

➔ Asking before sharing

Even though every parent knows that her posts are creating a digital footprint for her kids, it's still hard to resist sharing. Twenty-four percent of our survey respondents say they worry that their posts will come back to haunt their child as a teen or an adult, while 32 percent have deleted a post about their child that they feared was oversharing.

One mom explains that she had to rein herself in on social media when her children, at 7 and 5, asked her to, "I'd show them something I shared and say, 'Look what Mommy posted about you! You're so cute in this picture!'" says Ashley McGuire, an education specialist in San Diego. "My kids asked me who was seeing my posts, so I showed them the grandparents, friends' parents, and others I had in my social-media sphere. But they were never happy about having their personal stories and photos posted, and they asked me to stop. It occurred to me that even though my kids are an incredibly important part of my story, all of their stories aren't mine to tell. Now, if there's something deliciously adorable I want to post, I ask my kids' permission first. If they say no, I just don't share it."

The other morning, I was getting my toddler son dressed and, as he does most mornings, he fought my choice of sweater. He kicked and flailed as I attempted to wrestle him into the sweater, getting more frustrated and later for work by the minute, until we suddenly both collapsed laughing. His sweet toddler giggle rang through the house. There was no camera. Just a moment which, like so many in child raising, was silly and sweet, crazy and nonsensical. There is a simple beauty to these everyday moments, unseen by an audience. They generate no Likes and are "shared" by the two people who matter most: parent and child.

My baby, my selfie

It wasn't pretty, but I wanted to show my Facebook friends what new motherhood really looks like. by **LESLIE GOLDMAN**



JUST before turning 7 months old, our little girl—normally a champion sleeper—revolted, suddenly adopting the nocturnal habits of a grandpa with an irritable prostate: waking up multiple times a night, and peeing all over the place. One day while she slept on my shoulder, I got a text from my friend Ali: "Is now a good time to chat?" I held my phone up to snap a pic of the babe and me, to wordlessly convey my Occupied status.

The look I was going for: serene, soft-focused mother-and-child selfie—the kind that Victoria's Secret models post to Instagram.

What I got: Beetlejuice, only less rested and with bigger boobs. The circles under my eyes were cavernous; my scalp was playing peekaboo through my hairline. If my skin tone were a crayon, its name would be Pallor. I looked like a lactating Steve Buscemi.

Most women would hit the Delete button faster than your teenage barista can judge you for the two pancake-size milk splotches on your nursing tank.

Not me. I hit "Send to Facebook," along with the caption, "Isn't new motherhood beautiful?"

My friends were incredulous that I would broadcast the postpartum equivalent of a celeb mug shot. One wrote, "Aww, you look tired but still beautiful"—the kind of lie that seasoned moms tell newbies to ensure the propagation of our species. But I posted my zombie pic because I think it's important that moms understand we're all in the same energy-drained, pasty-skinned boat. Sure, Kate Middleton looked dewy and glamorous moments after delivery, and your sorority sister was picture-perfect in her online "Sailor's 1 week old!" photo album. It's because they're faking. The former no doubt has been made up, blown out, and styled by pros (though she probably wanted nothing more than to be resting in yoga pants); the latter spackled her face with concealer and abused the Valencia filter.

Once we become moms, we disappear from our feeds. (Can you blame us? Broken sleep and a diet of half-caff lattes do not a proper beauty routine make.) A selfie featuring an über-fit new mother flaunting her six-pack occasionally goes viral, but for the most part, our social-media presence consists of videos of our frosting-smeared 1-year-old tearing into an inaugural slice of birthday cake. And that's okay—it's our new normal. So are bloodshot eyes and cheddar bunnies in our bra. We shouldn't be afraid to show it.