

# Maya Smart

WRITER-AT-LARGE



*Readers of yesterday's Q&A with Katherine Wintch, founder and CEO of The Mom Complex, clamored for more of her wise counsel and insights. As an encore, today I offer some of her thoughts on overcoming self-doubt and judgment, the topic of her WomanKind 2014 workshop on February 8.*

I've done research in 17 countries around the world, specifically just on the topic of motherhood and how mothers feel about the job and the job they're doing. The research I did revealed that the number-one emotion that all moms share, regardless of age, race, income and geography, is doubt.

More specifically, it's self-doubt. "I doubt whether I'm doing a good job at this most important job, but more importantly, I doubt whether I can say anything when I feel like I'm doing a bad job."

This internal doubt causes us to have voices in our head that we never think we're good enough. We think we're failing at this task of motherhood every day. We're not good enough, fast enough, smart enough, nice enough or patient enough. As a result of that internal deficit, we often lash out at other mothers and critique their style and behavior.

It all starts internally. As soon as mothers can get their internal compasses straightened out, the likelihood of attacking other people's mothering practices dramatically decreases.

A lot of the work I focus on is what I call the "mask of motherhood." We feel like we're not doing a good enough job, yet we put this mask over our own thoughts, feelings and emotions. We walk around and tell the world that we have everything under control and that it's not quite as hard as we thought.

We don't admit that we need help, and that juxtaposition between on the inside feeling that you're failing and then projecting an image to the world around you that you have everything under control is a very painful place to be.

When you look at Eckhart Tolle's "The Power of Now," and all of his writing, it's actually the definition of human suffering. It's when the expectations that you have for your life exceed how you feel you're performing within your life. I help mothers take off their mask.

—Katherine Wintch on Ending the Internal Mommy Wars