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It's Our Time to Shine

By Stephanie Mason-Teague
Empty Mess - Rediscovering Life After Kids Excerpts

I CAN DO THAT - This disease doesn't afflict only those who want to compete in challenging games of skill or survival. I have also experienced severe symptoms at home. Need a new paver patio installed? No problem. I'm off to rent a plate compactor. Garbage disposal on the fritz? Clear out the cabinet. I'll be back with a new unit in a flash. This has gone on for so long that it's hard to imagine that life is any other way.

A good friend said to me, "Just because you can doesn't mean you have to."

This is a foreign concept to me, and I'm thinking, "If I don't, who will? And how long will it take?"

I indulge her for a minute. Then I smile and say, "You're probably right."

But what I'm thinking is, "I can do that."

COOL MOM - I was sure that I was going to be that mom, the cool mom. The mom who could hang out with her kids and their friends. The mom everyone looked up to and came to for advice. My kids wouldn't tell ME to drop them off around the corner from school and plead with me NOT to walk them to their classrooms. My kids wouldn't tell me how embarrassing I was or roll their eyes at just about everything I said. That kind of thing would happen to other moms, but not me.

Guess what? That's not exactly how it turned out.

REPLACED - You're going to think it won't happen to you—you'll think things will be different. Well, I can tell you—they won't. Between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two, your children will treat you like you are a complete imbecile. I recommend getting a dog . . . then at least *somebody* will have faith in you.

BED HEAD - I'm jealous of my husband's hair.

His hair always looks pretty much the same. There is just one version of his hair. When it grows out and it's a little long, it still looks about the same. Or just after a cut? Still the same head of hair. With very little effort, he and his hair look pretty darn good. It's maddening.

EmptyMess.com - Welcome to my Empty Mess! Why didn't anyone tell me this empty nest thing would be so hard? I had spent years pouring all my energy and attention into being the best mom on the planet, as if it were some kind of competition. And then suddenly the race was over, and I was struggling to find my purpose. I knew I had to do something. With a lot of laughter and a few tears, I wrote the stories in this book. They helped me remember the happy times, the crazy times ... they got me laughing again, and most of all ... they helped me move on. I hope they can do the same for you.
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