

## Why I Decided to Be a Stay-at-Home Mom

Being a stay-at-home mom was a difficult choice for me. I am an only child, a control freak, and a do-er. So, I always imagined my life would be career-driven... with a family. I pretty much assumed I could “do it all.” Then I met my husband, Jed. We dated, got married and started talking family. I was fairly successful. I designed custom cabinetry for a woodworking company. Business was booming. I was doing great. I made my own schedule. Jed worked for a bank with hopes of shortly getting promoted to VP of Loan Origination. It was a good bump in salary so we starting thinking about me staying at home once we had kids.

It wasn't really a “real” discussion until I got pregnant with Jessica. That's pretty much when we put pen to paper and crunched the numbers. It was doable, financially. The question was could I do it. It wasn't until I was at home, almost nine months pregnant, decorating her nursery that it hit me. I didn't want to miss a second of her life. I didn't want to be somewhere else doing something for *me* when I could be there doing something for *her*. At that moment, I didn't even care if the numbers worked or not. It wasn't about that. It was about her. And I never looked back.

Don't get me wrong. There have been plenty of times when I catch myself missing getting to travel, designing, meeting different people. When you have three kids, you don't get too much “adult” time. I'm thankful my daughter is now old enough to actually hold a conversation with me. She is probably my best friend. Granted, we can't share a bottle of wine and watch “The Bachelor” together, but she doesn't judge me when I do it by myself.

Being a stay-at-home mom also makes you appreciate the outside world so much more. I feel like a teenager every time I go out now. My single friends always wish they had my energy and can't believe I dance the night away. They're so tired from “working” all week. They may one day understand the feel of freedom a parent experiences on a rare night away from the kids. But, as of yet, they don't quite get it. And that's okay. It's just a different life. And I love mine.

My hard-working husband and I have a great respect for each other. He never makes me feel like I don't “work” because I'm a stay at home mom. He even comes home from his 10-hour workday and tidies up before bed. After all is said and done, the utter joy I get from my little family, the sweat, the tears, the exhaustion, the surprises, the wonder, and the love make my stay-at-home mom life absolutely perfect. I may have wanted a career-driven life... with a family; but I ended up with a family-driven life... with a career. Chief Executive Mom.