

Wednesday Sisters

A Story Collective

Written by eight women who met by chance and formed a mothers'
group

A Self Published Book

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Other Authors / Contributors:

Chin Poy, Kimberley, with Kristie M., Laurie F., Vanessa R.,
Janelle H., Laura M., Barb G., and Therese B.

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To our children, who we all dearly love, who are wonderful little friends to each other and are the reason we initially came together. Also thank you to our partners, parents and families for giving us time to draft our stories and for their ongoing support.

To anyone who reads this book and continues to spread the word – as mothering is the hardest job you will ever do and one we all need support for.

To the Early Childhood Centre at Eastgardens for unwittingly, or fatedly, putting us together as a collective, a group, a unit, to become friends and sisters.

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Foreword

The reality of having a baby can sometimes be different from what is expected.

In this raw, soul baring collective, written by eight women who met by chance and formed a mothers' group, you will read nearly every imaginable scenario about the heart warming and heart wrenching journey to becoming a parent. It is not sugar coated; no one got the fairytale after all. We all got something a little "unexpected".

Initially there were nine women who met at the Eastgardens Early Childhood Centre in May 2007 in Sydney, Australia, and by the pure coincidence of giving birth to babies over a four or five week similar date range, we formed a mothers' group. Some members were eager and others hesitant to join a mothers' group due to notions of competitiveness in such an environment.

One woman dropped out of the group after returning to full time work when her son was six months old. Eight women persevered and became sisters through adversity and a little bit of fate. Within this mix is a myriad of modern stories about becoming a first and second time parent.

Journeys experienced by women in the group include the IVF struggle, single mum struggle, premature babies in humidicrib, a double cleft palate baby, second marriages, reproductive organ loss, miscarriages, post birth haemorrhaging, defence force deployments, working mums, stay at home mums, stepchildren, long and short gaps between children, post natal depression and the arrival of a first baby following a life threatening international accident.

Four of the group are international orphans (from New York, London, Canada and New Zealand) and four are Australians (but of these only three

have family living nearby). Together we became each other's support network as we all, it could be said, had extra support needs.

Many tears have been shed over the production of these stories such are the hardships some women have faced. However, it is a gratifying read; an empowering read. For those about to become parents it will inspire them to be thankful for the journeys they too have survived, whether they be situational, physical or emotional. And for those hesitant, it may just inspire them to open their hearts to forming a mums' group of their own so they don't have to bumble on alone.

The "pre-pregnancy+pregnancy+birth=post birth" equation for every single human being is individual and some readers may want to know and understand just "how others did it".

The idea behind sharing our stories is to encourage new mums to seek out a mothers' group if they are unsure of joining one and to build themselves a support network – as some of us had real reservations. It also helps to show how strong and wonderful women can be for each other if competitiveness is removed.

The book also offers an insight into human life and how people deal with curveballs so readers embracing difficulties can take strength from stories similar to their own.

This collection weaves itself into a heart warming tale of how eight women became friends and offered a band of support to one another in some emotionally challenging times.

As we offer our very personal stories for you to read we are actually casting them free, like kites to the wind. The cover artwork of the kite was inspired by an Erma Bombeck poem, *Children are like Kites*, which describes the mothering journey as well as the child's development as we "patch and

comfort, adjust and teach. You watch them lifted by the wind and assure them that someday, they will fly".

The women in our mothers' group have experienced individual highs and lows and have been buffeted by different winds on our personal pregnancy and parenting flight paths. But with every new day comes more experience, and with greater knowledge, support and practice we have all eventually taken flight. There are so many ways to mother, but one we would all agree with, is that like the kite we are guiding our children to one day fly by themselves and find freedom. And within each other we have found a wind stream of support, happiness and friendship as we continue our mothering journey together.

Kimberley Chin Poy, Managing Editor

Kim's Story & Introduction

I loved my daughter Willow more than I ever thought possible. It was an overwhelming love. However, still at just a little over one month old, I was determined this baby wasn't going to take over my life, even though everything about my life had changed since I had her. I was a woman of two halves. On one hand I had many preconceived ideas, but on the other hand I wasn't foolish enough to think I knew it all. In fact, I was the opposite. I still had so many questions about how to do it all, because I wanted to do it all, "have baby will travel," "have baby will work," "have baby won't change," and "have baby will keep ticking off goals on the list," that I went to the Early Childhood Centre looking for answers.

I naturally like to have goals and draft lists and I was seeking a solution at the Early Childhood Centre as to how to have it all. However, I felt a lot of trepidation about joining a mothers' group. Perhaps this is because in the past I've found that women in groups can sometimes be competitive and jealous and not always sisterly and supportive.

"God," I thought. "It could be like walking into the bore-house or the Lion's den." Either I'd end up with some complete yawns or I'd end up with competitors worthy of the Mums' n Bubs' Olympics.

That first day I crept in the doorway and was still a little unconvinced; a little bit underwhelmed by the whole idea. In fact I felt a little like grimacing.

"Cheesy," was the word rolling around in my head. "This will be Cheesy. Urrrggh."

I mean, up until this point in my life, I'd seen myself in bar queues, airport queues, London Underground "tube" queues, queues for gas, movie tickets, concert tickets, beer stalls, and queues for lifts, queues for coffee, and in the

queue of sunbathers lying across Sydney's Coogee Beach all rotating at regular intervals chasing the sun.

I saw myself in queues for people going places and doing things; exciting things. Not queues for baby gear or lining up behind a hundred other women with prams talking the best brand of baby food. It seemed a bit of a step backwards, or a coming to a standstill even, this becoming "just a mum" thing. But yet here I found myself, poking my head in the door, looking to join a mothers' group through the Early Childhood Centre at Eastgardens, in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

"Cheesy," there I go again....rolling around with that word. Maybe I was just scared I wouldn't fit in. I had heard of some mums who were insanely competitive and I had built up a perception of them in my head. I just didn't want to sit around with a bunch of bores trying to outdo each other on the developmental milestones of their genius children, who happened to be all decked out in major brand name baby gears. I mean, hell, I was living in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney where kids do wheel by in \$100 denim jeans and \$60 designer label shirts, not to mention the \$1,000+ Bugaboo prams just to port them around in, so naturally I had an idea in mind about the mums that fit with this picture.

"Please can I just find someone like me to hang out with? Please!"

I'm a pretty natural sort of person. I don't often wear makeup. My hair is tied back in a scruffy bun most days and I like beach, cotton, casual clothing. I'm pretty much a jeans girl with a little bit of this and that thrown in; some branded, some not. I'm not someone you'd see week in, week out, shopping in Sydney's trendy Oxford Street. And yet the women I'd previously seen gathered together in parks and cafes with prams throughout the Eastern Suburbs seemed quite intimidating with their glamour girl looks and pristinely put together outfits.