

Int centre stage

Chanelle takes up centre stage.

Chanelle.

I am a single mum is trying to do it all. I have 2 jobs, one that I attend 10-6pm & another filling the minutes in between. Well not really cause even in my job I'm still thinking about my child during those hours also so I guess I'm working 24hours of everyday all day. But still I feel like I'm not the mother I'm "supposed" to be, because I can't be there for my child before and after nursery... but I selfishly crave something for me, although I'm not allowed am I? Cause I got up the duff, at a young age so it's my fault right?

My son is 3 years old and although he is lovely and the most precious person in my life sometimes I desperately want a day to myself. I'm guilty I sometimes get the desperate need to just run away.. Although I know I would never do it because my son is my world. I'm sure we all struggle through hardship and challenges to keep my sanity I've started writing a diary,

Chanelle pulls out a diary.

CHANELLE (CONT'D)

8 Things I find increasingly challenging as a single mum, each day I write something new, things I deal with & things I know one day I will. You know just to remind me I'm bloody superwoman!

She starts to read from it

CHANELLE (CONT'D)

**1. When I Worry Alone**

I'm not sure I've ever experienced a feeling as lonely as worrying about

my child alone. When I'm up all night worrying over a high temperature or when I'm struggling to know if I've made the right parenting decision, it's a lot. I don't miss my ex, but I miss the role he was supposed to play. Knowing I am the only person responsible for my children's future & safety is scary.

## **2. When I Celebrate Alone**

The lifetimes of our children are heavily marked with milestones of achievement and moments that make memories. While I look forward to them just as much as any other parent, I hate that every celebration is also met with the sting of celebrating alone. Being the single voice cheering my son on as he took his first steps and being the single set of hands clapping at his nursery graduation, is a subtle and painful reminder of the person who is missing out on everything my child is accomplishing.

## **3. When I Cry Alone**

Single mums, you know what I'm talking about here; that moment when you finally break down and let the tears flow. Our lives are hard and we need a good cry every once in a while, but when I cry alone it just seems to magnify the fact that there is no one here to help me or understand. I realize that it's up to me and only me to pull myself back together and that I have no choice but to do so. You feel isolated & alone.

## **4. When I Have To Ask For Help**

I don't like asking for help. As a single mother, my biggest fear is that I won't be enough for my son. Because of that, I desperately try to manage everything, and balance everything, because if I can pull it all off, I am able to convince myself that I really can do this. As much as

I want to be enough though, sometimes I simply can't be and when those moments arise I have no choice but to ask for help. Setting aside my pride and admitting I can't do it all can be a tough pill to swallow, no matter how much it is a lesson that I need to learn.

#### **5. When I Disappoint My Child**

There isn't a parent on the face of the planet that will go through their child's life without ever disappointing them, but for single parents those disappointing moments can hit harder than they do for coupled parents. Whether it's because of time, finances, or the fact that I simply cannot always play the role of two parents, there is nothing that feels worse than seeing my child's sad face and knowing that I can't give him what he wants. Sure there is usually a life lesson wrapped up in there, but sometimes I just wish he didn't have to learn anything that I wasn't ready to teach him. Sometimes I wish I could just give him what he wants, because as a parent, sometimes I simply just want to see my son happy.

#### **6. When I Have To Explain To My Child Where his father is.**

For me this is the single hardest part of being a single mother -- having to explain a situation to my child that I don't even understand. Why did dad choose to leave? I don't know. Does my dad still love me? I hope so. Is my dad ever coming back? I don't think so. Watching my child struggle to understand the absence of their father never gets any easier and I'm pretty sure it never will.

I love my kid and I love my life. If given the choice between being a single mother and not being a mother

at all, there's no hesitation that I would choose being a single mother. But as any parent can attest, there are some parts of parenthood that are nothing but rough. Unfortunately we go through those moments alone.

#### **7. It affects friendships.**

Only being available for chats after bed time, or preferring to hang out in child friendly places makes friends feel side-lined. The truth is I often prioritise friends above myself (instantly phoning them when my son sleeps despite just wanting to collapse), but I cannot prioritise them above my son, just doesn't work like that. Having a little human relying on me entirely and completely makes it extra hard to find the space for friendships and many get destroyed.

#### **8. You have a very small tolerance zone.**

All the stresses and constraints of single parenting leaves me with very little energy to deal with the usual/extra crap life throws your way. This is especially the case even more so when I'm going through a stressful experience. Add in some financial strains and you can be meltdown central just from an angry passer-by shouting at you for bumping them with your buggy!

"Just because you're a mum doesn't mean you can't work" I hear people say. That is correct, but it doesn't make life any easier either! You work, your financial help that YOU NEED stops, so here you are with a bunch of increased bills because you have the audacity to actually go & earn a bit more than you are "required" to live off of.

Chanelle closes the diary

I got pregnant at a young age, and after all the shit I have been through, there came a day when I decided to put my foot down, and empower myself for MYSELF! I have given so much of myself away to people and time away to people that I have completely neglected who I am, but no more. Now a super mum is born I am sick of tired of waking up thinking this is flipping hard! Actively I have been challenging the stereotype and not allowing myself to fall into that category, I am dating again! Juggling a child with romance can be hard but you find ways to make it happen. I am writing a book based on the stereotypes of single life with a child, empowering all mums out there.

Never again will I let somebody tell me I cannot do something. This year I am even going to run the marathon for all single mums out there. Show them we aren't afraid we are tough and we are here to stay. We all need help, we all need guidance but trust me when I say, it comes from within and no man or no amount of people telling you you're worthy will mean a single thing if YOU, can't look in the mirror and say yes, I deserve to be happy I deserve to be loved I deserve to have it all. From me to you, if no one has told you today I'm telling you now. I AM PROUD OF YOU, on behalf of all super mums we have got this now let's go get them!