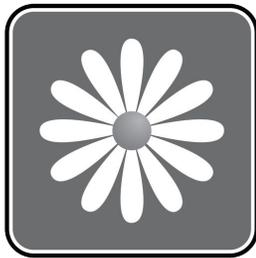


# **deliberate motherhood:**

12 key powers of peace, purpose,  
order & joy



The Power of Moms

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Getting this book to publication has been a labor of love from our Power of Moms community. We give our deepest thanks to those who contributed to this project, as well as to the million plus mothers who visit our website and, most importantly, exemplify deliberate motherhood in their own homes and neighborhoods.

We sourced the content of this book from our very first Power of Moms Writing Contest in November of 2010, and we selected the incredible cover photo by Cary Brege from our April 2012 Photo Contest. We offer a huge thanks to *all* the mothers who participated in these contests.

We also want to thank our volunteer board members who performed the lion's share of the work on this book:

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Love to all of you!

April Perry and Saren Eyre Loosli  
Power of Moms Co-Directors

# FOREWORD



## THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE

Linda Eyre

Perhaps “powerful” is not the first adjective that comes to mind when we think of motherhood and what it means in our day-to-day lives as moms. But motherhood is powerful beyond measure. Your influence as a mother is more exciting than you know and more long-lasting than you can conceive. While we can feel pretty powerless as the laundry piles up and the baby cries, we, as mothers, have amazing powers that can be defined and refined to yield beautiful results. With inspiration from the 60 mothers who contributed their stories and hard-won wisdom to this book, motherhood becomes more stimulating, more rewarding, and more deliberate.

In the late 1800s, William Ross Wallace wrote a beautiful poem about motherhood that includes this phrase at the end of each stanza: *“The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.”* For good or for ill, mothers are shaping the next generation of children who will shape the future of our world (even though it might seem that they’re only capable of making messes at present). Barbara Bush got it right when she stated at her Wellesley College Commencement address, *“Your success as a family, our success as a society, depends not on what happens in the White House, but on what happens in YOUR house.”*

As a mom, what you do today and each ordinary day that follows with your children is more important and more dramatic than any of us can imagine. Through sometimes-tedious daily routines, we teach our children about love, tolerance, patience and understanding—just as surely as we teach them how to make snap judgments and how to get angry. (I know . . . I wrote a book when all our nine children were home called *I Didn’t Plan to be a Witch.*) But as long as your children can see that you are valiantly trying, that you love them dearly, and that they are your first priority, great things will come out the other end!

Much of what you are teaching your children today will also seep through the generations to your grandchildren and great-grandchildren and on and on. I love this quote by Anna Quindlen:

*“We are building for the centuries. We are building character, and tradition, and values, which meander like a river into the distance and out of our sight, but on and on and on. [Motherhood] is a way of life, chosen in great ignorance and the bedrock of much of what we are, and will become.”*

As we focus on nurturing our children and helping them become the people they need to be, we can and should focus on nurturing the various “powers” that reside within *us*. Personal development does not need to happen at the expense of our children’s development. In fact, our children’s development *depends* upon our personal development. The refiner’s fire of motherhood changes you. It can make you better. We can truly become the people we really want to be through striving to become the mothers we really want to be.

The outstanding authors of this book have let the trials and hardships of motherhood make them into better people. Whether the change includes learning patience when the two-year-old “paints” your walls with the black permanent marker or forgiving a teenager who screams “I hate you,” or loving *more* when that naughty child doesn’t really deserve it, it’s a change that *refines* us—or as the dictionary describes it, “removes impurities, makes something more effective or become more elegant.” That is powerful!

You may think that everything has been said about motherhood, but the delightful thing about this book is that every mother/author is one-of-a-kind. They each come from different backgrounds, have different parents, are married (or not) to different people, and certainly have “different” children.

Each of the 12 “Powers” expanded upon in this book is a crucial component to help you in your motherhood. And the best part is that you don’t need to do it all at once. You can focus on one “power” a month, and over the course of a year, you’ll see great changes in yourself and in your family. The mark of a great book is that it makes you think . . . and it helps you change . . . which in the case of this book, is an absolute guarantee!

# INTRODUCTION



by April Perry and Saren Eyre Loosli  
Co-Directors of The Power of Moms

Remember the first time you held that beautiful little bundle and set off into the wide world of motherhood? Did you feel excited? Did you feel scared? Did you wish your little bundle came with an instruction manual?

There can't possibly be an instruction book that covers every situation you're going to experience as a mother. Could anyone have foreseen the seven minutes you spent peeling Band-aids out of the inside of the dryer, the two hours hopelessly trying to get Vaseline out of the carpet, or the three months nursing ear infections? Then, of course, there were those six months dealing with non-stop squabbles between two of your children (who simply didn't seem to like each other), and the good part of a year spent comforting your pre-teen daughter who felt like no one liked her.

Motherhood can definitely be tricky, but it's not just our interactions with our *children* that leave us searching for answers. It's our experiences refining *ourselves*.

Many people ask us what we mean by "Deliberate Motherhood." In our opinion, it means that you really think about what you do as a mom. You really care about your family and want the best for them. Plus you want to learn and grow and develop yourself as a person through the experience of motherhood. You live life purposefully. You embrace what you uniquely bring to your family.

When we take on the title of "Mother," that doesn't displace our personhood. Now we simply have more facets, and we need to make some critical decisions. What *kinds* of mothers do we want to be? What kinds of people do we want to be? Can we develop our unique talents and fulfill our own needs while being great mothers? Can we create amazing families while simultaneously thriving as women?

Being deliberate is about having it all (but not necessarily all at once). It's about using the very experiences of motherhood to develop the people we are inside—and finding greater fulfillment and joy in the process.

Each mother's situation is unique because each family is unique, but through the 12 years we've each spent as mothers and through learning from the moms we've met in person and online through running our website for the past 5 years, we've come to believe that there are some basic, fundamental principles of happy, meaningful motherhood.

To identify and explore these principles, we gathered some of the best mom-writers we know and asked them to help us clarify what it is, exactly, that helps mothers feel more in love with their families while experiencing more of the progress and fulfillment that motherhood can offer.

We came up with 12 core principles (or “powers,” as we like to call them), and they make up the basis of the 12 chapters in this book—grouped additionally into four categories: Peace, Purpose, Order, and Joy.

Each chapter features the voice of one main author and several supplemental authors chosen from our Power of Moms Writing Contest. You’ll notice that some chapters have one main essay with supplemental pieces at the end, while others weave all the voices together into a united whole. Either way, the result is powerful.

And when these 12 featured powers are examined, understood and applied, they change our lives. What you’ll read in this book is the proof.

### **How to Use This Book:**

One of the most exciting things about this journey you’re about to take is that you don’t have to do it alone! This book serves as the curriculum for the Learning Circles program on our website, which gives you the tools to meet monthly (in person or virtually) with a small group of like-minded mothers and focus on one power each month. (We’ve spelled out all the details at [www.powerofmoms.com/book](http://www.powerofmoms.com/book).)

So read the book as your personal self-study course in becoming the mom you really want to be. Or read it with friends as part of a Learning Circle. Either way, the stories and poignant thoughts in this book will get you laughing, thinking, and figuring out your own personal path towards the powers that will bring you more peace, purpose, order and joy in your life.

Motherhood is wonderful. Motherhood is worth the effort. Motherhood will shape and transform us into women with strength and character that far exceeds our current expectations.

We’re excited to grow with you. Welcome!