

Labor of Love

Category: Parenting

written by Pamela Obi | May 4, 2019

Push, push. You're almost there. Your baby is almost here!

As a family medicine physician, I've uttered some rendition of that speech numerous times during my career. Yet, when the tables are turned, those words were less than comforting.

I had my first child soon after my intern year. Although that labor experience was smooth and uneventful, my second time around was surely a labor of love. The epidural was administered too late, so for all practical purposes I delivered without the benefit of anesthesia. "Three is a charm," they say! Well, my third child-bearing experience was a charming mixture of my previous two experiences.

At work, I often counsel parents on effective and evidenced-based parenting skills and occasionally offer advice to children and younger adults. Regardless of what happens in the patient encounter, the ultimate encounter happens at the end of the day when I am welcomed home by children eagerly waiting to share their day's experiences, and expecting equal eagerness from me. Unfortunately, I often fall short of this expectation. Balancing homework, after-school activities, family time, chores and cooking almost seems impossible. I don't dare bring work home because it becomes an additional chore on the never-ending "to do" list. I am thankful for shared experiences, expert opinions and parenting books but nothing quite prepares you for those curious questions like "where did I come from?", "who will I marry when I'm older"?... The list is endless.

I have tried to be a great mother to my kids while balancing being a great wife, sister, daughter, friend and physician. Am I successful at this? Certainly not, but I keep striving to show more compassion, to be a good role model and to be a good parent. I strive to be able to share my own experiences with my kids after a long day of work and listen attentively while they share theirs. I strive to play silly games with enthusiasm, to keep a straight face when asked a curious question and always to be available. After all, that's the best I can offer them.

Pamela Obi

Rome, Georgia