

# THE HUFFINGTON POST

## How Millennial Moms are Changing Motherhood

The old childhood cadence is familiar: *"Sally and Johnny sitting in tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g..."*

For generations, the path to domestic bliss was pretty clearly mapped out for young women. Study hard, go to college, fall in love and get married. Check, check, check, check. Next up, buy a house in the 'burbs, get pregnant (twice) and go back to work when the kids start school. Then, at 62, retire and become the world's best grandmother.

And then came the Millennials, the generation between the ages of 18 and 33 that's taken upon itself to rewrite the book on finding fulfillment. In this new version, the only "right" path is the one that leads to happiness.

Millennials are not only changing what constitutes family, they're shifting popular opinion. More than four in four in five Millennials say that two parents (married or unmarried, gay or straight) constitute a family. To these moms, the nuclear family is becoming more of the exception than the rule.

These attitudinal shifts are visible in every aspect of the Millennials' life, and the work place is no different. In fact, career is among the Millennials' top five life goals (the only generation of moms to say so) and helps give her a sense of identity other than "mom."

But these examples of living life "out of order" don't simply amount to a demographic shift. It's symbolic of a larger movement that celebrates pragmatism over perfection, replacing the idea of June Cleaver with a more attainable, realistic you. In fact, Millennial moms give themselves a "B" at balancing the demands of motherhood. They embrace the motto that it's perfectly ok to be imperfect.

Growing up, my parents, like most, just wanted my brother and me to be happy. And yet, as I found success (and what others described as happiness) at work, I felt guilt over the decisions I was making for my family and doubt about how I stacked up against other moms.

As I watch the framework for motherhood change right in front of me, I can say with great certainty that these moms are happy, and it's not because they're comparing their decisions to mine. I only hope that my children take a page out of the Millennial playbook by approaching parenthood on their own terms. I'll be curious to see how my experience and well wishes for their happiness shape their definition of fulfillment.

How do you think the Millennial motherhood re-boot will shape the next generation of mothers?