It's nice and short, short and simple. I can just imagine, in my own life, my two children running around me while I'm trying to watch something on the Internet. It's twelve minute episodes, that again allow bite-sized pieces for people.

Each episode has a major theme to it. The first episode that people will see, today, is the introduction of these women, to each other, and the understanding that there is a commonality, whether you are a widow, a woman dealing with child support issues, a woman who is trying to reinvent yourself.

That's why we really adore the fact that Robert Townsend got involved. His film credentials are extensive, in the space of social purpose content. He's entertaining and a pretty funny guy. For the most part, he worked with a writer who is a Helen Hayes award winner, who has written some really great documentary content, etc, to help us put this together.



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There is this theme, in the first episode, which brings everyone together. Every webisode will have a common theme. Christy, that twelve minutes allows you a bite-sized chunk that says, "I've got to go to that toolkit, now, to get some things done in my life".

Christy: That's excellent. They can be watching this, and I'm sure as a webisode, they can pause it and rewind or fast-forward it, or whatever they need to do to allow for whatever is going in their life; kids running around, interruptions that are just part and parcel of our lives as moms. Then there can be these tools they can click on, right there, without having to go anywhere else.

Dr. Nicol: That's right, and they can connect with other women. Behind each episode, there will be actual real life stories of other women whose lives typify what we're trying to put forth in that webisode. They'll get to meet Kay or Jane or other people, Nephriti, who are part of the series. They can hear another voice.

We thought, when we were putting this together, that sometimes being a woman can be isolating. I think I read an article the other day about all the responsibilities that we as women have, particularly mothers. Sometimes, it can be very lonely.

Christy: Yes, it can be. I hear that quite a bit. There is a sense of isolation that happens and that's why I'm so interested in all this new technology that gives us the access. Seven years ago, when I had my first child, and I was in the middle of post-partum depression, we had Internet, but we weren't having any kind of real interactive tools that made it easy to connect in this way. I can see that this could solve a very real problem that faces so many mothers.

Dr. Nicol: It does. As mothers, we're private. The Internet allows you to do things, as you said, more innovative today than you could do before. When I had my son, six years ago, I took an online class. I was sitting home and said, "I have to do something." At that time, online classes were popping up on the Internet, where you could do message boards, and all that other stuff.



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Now, with the power of media, we've said, "Hey, you're not alone and here is an opportunity," like you said; you can pause it, you can come back to it, you can talk to another parent, you can share your story with other people. The key thing is; our stories need to empower and inspire other people and bring a level of compassion.

This is really a shout to the women out there who are doing it every day, who need that time. You may be going through it, and hopefully we will continue to expand our work to get into some of the other issues that women face, after birth, and all that other stuff. This is a series we're using to open up that voice for single mothers.

We did an opening of this in Atlanta, Georgia, just recently, at the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church. Four thousand people showed up to this event.

Christy: Four thousand people!

Dr. Nicol: Four thousand people, can you believe it? What was so powerful about it; a woman came up, at the end, and she just burst into tears. She said, "You know, I thought I was by myself. Thank you, One Economy, for sharing this voice out there". She came up with her two boys. It just made your heart melt that the power of the tool, and as she learned more about the toolkit, just imagine. I would love to come back to that same woman, a year from now, and see where she's at.

Christy: Absolutely, that is astonishing! I am always so glad when there is a medium that can really get out there and touch people. To know that there was that big of a turnout, that just lets me know that the word is going to spread very quickly. This is what I'm all about. The more that we can get the word spread about these empowering resources that are available for people, the more lives can be changed. You know how it is, when we touch one life, that person can go out and reach another person. It really does create this chain of positive energy that is incredibly powerful.



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Dr. Nicol: It's like a movement, much like what you're doing with your site, it's a movement. We need a place where we can talk to people about everything. I'm potty training my daughter. She's a little bit more difficult than my second one. I need a place to go and talk to people. There are different issues. We're multi-dynamic, as women, but I think we all share that commonality. This is not just for single moms.

Christy: We'll be back from break in a few minutes, and will continue our conversation, on **The Mommy-Muse is In.**

[Commercial Break]

Christy: Dr. Nicol, some of the people I've spoken with in preparation for this episode today, they weren't aware of the Public Internet Channel. I wonder if you could share a bit about this pic.tv with our audience, so they can get involved.

Dr. Nicol: I sure can. The Public Internet Channel, the web address for that is [www.pic.tv](http://www.pic.tv). It's what we consider to be our next generation public purpose, one mind network. Many of us have heard about public broadcasting. That, for the most part, comes through our television.

In the case of the Internet, there has not been this place where information has been aggregated for people, in the areas of healthcare, the environment, employment, money, living green, and those kinds of areas. This is our attempt to really look at how do we really bring all those resources together, in one place, where people cannot only look at information, but they can witness multi-media content. They can connect with other people. They can connect to tools and resources to take action.

We really designed the Public Internet Channel to be this response to the need of our country and our communities, to have this place that inspires, motivates, and gets us to action.

Christy: That's fantastic. So, pic.tv actually covers a very wide range of topics. There are a lot of people doing some very empowering stuff on there.



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Dr. Nicol: Yes, we have people who have started their own shows. In the living green section, there is a woman out of California that has this whole show that she started around how to live in a green context in an urban community.

Christy: Really?

Dr. Nicol: Yes, we do. We have other content we've created around how to manage your finances. A new course that we just put out is called "Crash Course". In this economy, people are trying to figure out how to get the most out of their money. Our course, "A Crash Course for your Wallet", is an engaging video that helps people.

People are different types of learners. We have different ways that information comes at us. Even though many people would say this is a downturn. We believe, at One Economy, there is no recession when you can inspire people to act. Much of what many of us are doing, right now, is just waiting for the day to turn.

The Public Internet Channel is all about giving information that inspires people to act.

Christy: That's excellent. I really wanted to let people to know that there is a lot of stuff available on pic.tv. I know we're focusing on one specific, really great show that's starting today, but I want them to know if they haven't checked it out yet, they're really missing out.

Dr. Nicol: They really are. It's great. It's in all levels of what we call the "best of the Web" in one place, particularly the best of the Web content that is around socially relevant ideas. We want you all to come.

Christy: Absolutely, and I notice that even poking around a little bit there, there is a lot of ways to interact and get connected with other people on that, not just to get ideas for yourself and what to do in your own life, and things like this "Crash Course for your Wallet", but also to find out what other people are thinking, what's on their minds, find people to connect with and get into groups together, even, to work on things.



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- Dr. Nicol: You're so right. Today, we're so busy. It's as if we don't have that time to reflect. That's the beauty of the Web. It offers us a power to connect with other people, as you said, but to figure out what other people are doing. That's why the *Diary of a Single Mom* is so important to us. As I said, previously, it's that voice for people who have been voiceless around their concerns.
- Christy: Tell us, then, let's talk a little about some of the specific challenges that single moms will be facing in this series.
- Dr. Nicol: In the series, we're going to be touching upon budgeting and finances. As we've mentioned, ten million people out there are single moms, 23% of the households that you've mentioned. Sixteen million children in our country live with single moms, right now. Moms are trying to make it day-after-day, and a lot of single moms, unfortunately, are most affected by unemployment. They have to have certain work schedules or the time to continue their education, etc. Or, they're in a life situation where they go from being married to divorced or widowed, which changes their circumstances.
- What you're going to see in the series is a focus on how to become more financially astute and manage your finances so you can empower your household, so you don't feel like you're sinking, all the time.
- We're going to deal with healthcare. One of the webisodes, it's not this particular one, but a future on where we will deal with health. Women face health challenges. Can you imagine when a woman has a health crisis, how that affects the family?
- Christy: Oh absolutely, especially as a single mother. My own sister was widowed at a fairly young age and had three small children. That was always a concern that I had, "Oh my gosh, what if Terry gets sick? What if something happens to her?"
- Dr. Nicol: I know, the worst thing you could see is a mother who goes early and her children are left alone. How do they get nurtured or how does that



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mother set up the proper channels to make sure those kids are taken care of. We're going to address that in this because we don't want to see women without a plan, moving forward.

We're going to address workforce issues. How do I find a better job? The series focuses around a woman named Ocean. The ocean is vast with possibilities and opportunities, which is why we chose her name. It's not a pond; it's an ocean. [Laughter] She goes through several challenges where she wants to get her GED and has been unsuccessful on the attempts to pass the test. You're just going to see her journey through exploring how to get this, how to use a computer to be able to access this resource and tool for her life.

Then, you're going to see how this growth affects our children. When they see us growing, our children grow. Again, this was meant to not put people in a box, anymore, to open up about who we are, what we do the best. I once heard someone tell me, my grandmother, "People do the best they can with the resources they have at that time". This whole series is about doing the best you can but knowing there is a way you can get out of the situation you're in and you can find other people who also have made it out, or who have made "mountains out of mole hills", I guess.

Christy: That sounds great. I know people who have started to try and get their GED and not passed it the first time. Sometimes, it's really demoralizing and they just don't want to go back. What I'm hearing sounds great. These characters are going to face very real challenges that moms all over the country are dealing with. We're going to see how they actually work through those and find some creative solutions.

Dr. Nicol: That's what I was saying; it is focus on the single mom, but all of us as women, have that isolating point of time in our life, where we're wondering, "How did I get to this job? How do I have all this credit card debt? What do I do?" Sometimes you wonder, "Why did I marry that man?" [Laughs]



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Christy: Oh, you never wonder things like that. [Laughter]

Dr. Nicol: We all go through it and so our campaign is focused on the single mom but we definitely want to appeal to any mother out there who may be having similar challenges. This is open to you, as well.

Christy: That's perfect. I know our audience is hearing this. Even though this is called *Diary of a Single Mom*, and that is the primary focus, there is going to be information here that can really help all of us. It's just bringing it out in ways so we can learn how to use them.

In the few minutes before break, could you talk more about this toolkit you mentioned that is going to be available online, and some of the specific things that will be there, just ready for people to click on?

Dr. Nicol: What you're going to find when you go to the Public Internet Channel, the toolkit is actually part of every product that's on the channel. If you see any of our courses, there is the ability to go to the toolkit. It's a special feature of the Public Internet Channel that helps you take action after you have watched some programming on the network.

For the case of the single mom, when you finish up the webisode, you're going to be directed to the major themes of that webisode. In addition to being linked to areas of healthcare – how do I find health information? How do I find childcare? What do I do if I'm looking for housing? It's going to link to a product we have called the "Beehive". It's a separate web property but it's all embedded in our Public Internet Channel. The beehive.org allows you to go locally, in your community, where we have customized it, obviously, to find resources that are within walking distance, a bus ride, or a car ride, for you to get help.

The toolkit is really interesting, for us, because again, we don't want you to watch it and just be entertained. We really want you to look at it, love the value of the characters in the series; tell us, America, what you think about it. Take action because too often, we get messages, in our society, and we don't know where to turn. That's why the Make



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it Easy toolkit is what it's called. It's making it easy for you to go on to the next step.

Christy: That's excellent. You're embedding this right inside so people don't have to go, separately, to beehive.org or any of that. All they have to do is go to pic.tv and anything that they are interested in, it will be accessible to them with just a click of a button.

Dr. Nicol: That's right. They don't get taken out of the web page and having to figure out how to get back. We've embedded it all on the channel. That's why we call ourselves the response to this new broadcasting sphere that allows people to really take advantage of the power of the Internet.

Christy: That's excellent. Tell us, while we have a little bit of time left here, who are some of the wonderful people involved in this show?

Dr. Nicol: In addition to Robert Townsend, I also have to put this out there. The show was also co-written, executive produced by our CEO, Ray Ramsey, who has seen the nexus of information and technology come together, these last few years. We look at him and what he's done with the company and say, "Wow, we're all happy to be on this journey". That's who would know the power of the Internet, today.

We have people like Richard Roundtree. Do you remember him in Shaft? I know he's done other things, since then, but that's his most notable one, for us. He actually plays a character on the show, as well as Billy Dee Williams. He looks great. Monica Calhoun, best known for her work throughout Hollywood and various films; Valerie Ortiz, Janice Lind, and Neko are all in this. Throughout the series, their characters evolve. You'll get to know them

I'll have to tell you, again, when we did that premier – Leon is also in it. When we went to Atlanta, the women loved Leon.

Christy: I bet.



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Dr. Nicol: He was in *The five Heartbeats*, the movie about the temptations. All those characters helped us bring credibility to the series, coupled with the real life memoirs from single mothers out there. Those characters and professional actors really helped us to capture it.

Christy: Absolutely. Stay with us through this next break, and we'll have just a couple of more minutes at the other end to share a bit more about *Diary of a Single Mom*.

[Commercial Break]

Christy: Dr. Nicol, I know that you are a mother, yourself. Could you just share with our audience, briefly, how you use online tools to keep your home going?

Dr. Nicol: I don't know how I would survive, I must say before I start. I have a two-year old and a six-year old. I use them online to look up things I want to purchase because I don't want to take my kids into the store. I'm constantly online shopping. I look for healthcare information, on the kids, where they should be on the development growth chart, extracurricular activities, and playgroups. I go online to see what's happening with playgroups in my area. I go and look at areas; I love the financial budgeting. The stuff we have at One Economy as well as the stuff that's available on the Internet. I download templates. There are organizers that I also go to, that I spend a lot of time going to those organizing sites to help me manage my schedule, since I have a limited amount of time, to balance my children and my home life.

I'm a vast Internet user. In fact, my daughter knows how to say laptop, [Laughter] which is kind of scary. My son knew how to say Google, at four. She knows how to say laptop. [Laughter]

Christy: That is excellent, and I know that you are definitely walking your talk, and I would like you to tell everybody where they can go, exactly, to tune in, look through, and see *Diary of a Single Mom*, today.



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Dr. Nicol: Today, if you go to [www.pic.tv](http://www.pic.tv), you will see the content for the *Diary of a Single Mom*. It is the first day, as Christy said, that we are launching it. It is very prevalent on the site. As you go through the pic.tv, you will also find other content around your family life, money, healthy living, living green, and other shows. We encourage you to take advantage of pic.tv, in general, but the *Diary of a Single Mom* series will pop up.

For those of you out there, this is a release of the first web series. There are eight in this entire program. This series is twelve minutes each webisode. It is just fantastic. The quality of the video and audio is great. When you are done, you will be linked to the Make it Easy toolkit, as well as to other blogs and resources that are happening around your town, to be able to take action on your life. We encourage you to go.

If you're interested, you will also find information about One Economy Corporation. We are the sponsors of the content. We would love to come to your city if we have people available in your city to come talk to you further about the *Diary of a Single Mom* and the other things that we do.

We are really on a mission, Christy, to get this content out there. We don't feel that any mother, today, as you and I have spoken about, should be home struggling, thinking that they're alone at this. If you are out there, listeners, please contact us, as well. You will find our information. We want to come out and help you and help the constituencies and the women around you to be better.

Christy: That sounds wonderful! For my audience, in case you forget that exact address, if you go to **Mommy-Muse.com**, click on our Great Places page. This will be listed as a Resource of the Week. I will also be updating the blog regularly, so you know what episodes are coming.

Dr. Nicole Turner-Lee, thank you so much for joining us. I know women, everywhere, can benefit from logging on, tuning in, and taking



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action to help their lives and the lives of the people that they love around them.

Dr. Nicol: That's our goal. Thank you, Christy.

Christy: You're welcome. Next up, we have my Mamapalooza co-founders of *Motherhood from Egg to Zine and Everything in Between*, Christina-Marie Wright and Corbin Lewers. We are a literary performance group and an online magazine at [www.motherhoodeggtozine.com](http://www.motherhoodeggtozine.com).

We believe there is a lot more to motherhood than what you see in most magazines and TV. We want to give a voice to all mamas, including grandmamas, soon to be mamas, and would be mamas. We've just returned from an outstandingly successful Seattle debut, this weekend, complete with readings from mothers in all walks of life, and belly dancing. [Laughs]

I want to go ahead and introduce you, now, to Christina-Marie Wright. She brings us Gonzo Parenting, a print zine available at [www.gonzoparenting.zine](http://www.gonzoparenting.zine), whose motto is "Sometimes parenting is all about surviving it?"

We also have Corbin Lewers, known as "Reality Mom," who is offering tales from the trenches of a struggling writer and mother of two, through [www.realitymomzene.blogspot.com](http://www.realitymomzene.blogspot.com). Her work has been published in *Mothering* and *Hip Mama*, among other places. She has authored the memoir *Not What I Expected* and *Swing Set*. Welcome to the show, my brilliantly talented writing friends.

Guests: Hi, Christy

Christy: Hello. Christina-Marie, tell us a little bit about your journey into motherhood.

Christina-Marie: Well, my journey is unconventional, to say the least. As a young mom, I had my son when I was nineteen-years old. I was married, but younger than a lot of the other new moms that I was trying to connect with in mothering groups. I really didn't have much in common with



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the other new moms that I was running into. They were all older than I was, or the ones that were my age were single moms and facing different challenges than I did. I kind of had that feeling of loneliness that Dr. Nicol was talking about, even as a married mom. Being a young mom was tough.

Things change. I got divorced and remarried. When I remarried, I married a man who had custody of his four children. I went from having one to having five. Then, a couple of years into our marriage we unexpectedly had two infants come into our home, that we are in the process of adopting.

Now, I have seven. I kind of say my family is not blended; it's pureed. [Laughter] That's how I came into motherhood. It was kind of taking the long way to it, but here I am, today, with seven kids, unexpectedly so. But, motherhood is good.

Christy: [Laughs] It's challenging, but I know it brings sometimes unexpected rewards. I am always amused at your concept that the telephone thwarted your attempts at birth control. [Laughter] Could you share with our listeners how that happened? I've never heard that one, before.

Christina-Marie: When my husband, "Mr. Right" and I were dating, I was at that time divorced, a single mom. I had gone through a difficult time in my employment, my living; my restaurant was burned down, the restaurant that I managed was burned down by an arsonist.

The same week, my roommate that I shared a home with told me she was moving out. With no job and no income, I probably can't afford to stay in my house. Mr. Right, the sweet little boyfriend that he was, he called and said, "You could always move in with me". I said, "You know, that's so cute," and I felt a little better at his little joke.

Three weeks later, when I couldn't find a job or a roommate, I showed up on his doorstep and said, "Thanks for the call and I hope you were serious". That sort of brought me my next four children.



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Then, as we settled into our married life and settled into being the parents of five children, we received a phone call, one day, from the State of Washington, informing us that our great niece had been taken into foster care. She was seven-months old. They asked if we could please take care of her, just step in for a little while, until the parents got back on their feet. Of course, we would. We got her. That was another phone call that brought me to six kids.

After six more months of having this little girl in our family, and considering the adoption possibility, just in case the parents didn't get back on their feet, we got another phone call from the State of Washington saying, "The little girl that you had just had a baby sister born, about three hours away from you. Could you come pick up this baby?"

A series of three phone calls did thwart my birth control method, which previously was vasectomy and working fine. I always tell my doctor that I will have to get my phone disconnected if I'm to prevent any more unplanned children. [Laughs]

Christy: I thought I was somewhat unusual because of actually getting pregnant with my second, while on the birth control pill, but you really take the cake. [Laughter]

Christina-Marie: No one is safe.

Christy: That is great. Tell me, why did you decide to start the hysterically funny magazine, Gonzo Parenting?

Christina-Marie: I will say that it wasn't intended to be funny; it just turned out that way. Parenting, sometimes, is a big joke. Dr. Nicol did talk about the feeling of commonality that people need, and that's really what I was looking for when I launched Gonzo Parenting. Here I was, a mom of seven, whose family was formed in an unconventional way. I read and reread a lot of mainstream parenting magazines, and joined mothering groups. What I really found was that I wasn't like the other mothers I was coming into contact with.



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These moms had a kid or two, or maybe three, but they seemed to have it all together. I was a mess, or I felt like I was a mess. I read a ton of articles on how to get organized, how to save time cleaning and preparing meals, how to spend quality time with my kids. Those articles made me feel even more inadequate.

I got to the point where I found myself shouting, "I have seven kids! Telling me how to get organized is like offering me advice on how to arrange the deck chairs on the Titanic!" I thought, "Aren't there other parents, like me? Aren't there parents out there who love their kids to the end of the Earth, but aren't perfect? Aren't there any parents who sometimes, just sometimes feel like they're just surviving parenthood?"

I started putting out calls for content. I thought, "Wouldn't it be great to put together a bunch of stories, crazy parenting stories from parents who aren't afraid to say, "I'm not perfect". I started meeting all of these wonderful, wonderful writers and all of these wonderful parents who maybe weren't writers but had a story to tell.

Like I said, it didn't set out to be funny, but more often than not, it really is.

Christy: That is so true. We're about to go to break. We will be back in just about two minutes, to continue our conversation with Christina-Marie Wright and Corbin Lewers.

[Commercial Break]

Christy: I have Corbin Lewers here, known as "Reality Mom". Corbin, could you share with us why you decided to start Reality Mom magazine.

Corbin: Sure, the day I went into labor with my son, the magazine I was editing folded. Here I am with my newborn and no job. As many moms probably know, we make these master plans and then that never really happens. Once I got grounded with my son, I thought, "What am I going to do, now?" The economy had shifted, as it has



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now, and I started doing some freelance work. Over and over again, I was sending out submissions and getting tired of being rejected.

I thought, "Maybe I'll start my own little thing." I won't reject myself, obviously, so I can publish as much as I want. I can say what I want. As Christina-Marie described, I was not relating to a lot of the other moms. I was working but I worked from home. I wasn't necessarily a "working" mom or a "stay-at-home" mom.

I also didn't read any parenting books so I wasn't [0:48:31.6 unclear] parenting mom, or all those names that were being thrown around. I didn't know what people were talking about. I was just going by my own instincts.

I was constantly feeling alienated from these groups; I was missing a whole different language. By starting the zine, I was hoping two things: To meet some other like-minded individuals, and to get my ego boosted back up about writing.

Christy: That's excellent.

Corbin: It did both, I'm happy to say. [Laughter]

Christy: Your latest issue of Reality Mom has some great writing about dreams versus reality, in outings with children. I wonder if you could share an example of that with our listeners.

Corbin: Sure, around Christmas time, I had a wonderful idea. "I'm going to take my children, who are three and six, downtown. We will see the Macy's train and we'll ride the horse drawn carriages and look at the trees". Within ten minutes, they were running around like crazy people because they were excited to be downtown. There was rush hour traffic and people everywhere, talking on their cell phones, trying to get home. It was freezing cold outside. I found myself staring at every car, thinking, "I wish I were in there, instead of on this outing with my children".



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Then it proceeds; we go out to eat. My son is very calm and reads, for the most part. My daughter is running around the restaurant like a crazy person. Over and over again, you do these things, like camping with your children, going on long road trips with your children.

You have this fantasy of what it's going to be. You then go, and it's actually not that. Sometimes, it's very hard, but you do it again and again because you always remember the dream. In its own way, it doesn't matter that it wasn't what you thought it was; it still is a special time. It's just not what you think it's going to be.

Christy: That's so true. To me, that's what is so empowering about what it is that you and Christina-Marie are bringing forward into the world, and really why we teamed up to bring *Motherhood from Egg to Zine* to people.

If people just read sanitized, nicely groomed version of motherhood that is in most media, certainly in the glossy magazines, we might get the idea that there is something wrong with us. What I want people to know is there is not. I know our lives are messy. If we just realized that we're actually connected to all these other moms who are having these kinds of dreams versus reality experiences, it's actually not depressing. For me, it really helps lift me out of the funk, a lot of times. Just recognize that and to see you guys giving voices to the moms that might not be spoken to or heard properly in regular mass media. I think it's fantastic.

Corbin: In so many of our presentations, the word post-partum depression came up. I don't like to label what I had as that, though it probably was that. It was that isolation and loneliness, over and over again, of feeling – I would be the one that would walk into the mommy group saying, "I'm going insane! I didn't get any sleep, last night. I'm fantasizing about checking into a hotel and never coming out". People would just look at me as if I was horrible. I would walk away feeling so guilty; "I'm a horrible mother. Why don't I love every minute of this?" I was just speaking my truth. That's what we're hoping to do with *Motherhood Egg to Zine*, and what we are doing.



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- Christy: Absolutely, now where can people get a hold of Reality Mom zine?
- Corbin: There is a website, [www.realitymomzine.blogspot.com](http://www.realitymomzine.blogspot.com). There is PayPal on there. If they happen to live in Seattle, it's sold in almost every bookstore in Seattle, or they can connect to the [www.motherhoodeggtozine.com](http://www.motherhoodeggtozine.com) site. We're all there too, so they can find me that way, as well.
- Christy: That's excellent. I know [www.gonzoparentingzine.com](http://www.gonzoparentingzine.com) has PayPal buttons up. You can easily point, click, and order a subscription there.
- In just this last minute, or so, Corbin, you have a couple of books, right, and a contract coming up, right?
- Corbin: That's right. My memoir, which has many titles, but the current title is *Creating a Life*. It's about the whole process of starting into motherhood and how before I became a mother, I also made that leap of faith, of quitting the 9 to 5 benefit job, and took that leap into becoming a writer and freelance editor, creating my life while I was creating the life inside of me. Then I decided to birth at home instead of a hospital so all those changes I went through at that time, of doing what I needed to do to feel like I was set up to be the mother, before the baby came.
- Christy: That's fantastic. We will definitely be looking forward to that. I want to thank both of you, Christina-Marie and Corbin, for being here with me, today, and taking a little time out of your very busy lives, to join us and share what you have to bring to the world – to our audience.
- That's about all our time for today. I'd like to thank my sponsors at Sound Formulas, and encourage everyone to check out [www.soundformulas.com](http://www.soundformulas.com), makers of revolutionary products that provide the precise nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and essential oils that not only pregnant, but post-partum mothers need. They have tremendous integrity and have dedicated themselves to making a difference in the lives of mothers everywhere. Give yourself the



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I give a big thank you to co-founder and Web mistress of **Mommy-Muse.com**, Linda Semrau, as well as my Senior Executive Producer, Melissa Schmitz. We're on live, Tuesdays, at 12:00 noon, Pacific, and 3:00 p.m. Eastern.

Join us next time for a special show with Debi Silber, registered dietitian, personal trainer, whole life coach, and lifestyle expert just for moms, known as the "Mojo Coach". She'll be here to help you.

Look through, online, to **Mommy-Muse.com**, sign up for weekly updates, check out my eBooks and see if online counseling might be right for you. This is your host, Christy Cuellar-Wentz. I'll see you next week.