

dr  
gertrude  
lyons

**TO THE WOMAN**

who never wants to  
have children:

*YOU are a mother.*

#rewritethemothercode

To the woman who never wants to have children:

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To the woman who never wants to have children: **you are a mother.**

You just may not realize it yet.

You are a mother because as a woman, you inherently have the choice to bring a child into this world. Whether you choose to partake in that is up to you. And, should you choose not to, doesn't make you any less of a woman. It merely means that you've chosen to direct your "mothering" towards something else. Perhaps you mother a thriving career, a creative endeavor, a partner, or a pet; you most certainly should be mothering yourself (yes, that's a thing, and I speak of it often). The term "mother" doesn't need to be reserved solely for child-rearing; it's much more all-encompassing than most of us realize.

Consider, for instance, the mothering paradigm of conceiving, creating, and giving birth. As a woman who has chosen not to follow this in the traditional sense, you still have all of the power in you to conceive, create, and give birth, just in different life arenas. While I was writing my dissertation (which was arguably more difficult than laboring my daughters), I felt especially connected to this paradigm. And the fact that I produced a final result was very much a miracle! I find that when a woman looks at her journey through the lens of conception, creation, and birth, she is offered a more feminine experience that creates additional meaning and fulfillment. Certainly this was the case in the birth of my dissertation—it was self satisfying in a way that I never could have imagined.

### **How Did You Get Here?**

At some point in your life you must have grappled with the idea of "kids versus no kids" and discerned that you did not want to have children. Maybe you've always known or you've just never had the desire to become a mother to children. You might have had a past experience that tilted you one way. Our decisions are often informed by where we come from, and I find that raising curiosity as to any of our assuredness is a worthwhile endeavor.

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## Exercise

**Consider the statement: "I know that I do not want to have kids."**  
Explore why you resonate with this statement.

**What immediate thoughts, feelings, and experiences rise to the surface?** Take time to journal about your response.

### The Power of Choice

Deciding not to have children is a choice that is hugely laden by cultural judgement. It's important, here, to realize that having the choice at all is a relatively new concept arising only in the last 70 years with the advent of birth control. As someone who has taken the nonconformist path, know that **you are a brave pioneer, charting a new course for yourself and others, and helping to make this choice easier for future generations.**

Also know that your choice does not make you any less of a woman than one with children.

Myths such as this and others (see sidebar) pervade our thinking and effectively lead women to feel "less than." Know that whatever form of mothering you decide to take on, you are just as much a woman—and, quite frankly, a mother—as any other woman reading this.

In my coaching, I've found that many of the women who've made the choice to not have kids feel great satisfaction and fulfillment in other areas of life such as their career, relationships, or creative endeavors. While she knows that she is giving up something—birthing and raising a child—she feels that she has plenty to enjoy and gain beyond that. On the same token, it's also completely normal for her to feel some sense of loss. If you've felt this loss, even though it was your choice, give yourself the space to mourn. Your emotions deserve to be honored and felt in the fullest.

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## Exercise

Go deeper into your inventory of beliefs around choosing not to have kids. Consider how your family and culture play into your decision, looking at both the positive aspects as well as any challenges.

**Write down what comes up for you.** You may find that this exercise teases up emotions and thoughts that you've never had before.

**If you feel compelled, I recommend that you continue to go deeper, exploring those emotions and thoughts either alone or with a coach or partner.**

## Opportunities for Growth

Motherhood offers many opportunities for personal growth and development. One of the gifts of having children is that they serve as a constant mirror of your "unfinished business." Kids can stir up all sorts of things, giving rise to unexplored thoughts and pushing one's limits mentally, physically, and emotionally. But what about the childless mother? How does she explore unfinished business without a child as impetus?

Growth is always available to you in times of stress or disequilibrium—think, anytime that would seem reflective of the "new mother" experience. Situations to explore unfinished business can arise at work, through family and relationship dynamics, financial hardships, and other difficult life events. The point is to use these more trying times to get grounded in and better learn about yourself. And, as you better know yourself, you will better be able to define your own vision of motherhood.

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## True Transformation

As a woman and mother, you can make personal growth and transformation a reality—you can reach a potential that you may have never imagined for yourself. But it requires you to do the work and to *mother yourself first*—and that's not always easy to do, especially alone. This is where a coach can step in and make a big impact in helping to guide, support, and (gently) push you to the next level of your potential. It's up to you to decide how far you're willing to go.

My coaching programs are structured to meet the unique demands of women and mothers in every phase of their journey. For the woman who has chosen not to have children, there is a great opportunity for transformation, but unless you seek it out, you may never fully experience all that is available to you. This work is often made easier with a partner who truly understands the breadth of emotions—both good and bad—that may arise over the course of the experience.

If you are interested in finding out more about working together to rewrite your mother code, you can sign up for a complimentary discovery call with me at [drgertrudelyons.com/private-coaching](https://drgertrudelyons.com/private-coaching).

Talk to you soon, mother.

*-Gertrude*

let's connect



@drgertrudelyons  
drgertrudelyons.com

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## MYTHS of Motherhood

There are numerous myths of motherhood a woman needs to explore in order to engage in transformation. The following is a list of some of the modern myths I share in my work. I feel that these myths bind a woman into a narrow definition of what it means to be a mother and curtail the breadth of transformation possible in motherhood. They are not listed in order of importance:

1. You are only truly a woman if you have a child.
2. The more a mother tends to the needs of her children first the better a mother she will be.
3. A mother's spouse/partner will understand that the children are a priority and that their needs come first.
4. It is part of a mother's job to put the needs of her children and spouse/partner first and then take care of her own.
5. Children will be a source of ongoing joy and fulfillment.
6. Children are a primary way for a mother to feel affirmed.
7. When you feel insecure and doubt yourself as a mother, follow the guidance of experts in the field, your own mother, or close family members.
8. Being a mother is an innate skill.
9. A woman will immediately fall in love with her baby when she holds him/her for the first time.
10. Motherhood provides a network of other mothers who support her in being the best mother she can be.
11. If a mother is overwhelmed with intense feelings of anxiety or sadness after the birth she will likely need medication so she can function properly as a mother.
12. A mother's hurt/pain expressed around her children may limit or harm their development.
13. Expressing any fear and/or anger around her children is likely to have a negative effect on them.
14. Stopping short of hurting her children, it is best for a mother to stop them from expressing emotions if it upsets her.
15. Parents should avoid any arguing in front of the children.

## *Rewriting the Mother Code™*

There is no "right way" to mother. It is up to each of us to define motherhood on our own terms—to write our own mother codes. As a professional life coach, I've made it my mission to explore, demystify, and democratize the maternal power that lives in all women. I believe that motherhood is a transformational journey that all women can take, with or without children. Because mothering is a choice, and if you let it be, it can become a vehicle to your highest self rather than a sacrifice of self. Together, we can start a new conversation around modern motherhood.

**Together, we can rewrite the Mother Code.**