

A love letter to the mother in the trenches



Just Saying with Miriam Mukama

Mothers should take a moment to consider the lives they are building and remember the truth that to their children, they mean the world.

When I became a mother a few years ago, I quickly realised that motherhood was far more complex and demanding than I had imagined.

As the mother of two energetic boys, I discovered how different real motherhood is from the polished version that society often expects us to project. Behind the smiles and carefully maintained routines lies the true work of motherhood: the exhausting school runs, the struggle to balance career and family life, sleepless nights, and the deep love that keeps mothers going even when they feel completely drained.

One of the most emotional aspects of becoming a mother was gaining a new understanding of my own mother. For years, I saw her only through the eyes of a daughter; her strength appeared natural and effortless. However, after becoming a mother myself, I realised that her strength was a choice she made every single day, even when she was exhausted. I now understand the silent sacrifices she made, the prayers whispered in the dark, and the emotional burdens she carried to ensure her children felt safe and supported. Motherhood has given me a new appreciation for her love and resilience.

To every mother who has spent sleepless nights rocking a crying baby, I am with you in understanding the

overwhelming exhaustion. Those nights can feel endless, especially when children refuse to settle. It often resembles a marathon with no finish line. But as one tired mother to another, take comfort in knowing that these challenging stages eventually pass.

For mothers constantly questioning whether they are doing enough, please remember that your worries already reflect how deeply you care. There is no perfect guide to motherhood, and no one gets everything right all the time. As long as your children are surrounded by love, you are giving them what matters most. Mothers often underestimate themselves, but children do not need perfection; they simply need love, care, and presence.

Motherhood also changes how women see themselves. Many mothers struggle to recognise their bodies after childbirth. Some mourn the version of themselves they once knew before pregnancy, sleepless nights, and endless responsibilities changed everything. Our bodies deserve kindness, not criticism. They carried life, endured pain, survived exhaustion, and continue to show up every day for the people we love. Mothers should speak to themselves with the same compassion they naturally offer their children.

There are also the difficult moments that often go unspoken; days when



patience runs thin and "mom guilt" feels unbearable. Every mother has moments she regrets. Yet children tend to be far more forgiving than mothers are toward themselves. Mothers need to remember that one difficult day does not define their love or their ability to be good parents.

The emotional weight of motherhood can sometimes feel overwhelming. Many women bear the needs of everyone around them while neglecting their own mental and emotional well-being. However, caring for a mother's mental health is essential because the well-being of a family is closely connected to the well-being of the mother who holds it together. Asking for help or admitting exhaustion is not a sign of weakness; it is a form of honesty.

To the mothers who feel like they are falling apart, please

know you are not alone. Every mother experiences moments of deep exhaustion, emotional strain, and self-doubt. There are days when everything feels too loud, too demanding, and too heavy. Yet mothers somehow continue to gather strength and show up for their families. On those difficult days, mothers deserve to extend the same grace to themselves that they so freely give to everyone else.

There are also mothers carrying profound grief. Some mourn the children they have lost, while others bear heartbreak that few people fully comprehend. Their strength is extraordinary. For mothers navigating their journey without their own mothers beside them, the pain can be particularly heavy. There is an ache in wanting advice, comfort, or reassurance from the one person who once provided it so freely. Yet every act of love they

pour into their own children becomes a continuation of the love they once received.

To my own mother, thank you for every sacrifice, every prayer, and every moment of care that has shaped my life. Motherhood has taught me that a mother's love truly never ends.

At its core, motherhood is not about perfection; it is about the invisible work done quietly every day, often without recognition. It is about love, sacrifice, resilience, and showing up even when exhausted.

Mothers should take a moment to consider the lives they are building and remember the truth: to their children, they mean the world. And they are more than enough.

The writer is a mother, strategic communications professional, and mental health advocate.

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