Guest Post for Mommy Bloggers

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March 26, 2012

*The Funny, Broken, Love of Parenting*

I click open a Facebook message. A friend has sent me a word search and tells me to let my eyes fall onto the image and take note of the first three words that I see. These are the words that best describe me, she promises.

I shrug, take a sip of coffee, and glance at it. “Funny,” “broken,” and “love” are my words.

When I close the message, I’m tempted for a moment to try again. What other words are hidden in that tangle of letters? Maybe on my second try, my eyes will land on a combination such as “smart,” “attractive,” and “successful.” (That would be nice.)

I don’t give it another try, though. The words I read the first time are just right considering how I’ve been spending my days for the past several months, thinking and writing about the family in which I am the wife and the mother and about my family of origin, where my story began.

*Funny, broken, love* - sounds like family.

*MOMumental: Adventures in the Messy Art of Raising a Family* is about my own missteps and small victories as a mother. Over the years, after beginning my parenting journey – as so many of us do – staggering under the weight of the expectations I had for myself, I’ve loosened up. I’ve come to learn that none of us is perfect. We all fail, misunderstand our kids sometimes, and mess up in countless ways. In *MOMumental*, I share stories of some of my “epic fails” as a mom.

The dire messages that flash on the computer or television screen that warn what a mother absolutely *must* or *must not* do no longer hold me tightly in their grasp. I now look at myself – and at other mothers – with less judgment, knowing that we all work it out, there is no manual for motherhood, and that the most important thing in raising kids is to be authentically connected with them.

(And a person can do that whether she serves microwaved macaroni and cheese to her kids for lunch every day or gives them homemade bread and a sampling of organic greens from her vegetable garden. Whether or not she homeschools them, uses “the family bed,” or exposes them to Mozart by the time they are six days old.)

I hope in sharing my own personal – and often quite cringe-worthy – story in *MOMumental*, other parents will show themselves, and other parents, more grace as we raise our children.

To me, those three words – funny, broken, and love – are great ones to reflect on when I think about the gift of family. To be able to enjoy our kids, repair our relationships with them when needed, and most of to love our children like crazy covers a multitude of parental crimes and misdemeanors.

Wishing you all the best in your own messy family-making adventures!