

Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?

Posted by: Xan ()
Date: February 17, 2016 10:51AM

Sorry if this is a topic that comes up a lot, but I haven't been on this board in years.

A little background- I left the church about 14 years ago, when I was 18. I was born into it, but didn't come from a super active family. I was most active during my high school years, when I went back on my own. I ended up leaving at 18, for various reasons that feel like ancient history now.

I'm 32 now, married, with 2 kids. I work full time, and I'm in grad school. I have a lot on my plate.

My question is... do any of you struggle with guilt over having a "small" family of only 2 kids? I thought I was so far beyond this. But now, my husband and I are kicking around the idea of a third. Or really, I am. He is very happy with our 2, and thinks it will be a financial hardship and irresponsible to take on a third at this point.

I have been countering him, saying we do make pretty good money, and we could probably DO a third, although it would be tight. He wants to invest deeply in the 2 we already have.

Thing is, I see his viewpoint. The thought of having a two child family sounds GREAT, and so much less stress and pressure than bringing a new child into the world with full time work and grad school. I almost want permission to stop, but don't feel like I can.

I keep feeling like someone is left out. Like if we stop, we are sacrificing living, breathing human beings that could exist, instead of just deciding against mere ideas that may not be right for our family or resources right now. I feel selfish and shallow for only wanting two, when we could have more.

I have been examining myself in this, and I realized it is a leftover relic from the LDS church. It is deeply engrained, and I am struggling to gain my ground against it.

I thought I was so far beyond this. Has anyone dealt with something similar?

I never think about it.

Posted by: c12 ()
Date: February 17, 2016 11:19AM

I wanted 8. I have twins who are 30 years old. The only reason I wish I had more kids is because my kids have been at odds for quite a few years now, where they used to be close (ever since my daughter went back to THE church).

I became a single mother. I don't know what I would have done if I had more. Taking care of 2 was more work than I ever want to do again.

My sister only has 1 child. She wishes she had had more so he had a sibling.

The big impact for us was when our parents died and then you realize how much you need siblings (though we had a lot of arguing and drama between us).

But I never even consider feeling guilty about it. Once in a great while it will pop into my head that teaching of "Saturday's Warrior." It doesn't bother me at all.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: hurting ()
Date: February 17, 2016 11:35AM

You definitely have a lot on your plate! If you want permission to stop, your husband is giving it to you. When I had 2, I just wanted more. It may be a maternal hormone thing, or the clock ticking. So we had more, probably more than we can handle, but I don't regret any of them. Full time work and grad school? I would certainly wait until finished with school, then see how you both feel.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: madalice ()
Date: February 17, 2016 11:43AM

I have two kids. They're both in their early 30's now. I never ever regretted only having two. I felt like that was all I could handle and still give them the love, attention, and resources needed for them to have a good life.

I always thought it was irresponsible for the church to encourage people to have a boat load of kids. I grew up in a family of 7. My mother didn't let us forget that she'd only wanted 2 kids, but she had the others because that's what she was told to do. I noticed that the old men who demanded she have all those kids were nowhere to be found. They weren't the ones who paid for, and raised us. They were just old guys on TV telling everyone what they needed to do in order to be happy. My father wanted 12 kids. I have no clue why, he was never around unless he was yelling at, or beating on someone. He should have followed in his brothers footsteps and never had any children.

My mother is the most unhappy person i've ever known. She's extremely mentally ill and refuses any kind of medical help. She learned long ago (mormonism again) that having mental health issues meant you were evil, and psychiatrists were evil people that were out to control you and make you go against church teachings.

I took note of all the crazy, and promised i'd never let anyone decide I should have kids I didn't want, or couldn't care for the way they needed to be. I have never ever regretted that.

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 02/17/2016 11:46AM by madalice.

Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?

Posted by: MRM ()
Date: February 17, 2016 11:49AM

Someone once told me that sure you want more kids...they are called grandchildren.

Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?

Posted by: madalice ()
Date: February 17, 2016 11:54AM

I have one grand baby. She's the light of my life. I adore her.

Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?

Posted by: iris ()
Date: February 17, 2016 12:10PM

+1

Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?

Posted by: Lethbridge Reprobate ()
Date: February 17, 2016 11:49AM

No. My mom and dad couldn't have children so they adopted my brother and I and my wife and I couldn't have kids so we adopted a girl and boy. I never wanted anymore children than what we have. Some days I've wondered if being a parent at all was the right move as I basically don't like kids much other than my own and my 3 grandkids.

RB

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 02/17/2016 12:08PM by Lethbridge Reprobate.

Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?

Posted by: whiny ()
Date: February 17, 2016 12:02PM

It sounds like you are asking how to let go of irrational beliefs that are causing you guilt. For me, that usually requires a lot of introspection and writing in a journal.

Maybe some awareness of facts could help too. Did you know that nearly 50% of all fertilized human eggs are lost? Or that that rate of spontaneous miscarriage for women who are aware of a pregnancy is upwards of 20%?

I just think that if there are spirit babies waiting around to be born, there couldn't be a more inefficient system provided for them. God is "leaving people out" already. Not having another doesn't make you selfish.

Maybe it's just not true?

Re: [Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: newnameabigail ()
Date: February 17, 2016 12:07PM

I would feel guilty for having more children than we can afford or educate in a good way.

We have one and we are totally fine with that. My BF is still working on his undergraduate degree and will finish it next year and I start to work again next month, when he is on spring-break and can be a SAHD for 4 months.

Since he is not able to contribute a lot to our financially situation now and we think it's more important to get a good education we couldn't imagine to have more children now. We would end up on welfare if I have another one and had to stay home for several months again. That would cause much more guilt to me than not popping out another one.

Re: [Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: the1v ()
Date: February 17, 2016 12:08PM

One kid is a lot easier than two, two kids is a lot easier than three, three kids is a lot easier than four, after that parents are generally maxed out and they are all neglected. Some parents reach this point with 2 or 3.

Look at yourself, don't worry about the finances or anything else. Will you be happy with two kids or do you feel you need to have more? Why do you feel that way?

Next question, can you take care of more than you have? With school, work, life etc... Are you capable of giving the child what they need?

Over 30 things start to be more problematic in having kids. More things can go wrong. Are you healthy enough for another?

Contrary to the brainwashing the church says more is not better. The number of children is nobodies business except your own

That said I am very happy with my two boys.

Re: [Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: Exmoron ()
Date: February 17, 2016 12:27PM

As a Mormon – I did. I was very concerned from a spiritual perspective (i.e. "What did the Lard expect" standpoint). Silly now that I think about it. I calculated the average amount of children the apostles had over the last 100 years. I think the number was five. Silly stupid mind games of a cult.

Now as an exmormon I tell my adult son, both of us atheists, to be extremely thoughtful of his wife – stress level that she endures both physically and mentally as the first priority. Next, think about the financial stress on the marriage. He says they're

a one and done sort of couple – and I think that's great. Better to be with your best friend in a healthy relationship (with one child) then to have five children and a stressed out couple – only to divorce later on. My two cents.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: madalice ()
Date: February 17, 2016 08:39PM

When my husband and I married I had two kids and he had one. They were ages 4,5,6. We were 34 and 36 yo. Me being the older one. I had my tubes tied after my second baby was born. NO regrets whatsoever.

A bishop told us that I should undergo surgery and have my sterilization reversed so we could have more kids. He was out of his mind. What a wacko. And who in the hell did he think he was??? He had 6 kids and they were extremely poor. Their own kids never had enough of anything except child abuse.

We completely ignored that advice. It would have been a disaster for us. I was diagnosed with a chronic illness when the youngest two were seniors in HS. If i'd had more kids I wouldn't have been able to be a very good mother.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: Elder Berry ()
Date: February 17, 2016 02:22PM

Xan Wrote:

> I thought I was so far beyond this. Has anyone
> dealt with something similar?

I shouldn't have had any kids but I struggle sometimes with the few I have in regards to more. I come from 10 and I was indoctrinated to believe it was a sin to "limit" your family.

I'm seen as bad since I have so few compared to my sibs in regards to family size.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: Visitors welcome ()
Date: February 17, 2016 03:51PM

I have zero kids and I'm very happy. My parents had two, my sister has one, and my mother was an only child in the fourth generation.

I know an old lady who had ten children and is very arrogant about it. We are all selfish for not having that many, No family can be happier than a large family. Only children are miserable and suicidal for the rest of their lives. But you know what? One of her ten kids had three children, the others have one or two. Their experience helped them to know better!

You don't need a third child, your spouse doesn't need one either, and the kids

themselves don't need another sibling.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: Elder Berry ()
Date: February 17, 2016 09:22PM

Visitors welcome Wrote:

-
- > I know an old lady who had ten children and is
 - > very arrogant about it. We are all selfish for not
 - > having that many, No family can be happier than a
 - > large family. Only children are miserable and
 - > suicidal for the rest of their lives.

How did you meet my mother? The old lady lives in a shoe...horned head full of LDSism.

Just kidding. My siblings all have 4 or more and a couple of them have 8. My mother just doesn't know what to do with so many grandchildren so she ignores most of them and focuses her attention on the first batch of them who conveniently all live in Utah.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: donbagley ()
Date: February 17, 2016 04:24PM

After the hell I'd gone through in a sick & dysfunctional family, I felt guilty reproducing at all. My son is more than enough for me.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: boilerluv ()
Date: February 17, 2016 05:46PM

If you are making good money, and can support two children well, are going to be able to send them to college, or get tutors if and when they might need them, and having another might make things "tight," my feeling would be to hold off. You are very fortunate to have two happy, healthy kids that you can provide for well. There is no reason at all to feel guilty for not having another. And--what if #3 turned out to be twins, so you end up with not three, and things a "little tight," but FOUR, and things are REALLY tight? Or--what if the third turns out to be a child with special needs, which can be very expensive, not only financially, but emotionally and mentally, not just for you, but for the entire family. Of course, as a nevermo, I would never feel guilty or selfish for not having children at all. I do feel that unless you both really, really WANT another child, and if you both feel strongly that your family does not feel complete without a third child, I wouldn't do it.

[Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: imaworkinonit ()
Date: February 17, 2016 05:59PM

Yes, I did. But my husband convinced me that 3 was plenty. I thought 4 was the minimum in the church. But I was very relieved to be done.

As far as being selfish to have no kids, or 1, or 2

In what way could it be 'selfish' not to create another human being?

Who would it hurt to NOT have a child?

Even using the word 'guilt' in a discussion of whether or not to have a child is a red flag for religious or cultural programming. It assumes that there is some obligation to have more children. Why? The world isn't short on people to carry on the species. Some might even say that we have too many people for the available resources, and it's selfish to overburden the planet.

Decide what YOU want. It's completely your choice. There aren't unborn children waiting in heaven to be born.

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 02/17/2016 06:01PM by imaworkinonit.

[No but I feel guilty about bloated over-large family](#)

Posted by: anagrammy ()
Date: February 17, 2016 08:20PM

None of the children got the attention they needed--just too many of them and only one mother. (nine children)

Now I'm older and have forgotten the details of their individual childhoods. It would be nice to reminisce about all the wonderful memories we made, but alas.

To be honest, I make up details, esp from when they were a baby.

Kathleen

[Re: No but I feel guilty about bloated over-large family](#)

Posted by: madalice ()
Date: February 17, 2016 08:44PM

Don't feel too bad about that. As you know, I only had two. I don't remember a lot of details either. When grand baby was born I made comments about my kids doing the same things she does. I'm sure they did! It all seems very familiar. The truth is, I was an exhausted stressed out mother when my kids were small. There were job issues, and huge moves across the country. Hubby was never home and I was basically a single parent with zero support. I don't know how I held it together some days.

Re: [Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: Slumbering Minstrel ()
Date: February 17, 2016 08:31PM

I have two kids. It's great! Shortly after my second was born I did have the thought, "one more wouldn't be so bad." But man, I am glad that didn't happen! We don't need a super huge vehicle and a 3 bedroom house is just dandy. I have also thought in the past that I might not have had any kids had there not been pressure from church and TBM in-laws. But I am very, very happy with my two. I wouldn't change it or add another for anything.

Re: [Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: madalice ()
Date: February 17, 2016 08:47PM

If you add one more, then they fight over who gets to sit by the window in the car. With two that's never a problem. I liked having two. I had a boy and girl. One of each. It may have been easier having the 2 boys or 2 girls IDK. It would have been a tiny bit cheaper in the beginning though.

Re: [Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: excatholic ()
Date: February 17, 2016 08:40PM

Having grown up in large families, dh and I did not want to inflict that on our kids. The world is already overflowing with living, breathing human beings. There is no shortage. Having kids you don't really want makes no sense at all.

Re: [Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?](#)

Posted by: baura ()
Date: February 17, 2016 09:18PM

When the Provo temple was opened for viewing by the general public before being dedicated, my Elders Quorum provided ushering services one afternoon. As I was there waiting for the next group to fill and begin the walk-through the guy next to me (whom I knew only by name) started making small talk about his low sperm count and how difficult it was for him and his wife to have kids.

It was starting to creep me out until I realized that he was offering excuses for not having any kids yet after having been married for 4 or 5 years. He must have assumed that EVERYONE in the ward as talking about his childlessness and clucking their tongues at him and his wife. Given the rhetoric about not "selfishly postponing family" that was regularly thrown out, I can see why he felt the need to explain to everyone.

Re: Do you ever feel guilty over a small family size?

Posted by: Xan ()
Date: February 17, 2016 10:31PM

Thank you all so much for your responses. Truly. The different perspectives helped so much.

We have 2 healthy, wonderful boys, and I really believe that is enough for us. I just need to spend some time moving past some of the LDS programming, and change my way of thinking a bit. Funny how this stuff creeps up on you. You think you've finally moved on, and BAM. More baggage.

Thanks again everyone!

Recovery from Mormonism
www.exmormon.org
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