

FOR MATILDA, HUGO,
CHARLIE AND JOE,
WHO ARE THE SOURCE OF
SUCH LOVE AND JOY
AND SO MUCH MATERIAL.

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DEAR
FELLOW
SCUMMY
MUMMY

Dear fellow Scummy Mummy,

We know your secrets. We know you gave the kids fish fingers four times in a row last week. We know you drink wine out of a mug at teatime. We know that once your son did a sick in Sainsbury's, and you ran away.

We know you forgot your daughter's name when another mum asked, even though she's an only child. We know you used one of your son's toys to fish a poo out of the bath, giving a whole new meaning to the term 'dump truck'.

We know you sneaked wine into a classical music concert by hiding it in your child's beaker. Or as you prefer to call it, the Tommee Tipsee.

We know about that rainy Thursday when you let your kids watch *Madagascar* twice in a row while you sat in the kitchen and did Google image searches for Benedict Cumberbatch.

We know you picked up that raisin you found on the stairs and popped it in your mouth. Only to discover it wasn't a raisin.

We know that one Sunday afternoon, you let the kids cut each other's hair while you finished the wine.

We know you pretend not to notice when your child eats chicken nuggets the cat has just licked.

We know that right now, there's a dirty nappy in your handbag.

We know about all these things because you shared them with us. Some of you told us after listening to our podcast. Some of you confessed at our comedy show. Some of them are things we've done ourselves. Because no matter how hard we try, at some point, all parents end up doing something scummy.

Still wondering what a Scummy Mummy is? Basically, it's the opposite of a Yummy Mummy.



Yummy Mummy	Scummy Mummy
Feeds her children lovely organic quinoa and kale sandwiches every day.	Feeds her kids fish fingers every day. Sometimes not even cooked. (Mmm, Captain Birdseye sashimi.)
Teaches her kids to play the violin.	Teaches her kids to play <i>Angry Birds</i> .
Takes her children on long woodland walks to collect leaves for an autumnal collage.	Takes her children to Lidl to see how many different kinds of foreign crisps they can spot. Crusti Croc safari!
Has children who can sight-read music and spend hours practising for their ballet recital.	Has children who know all the words and dance moves to <i>Gangnam Style</i> . Hey, sexy lady!
Prepares a fresh papaya and wheatgrass smoothie every morning.	Counts Fruit Shoot as one of her five-a-day.
Has children who are fluent in French.	Has children who are fluent in CBeebies, having watched so much TV they think Mr Tumble is their dad.
Ensures her children are able to do complex equations and use an abacus by the age of six.	Teaches her kids how to write BOOBIES on a calculator.

The fact is, not one of us is perfect – not even Kirstie Allsopp. As Scummy Mummies, if there's one phrase that comes to mind when we think about our parenting style, it's this: 'Let it go.' And not because we've been forced to sit through that bloody DVD so many times that one of us once shouted "OLAF!" at the point of climax.

Of course, it's important to make sure your kids are loved, fed and relatively clean. But there are some things we don't think it's worth worrying about. For instance:

A Clean House for Play Dates

"Oh no! The girls are coming over for coffee – I'd better get up at 5AM to bleach the toilet and hand-make some spelt truffles!" Fuck this shit.

Anyone who gives a toss if there's Lego all over the floor can go in the bin. The good people won't care, and the best people will say, "Oh, this makes me feel better about my own shithole." These are the keepers.

Ironing

Unless there is an actual emergency – like a job interview, or your mother-in-law is coming over from Australia – put the ironing board down, people. The kids won't care if their jeans are a bit crumpled. If you have a baby, all your clothes will be covered in snot and porridge by 9AM anyway.

Perfect Homemade Cakes

Look, we feel your pain. One of us was recently up until 2AM creating a fondant unicorn oasis that Paul Hollywood would have described as "a bit elaborate". Twelve hours later, we watched a group of six-year-olds rip it to shreds in under a minute.

All kids care about is the quantity of Smarties and the volume of icing. In fact, why not just stick a few candles in a bag of sugar?

Creative Meals

There's no need to spend hours creating Picassos out of peas and potatoes. If your kids will only eat a few things, give yourself a break. Humans can survive on pasta and sweetcorn. And don't

compare yourself to the woman at the Giraffe café in Blackheath whose children were asking for the bulgur wheat salad. She wasn't real – it was just an apparition, because you were so tired.

Being Everyone's BEST FRIEND

When your kid starts nursery or school, the number of new potential friends and social gatherings can be overwhelming. It's good to be polite and friendly, but you don't have to be everyone's best mate.

Remember, your time is precious. What would you rather do, have a pint with that old drinking buddy you haven't seen since your twenties, or sit in a Caffè Nero with someone you barely know talking about house prices?

Feeling Like You and Your Kids Are Not Normal

This is one of the great anxieties of parenting. Is what your kids are into normal? What about the food they eat? Or the fact they like singing Kanye West songs at the top of their voices on the number 75 bus?

Worrying about these things can leave you feeling isolated and crappy. But here's the thing: there IS no normal. Just like people, all families are different, and they're all a bit weird in their own way.

And because of this, there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all parenting style. The trick is to find out what works for you and your kids, and try not to worry too much about what everyone else thinks. The c***s never bothered you anyway.

Just ask yourself: is your child happy? Does he know he is loved? Does she have clean knickers on at least 300 days of the year? Then you are doing a good job.

We might have different ways of parenting, but putting each other down is a waste of our time and energy. Two things will always unite us: we love our children, and we are all scummy mummies. So let's be united in our failures. Let's talk to each other, and share our scummy stories, and be honest about our imperfections. Most of all, let's have a good laugh.