

# CHILD FREE

## M A G A Z I N E

ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2021



FREEDOM, ADVENTURE AND POSSIBILITIES



# CHILDFREE

## M A G A Z I N E

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NB: The magazine is global and the spelling is set to British/Australian English, so you may notice some words that look different from how you spell them in your country. These are not errors, just spelling differences.





# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

I have always been a big dreamer.

My book, '[A Childfree Happily Ever After](#)', was a big dream I made a reality and three years later I am now onto my next big idea – a magazine designed specifically for childfree people across the globe.

If you are reading this I thank you for your support of the [world's first Childfree Magazine](#). I want you to think of this as your own magazine. This is not a fashion mag or a mainstream glossy full of fancy ads that put motherhood on a pedestal. Instead, it is focused on the issues we face, the real-life stories, our lifestyles and along the way, providing positive & practical solutions.

The goal with everything I do, including Childfree Magazine is about the C-word – CHOICE! Childfree people are all different as we well know and we have different focuses, passions, issues, and challenges and we all make choices to create our ideal life and that is exactly how it should be.

This is the first issue. There were so many story ideas and pitches to choose from but unfortunately, I couldn't include it all. Anyway, we'll need some gold for the next edition (if we can raise the funds for it). I will be honest and admit there have been tears, tantrums, and moments I have been very disheartened by this project. But I was driven by the positive support and the fact we need our very own magazine that doesn't have a kid on the cover!

It isn't perfect. I am not a magazine publisher and this is my first attempt. I will learn from the mistakes if I get the chance to do this all over again. "I hope you enjoy the stories and content my amazing, generous contributors and I have created for you. This has very much been a group effort by people who are passionately childfree. I do want your feedback but please don't be too harsh and remember this is the first edition and like all magazines, it will evolve as it needs to.

Remember to make your own rules in life and never let anyone dull your sparkle!

*Tanya Williams*

CHILDFREE MAGAZINE PUBLISHER



# WELCOME TO CHILDFREE MAGAZINE

We started creating CHILDFREE Magazine in October 2020. Many hours have been put into creating this magazine for you. We'd love it if you can help spread the word on your social channels, groups, and networks. More people knowing about CHILDFREE Magazine equals more support for future editions that give the childfree community a 100% childfree focused media platform.

Here's a little Welcome message just for you.

**#childfreemagazine**



# CONTRIBUTOR CREDITS

Like most big projects it is impossible to make them a reality without the help of amazing, passionate, and generous people. I am sending a massive thank you to my chief sub-editor, designer, feature writers, and contributors who have made this magazine come alive with their talent. I am forever grateful x

<b>Founder &amp; Boss</b>	Tanya Williams
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<b>Shout Out To</b>	Katie Hart (Childfree Travel)





" Girls can be so much more than just mothers. It's time to change the way we raise young girls, so they know that - while motherhood is an option - it's not the only one."

# OUR BODY OUR CHOICE!

Written by Therese Shechter

AWARD-WINNING CANADIAN-AMERICAN FILMMAKER, AUTHOR AND ACTIVIST THERESE SHECHTER SHARES HER PERSONAL STORY AND DISCUSSES REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS.

**M**y period arrived when I was 14, after most of my friends. I blame those multiple readings of Judy Blume's, 'Are You There God? It's Me Margaret' for how impatient I was to join them. When it came I was thrilled, until I realised what a painful and bloody mess it all was. The 'Now You Are a Woman' films they showed us in junior high school reassured us that it was all worth it, though, because it meant that we could become mothers.

By the time I hit high school, I was pretty sure I never wanted to become a mother. I told my own mum as much and, to her great credit, she and my family never gave me a hard time about it. I can't say that for the rest of the world, though.

In our pronatalist culture, motherhood has been described as a woman's highest achievement, greatest reward, patriotic duty, and sole purpose for existing on Earth. Countless doctors, politicians, Mother's Day cards, and that random person you invariably meet at someone's baby shower have







put considerable effort into convincing all of us that this is a fundamental truth, and anyone who rejects it is not only selfish but will be responsible for the ruin of society.

Back in 1870, Dr M. L. Holbrook quoted medical research that stated it was “as if the Almighty, in creating the female sex, had taken the uterus and built up a woman around it.” Today, 150 years on, we’re still being treated like walking uteruses, and that’s the problem. If you have both a uterus and heterosexual intercourse, you will spend decades trying not to get pregnant.

For me, those 38 precarious years between the beginning of menstruation and the sweet relief of menopause were defined by stress, nasty side effects from birth control pills, arguments over condom use, and two serious pregnancy scares – until I made it through to the other side.

A lot of the conversation about being childfree has focused on the accusations of selfishness or immorality, and the threats of regret and a loveless and lonely old age, which - although incredibly annoying - are not the worst things that can happen. I believe the real struggle at the heart of choosing to be childfree is the ability to control our own bodies and - by extension - our lives. It’s especially challenging for women (or anyone with a uterus, be they cis, trans, or gender-non-conforming) to get easy access to reproductive healthcare. Safe contraception, morning-after pills, voluntary sterilisation, and legal abortion should all be treated as a basic right, but in the United States, where I live, they often aren’t.

At her confirmation hearings in 1993, the late great US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, “The decision whether or not to bear a child is central to a woman’s life, to her wellbeing and dignity. It is a

decision she must make for herself. When the government controls that decision for her, she is being treated as less than a full adult human, responsible for her own choices.”

Now that conservative Amy Coney Barrett has taken Justice Ginsburg’s still-warm seat on the Supreme Court, I’m simultaneously holding my breath and educating myself about reproductive options if the Supreme Court’s *Roe v Wade* decision (from 1973) is overturned. How ironic that just as we’re getting more comfortable talking about being childfree, the court is poised to strip us of the right to a legal abortion –and maybe even contraception.

Today, 150 years on, we’re still being treated like walking uteruses, and that’s the problem.

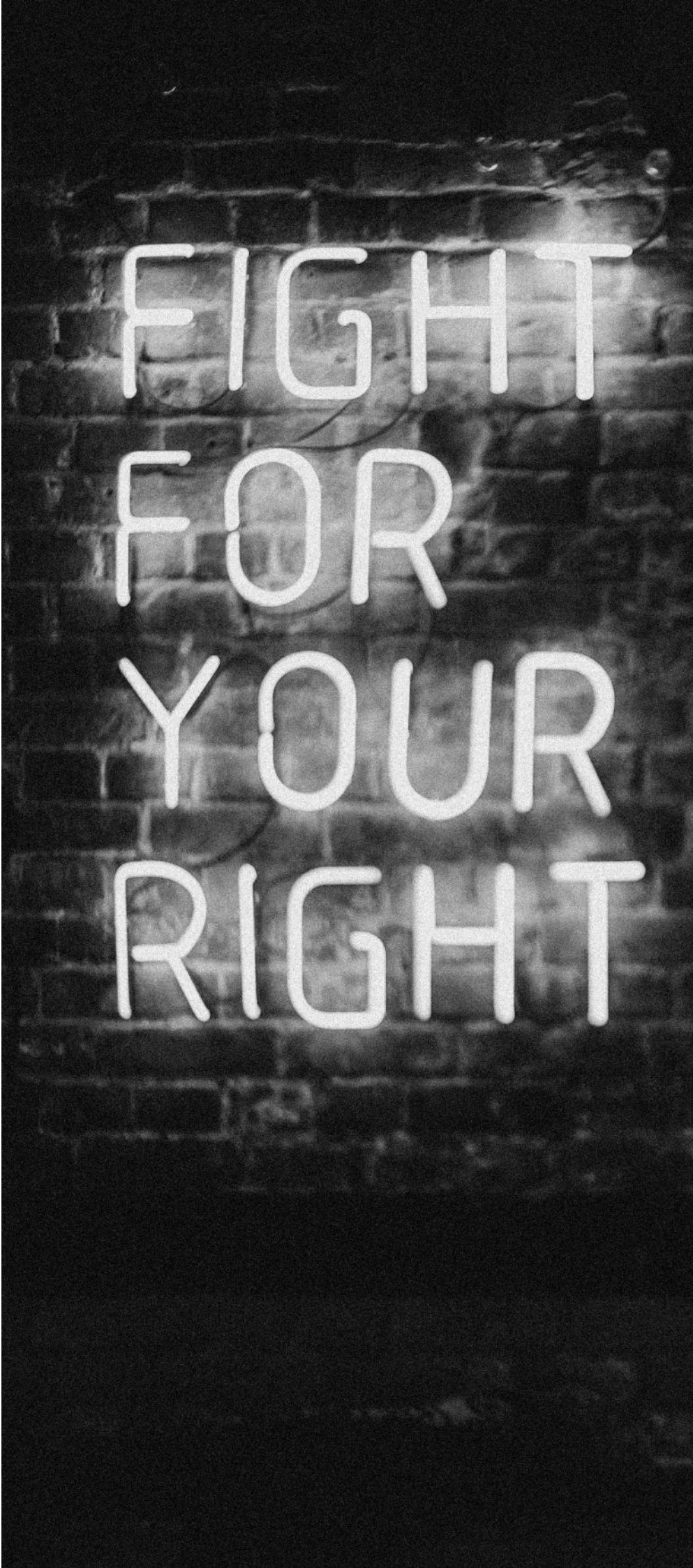
Conservative, religious, white-supremacist, misogynistic (usually) men have long been obsessed with controlling women’s bodies. One goal has been creating a population that looks just like them, encouraging baby-having for white women, and oppressing it for everyone else. The forced sterilisation of black women, women of colour, and indigenous women has long been part of that plan. And in case you think this is ancient history, as recently as 2020,

women detained by U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement in the US state of Georgia, allegedly received hysterectomies that they did not want and may not have been medically necessary.

One response to this oppression has been Reproductive Justice, a framework created by black women, which combines reproductive rights with social justice for three goals: the right to not have children, the right to have them, and the right to carry, birth, and raise them in health and safety (something black women in particular have been denied). Even though we might not all have the same desires or goals kid-wise, there is a fundamental moral case to be made for treating us all as full adult humans.

One thing people outside the US are surprised to hear is that it's been hard to get an abortion in this country for decades, especially if you don't have the time and money to get on a plane and travel to a state with accessible services. In much of the US, people travel hundreds of miles to get to a clinic that performs abortions, and that's assuming they have transportation, can take time off work, and can pay the expenses for the procedure and a place to stay overnight. If they're in their second trimester, often because it took so long to raise the funds they need, it's even harder. A growing [Self-Managed Abortion](#) movement is working on a better option.

Most childfree people who seek voluntary sterilisation procedures find them difficult to obtain as well. There are countless stories of people being denied over and



FIGHT  
FOR  
YOUR  
RIGHT



and over again by doctors who are afraid patients will regret a procedure they're desperate to get. Like with the decision to get an abortion, women are treated as though they can't be trusted to know their own minds. Even basic contraception and the morning-after pill are subject to the whims of pharmacists, who can refuse to dispense them on 'moral grounds.'

Of course, vasectomies are a much simpler, less expensive and easier-to-obtain solution to contraception, yet they're done in far smaller numbers. I have to wonder why more guys aren't taking one for the team.

Childfree spaces have been overwhelmingly white, but the reality of experiences and stories are far more diverse. Childfree black women and women of colour face particular stigmas around seeking out voluntary sterilisation. It's a desire that's complicated by the history of forced sterilisation in their own communities and the accusations that they are helping further the work of white supremacy by not having their own children.

People who choose to be childfree also face specific stigmas around abortion. Positive abortion stories are usually framed as it not being "the right time", or because there's something already wrong with a pregnancy. We rarely hear stories about people who get abortions because it will never be the right time. Our society overwhelmingly believes that a woman's purpose is to have children, and anti-choice activists milk it for all it's worth, painting anyone who rejects that purpose as morally bankrupt. Motherhood is a great marketing tool.

Safe contraception,  
morning-after pills,  
voluntary  
sterilisation, and  
legal abortion should  
all be treated as  
a basic right.

These are big issues that we don't talk about enough in childfree spaces. I've had conversations with women from Poland to Colombia to China who are passionate about the challenge of women deciding their own reproductive fates in the face of oppressive government policies. Yet many childfree people are decidedly apolitical, and their concerns about reproductive freedoms extend only as far as their own personal rights.

Why aren't we as a group more vocal and visible as part of the larger fight for reproductive freedoms? Not just for us or our partners, but for anyone who wants the best options for one of the most significant choices of their lives. And why aren't more organisations interested in the needs of the childfree, for example, reinforcing the fact that voluntary sterilisation is a reproductive right to fight for.

We owe it to ourselves to build a true childfree movement that stands for [Reproductive Justice](#), the universal right to control our bodies, and the freedom for everyone to make the best choices for themselves.



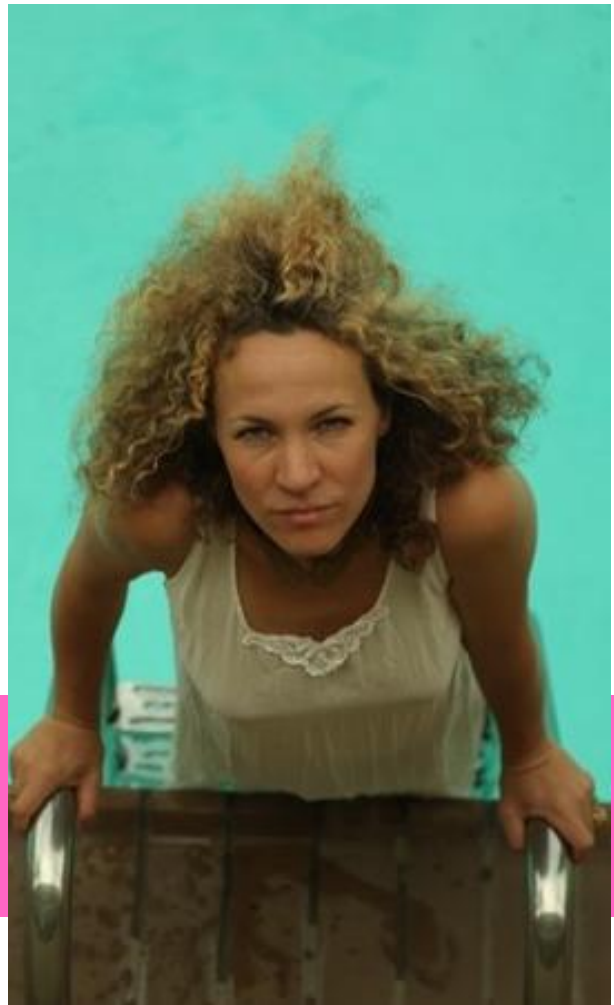
## ABOUT

***Therese Shechter** is a Canadian - American filmmaker, author, and activist who studies the social forces that make motherhood seem inevitable – even mandatory – in ways we don't even notice. Her documentary film 'My So-Called Selfish Life' is coming out in 2021. You can watch clips, hear and read stories of childfree lives, and support the project at the film's website: [myselfishlife.com](http://myselfishlife.com). Join the community on Facebook and Instagram. Find all her work at Trixie Films.*

# READER SPOTLIGHT

# WENDY HOENKAMP

**Location:** Utrecht, The Netherlands  
**Age:** 39  
**Marital Status:** Single  
**Occupation:** Online marketing for non-profits



## **Who inspires you:**

Esther Ouwehand, who leads the Party for the Animals in the Dutch Parliament.

## **Hobbies:**

Podcasts, politics, music, (pre-and post-pandemic) travel, cuddling with cats.

## **Fave toy growing up:**

Books and the woods.

## **Do your parents accept your decision?**

My father finds me courageous and my mother accepts it. It helps that they were already provided with two grandchildren and are very progressive thinkers.

## **Most offensive thing someone has said to you about your choice?**

As you probably know, a lot of people find the choice to remain childfree so radical, that they assume you must hate children. I also hear a lot of people's own fears, such as: 'aren't you afraid you'll grow old alone', or 'aren't you afraid you'll miss out on something?'

## **Your story**

The year before I turned 30, it hit me: in the next 10 years I need to decide if I'm going to have children. I decided to turn it into a practical project: for the rest of the year I talked about it with a lot of women who had children, a lot of women who didn't or would never have children. At the end of the year, I knew: having children is not for me. The three main reasons (and still are): I have so many things I love to do in life, so many hobbies and so much curiosity. Secondly, when I asked myself the question: 'do I find life and the world we live in so awesome and wonderful, that I wish to give this to a being?' The answer was, "No." Lastly, I know how tremendous the impact of childhood is on the resilience and happiness on the rest of a person's life. And I realised I didn't want a child enough to make such a sacrifice.

Nowadays I really feel like a childfree choice advocate. I wish for a world in which having children is no longer the norm, so that every person can truly make a unique and personal decision, free from fear and free from unconscious cultural expectations.





# WHAT'S YOUR VALUE?

HANNAH HELFENSTEIN LOOKS AT THE WORTH OF THE CHILDFREE TO SOCIETY, TO PUT A COMMON - YET RATHER DISRESPECTFUL - QUESTION TO BED.

Written by Hannah Helfenstein

**W**hat kind of value are you offering society if you don't have kids?" my client asked me with a clear tone of judgement in his voice. As a recent 20-something graduate just starting my professional career as a physiotherapist, I was not accustomed to such personal questions in the workplace.

I hastily tried to think of an appropriate response to him critiquing my choice to live child free. Conversations with clients had always been about casual topics, but today I had been asked THE question: "So, how many kids do you have?" My

answer of "None, I actually don't want any" prompted the somewhat disrespectful question I was now trying to answer.

So, what did I offer society beyond the skills and knowledge I had acquired in university to treat his lumbar spine? When you make the choice to live a childfree life, you will no doubt be asked this question or various versions of it, such as, "What's the point of life if you don't become a parent?" or "Aren't women supposed to want/have children?" These questions all come down to one central theme: value and worth.

Having children has long been viewed as being advantageous to the economy, due to the fact they are future consumers and eventual taxpayers. Babies are big business and raising them comes at a cost. The United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States and Australia are currently rated as some of the most expensive countries in which to raise children, with 38 per cent, 36 per cent, 23 per cent and 23 per cent of a household's income going towards childcare costs, respectively.

It's no secret that governments offer various incentives to encourage family expansion.

Baby bounties, as they are often referred to, can include everything from cash, tax breaks, baby clothes, books, paid childcare leave and even refrigerators! For example, in 2019, Hungary waived personal income tax for life for women who have at least four children. France offers stipends, expanded childcare and discounts on services such as train fares. Not to be outdone, Finland offers maternity allowance, parental allowance and paternity allowance, as well as a maternity package (aka 'baby box') for newborns that boasts 56 baby items!

While growing families are contributing ankle biters to the economy, what are the childfree doing? Interestingly, a Canadian study has shown that childfree women earn more than their child-rearing mother coworkers. On average, a childfree woman is earning between 9 per cent to 20 per cent more at any given time during her career, according to the study.

Typically, households without children will have a dual income stream with no child-related financial costs. More disposable income usually means more spending, and a study by Euromonitor International, a leading market research company, has found that spending by childfree households tends to be far greater than spending by couples with kids. In 2019, Euromonitor forecast that childfree couples in the United States will have a yearly average household expenditure of US\$36,000 (AU\$46,700) by 2030, while couples with children will only be spending about US\$27,000.

Childfree households support the financial economy through travel, personal purchases, and contributions to investment opportunities. Childfree and childless couples are also four times more likely to leave a gift in their wills, according to new research by Legacy Foresight for Include a Charity.

The idea that a childfree woman could contribute value to society at the same level as a mother is a novel idea for many. But a quick Google search reveals that there have been many childfree women who have contributed positively to our world. From authors, entertainers, explorers, musicians, artists, scientists, politicians, activists, to athletes, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, comedians and royalty, the list is endless. Ten of the more famous women include: Renee Zellweger, Helen Mirren, Anjelica Huston, Katharine Hepburn, Gloria Steinem, Candace Bushnell, Stevie Nicks, Dolly Parton, Ellen DeGeneres and Chelsea Handler.

Ironically, it's perhaps what the childfree don't offer that could be seen as the most valuable. The environmental toll of having even one child is enormous: an average of 58.6 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions per year, according to researchers from Lund University in Sweden. Eating meat, driving a car and travelling by aeroplane made up the list of the most polluting things people can do to the planet, but having children came in at number one, according to the research, published in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*.

Statistics aside, we would be doing ourselves a great disservice to ignore the personal and human aspect of value and worth. I now know how to answer the question I was asked about my worth as a childfree woman. Today I would say, "My value doesn't come from all the things that society tells us it comes from. It simply comes from being a human being. From being me."



**Hannah** is a Canadian wife who enjoys adventures with her husband, eating, staying fit and discussing the choice to live a childfree life on her YouTube channel, *Wife Without Kids*.





**NEVER BE AFRAID  
TO HAVE A VOICE  
ABOUT YOUR  
CHOICE.**



# CHILDFREE BY CHOICE, STEP-MUM BY CIRCUMSTANCE

LACEY PRUETT'S RATHER UNIQUE EXPERIENCE LED TO A ROCKY ROAD OF JUDGEMENT, NEGATIVITY AND LABELLING BY OTHER WOMEN. SHE EXPLORES THE 'LABELS' AND 'MIS-LABELS' OF OUR CHOICES.

Written by Lacey Pruett

**W**omen are brilliant, vivacious, multifaceted human beings who have the opportunity to decide for themselves which roles they want to play during their lifetime. Sadly, some of these selfless women are made to feel selfish for not wanting their own children, or they are mislabelled as anti-children. This, along with several other labels, can misrepresent the abundant wellspring of love and nurturing that exists within these women.

I spent a decade of my life feeling misunderstood and abandoned because I didn't conform to a set of socially-acceptable roles in a timely manner. As a childfree woman who became a step-mum by circumstance, I had to side-step verbal landmines from other women who couldn't make sense of my life choices. Assumptions and judgement made the already challenging feat of blending a family more difficult, because I didn't quite fit

into most groups of women anymore. The mums didn't understand my desire to not have children of my own. The career women thought I was crazy for continuing to pursue my career with so much on my personal plate. The childfree couldn't understand why I would marry a man with teenage children, and some wouldn't even let me call myself childfree, since my husband has children of his own.



The years before I had a relationship with my husband's children were especially difficult, due to being labelled and mislabelled so much. I even started questioning where a woman like me belonged - if at all? The answer is that we belong in our own fabulous group of childfree women who include as many of the world's children as we desire in the life of our dreams.

For a childfree woman, I sure do have a lot of children around me. I am an aunt to eight nieces and nephews. I am a volunteer and advocate for domestically abused children. I am a mentor to women who need help finding their way. I am a loving wife and a true friend to my step-children, who are now fully grown. I provide a different support and one-of-a-kind love to nurture the children in my life. I am grateful for the resources that I have due to my choice not to have children of my own. It is a privilege to give selflessly to numerous different needs.

Looking back, I wish I'd turned a deaf ear to the critics and naysayers about my chosen roles for my life. I do believe people criticise what they don't understand but, at the time, it made me feel a little lost among my fellow women.

"In 1976, just 10 per cent of women in the United States had not given birth by the time they reached their 40s," according to Dr Amy Blackstone. By 2010, that number had risen significantly, reaching 19 per cent of white women, 17 per cent of black women and 16 per cent of Asian women aged 40-44, according to America's Current Population

**Here are some of the negative childfree labels we need to leave behind:**

## REGRET

"YOU'LL REGRET NOT HAVING YOUR OWN CHILDREN."

Conversely, it's childfree women who are playing a big role in inspiring children, and DNA has nothing to do with it. "Culturally we believe that women are uniquely wired to want children, and challenging this means questioning everything we were taught about our place in the world," says Dr Amy Blackstone. There cannot be any regret in owning your life choices. That's the beauty of getting to choose.

## SELFISH

"IT'S SELFISH TO NOT WANT TO SHARE YOUR LIFE AND CREATE LIFE."

On the contrary, I feel that childfree women are free to give, love and nurture in a big way, and to more children than some mothers do. Selfishness hardly describes the childfree women I know, who volunteer with children's programs, domestic violence care centres, and step in for family members when parents fall on hard times.

## ANTI-CHILD

"SHE DOESN'T LIKE CHILDREN."

I love children but I understand not everyone does. Some parents don't like children, which is why it is important to discuss family planning before the babies arrive - a real problem in our world today. Some people are so quick to get to society's next step in life, they never consider if being a parent is what they really want. Globally in 2014, 1 billion children aged two to 17 years experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect. A quarter of all adults report having been physically abused as children. One in five women and one in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child. Showing these abused children love and hope is one of my greatest honours. American singer/songwriter Dolly Parton once said, "It just wasn't meant for me to have kids, so the world's kids can be my kids."

## SHALLOW

"WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?"

We find and nurture our heart's desires. For some that is travel, career, creations or building other types of legacies. American actress Betty White said, "I've never regretted not having my own children. I'm so compulsive, my children would have been my entire focus, and I knew I wanted my career." Another woman with no regrets about not being a mum? TV host and actress Oprah Winfrey. Look at the legacy she is leaving the world - and for young girls. Isn't it wonderful we get to choose?

Survey. While many women may now be without children, they are not without families. Research proves that people without children form bonds, create households and help rear the next generation in many of the same ways that those with kids do. When you're not busy raising your own children, you free up time, money and other resources to nurture other opportunities in life. Think of all the teachers who remain childfree but play a big role in raising the world's children.

People ask me all the time if being childfree was a difficult decision to make (note the assumption that it is difficult). I say, yes, but not for the reasons you would think. I was clear in my "yes" to my husband about choosing to marry him and not having our own biological children. Further, I was a bit relieved. I'm not a woman who thinks childbirth is something I need to experience in this lifetime. I don't think motherhood is for every woman, and I don't think it lessens a woman's value if she decides not to birth or adopt a child. I feel that motherhood is one role or one adventure of many that women can choose. What made my decision difficult was the wrath of judgement I faced from fellow women in response to my decision. Some of it was outwardly cruel and some of it was more of a subtle snub that I don't belong, or can't understand, or can't empathise because I am not a biological mother.

In some circles I was assumed to be selfish, narcissistic and empty inside because I didn't bear my own children. My once

inspiring circles of women who gathered to uplift one another in our careers and home life became a critics circle filled with shame and ridicule. Women were quick to offer their opinions about how I should be handling my husband's children and my own life decisions, while I quietly wondered, "how did the conversations become so stale and boring?" We used to be multifaceted, talented and inspiring women, with little criticism and much encouragement. What I started to witness was a female society trapping themselves in one of two narratives and trying to make the best of it. What became interesting yet pretty hurtful to me is that I had little support from fellow women while I was trying to navigate the chosen roles for my life.

But the world is vast, so I refocused on the aspects and details I wanted to experience more of in my own life. I started

labelling myself in a more loving way: giving, nurturing, caring, generous, creative, hopeful, supportive, inspiring, loving.

Would you believe it, the more I focused on these positive labels, the more of them presented themselves. I found fulfilment in this abundant world, as a childfree woman serving in many roles, and along the way I found a group of childfree women and mums who support women shining in whatever roles they choose for themselves.

Our value isn't set upon whether or not we chose to have children of our own. Our value is in who we are. What you choose to do with who you are is a gift to the world, and we should respect everyone's right to share their gift in their own way. Otherwise, what was the point of all the effort towards equal rights if we women are just going to hold each other back anyway?



**Lacey Pruett** is an author and yoga teacher, living in Dallas, TX with her husband and two dogs, and travelling as often as possible.





# LUXE SPLURGE URGE

IT'S TIME TO SPLURGE ON YOUR FAVOURITE THINGS  
(IF ONLY IN YOUR DREAMS)

Why not aim high and put it on your vision board.  
You never know what 2021 will bring you!



## JIMMY CHOO AVELINE 100

US\$925

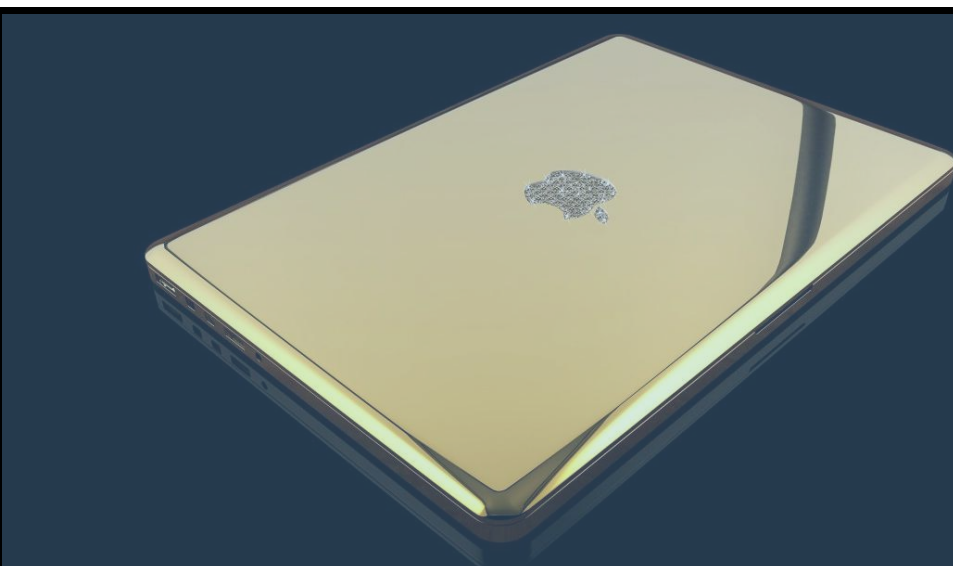
Black Sandals with Asymmetric Grosgrain Mesh Fascinator Bows



## ROLEX GMT-MASTER II

USD\$16,500

Features a black dial and a brown and black Cerachrom bezel. Designed to show the time in two different time zones simultaneously during intercontinental flights.



## 24K GOLD MACBOOK PRO

USD\$12,600

Limited edition Macbook Pro with 24k gold housing and diamond encrusted logo





## LEXUS IS 300

Price Starts at USD\$39,000

241-Horspower turbocharged in-line  
4 engine, Apple Carplay®  
Integration, Class-leading standard  
Lexus Safety System+ 2.5



## EMIRATES A380 FIRST CLASS

Price varies

Luxurious travel with first class  
seating, dining, inflight  
entertainment, onboard lounge and  
a shower spa



## ARMAND DE BRIGNAC BRUT GOLD CHAMPAGNE

USD\$299.95

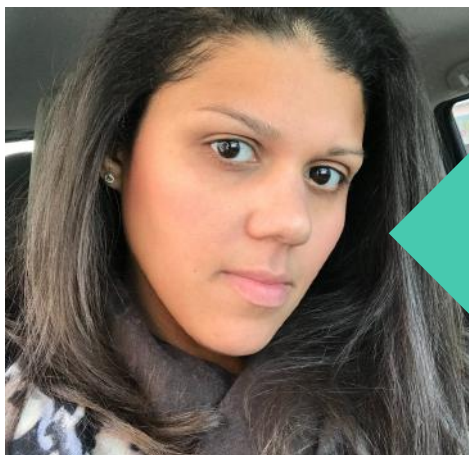


## GRUNGE STREET FIGHTER COMPACT ARCADE GAME

USD\$3,500



# VOX POP: YOUR CHILDFREE WHY



**Sonni D'Andrea**  
New York, USA

*"I didn't want to end up like my grandparents, who had to raise all their grandchildren because their own children were incapable."*

”

“

**Cody**  
Savannah, USA

*"I'm happily childfree because it's better for the environment and, as a bonus, it offers stability for the life my wife and I want to live."*



**Charlotte**  
Melbourne, Australia

*"I've always known I don't want children, I crave freedom and having kids would mean sacrificing everything that matters most to me including myself."*

”



# ARE WE THERE YET?



MARCIA DRUT-DAVIS DELVES INTO WHETHER THE CHILDFREE LIFESTYLE WILL EVER BE FULLY ACCEPTED BY SOCIETY.

Written by Marcia Drut-Davis

I recently celebrated my 78th birthday. It was a surreal moment. It feels like the decades went by in a blink! In my earlier years, I had been a devoted teacher and was even nominated for one of the annual Walt Disney American Teacher Awards. But in 1974, at 34 years of age, everything changed for me. In an interview on the renowned television show “60 Minutes” I dared to admit publicly that I had chosen the childfree lifestyle.

Immediately I faced the wrath of

people who labelled me a “selfish, hedonistic, Godless bitch” because I didn’t want to birth or raise any children of my own. I even received death threats and had to be taken across picketing lines of angry parents when asked to speak. Ultimately, I lost my teaching job.

The results were catastrophic and shocking to me. But my shock turned to anger. I felt a need to stop these ignorant perceptions. I also had a calling to support those -like me -who needed validation.

When I began this journey in the mid-1970s, there was little to educate or support our lifestyle choice.

Now, after 45 years as a “pioneer” in the childfree movement, the question I hear over and over is: “Any personal regrets?” My answer is short, sweet and to the point: “Not one!” Another question I hear is a bit trickier: “Do you think the childfree will ever be fully accepted?” The answer to this is: “Yes and no”.



Social media has done a lot to educate, support and validate our lifestyle. More and more women are feeling bold enough to state their choice and not care as much about negative responses. Many have learnt that it's useless to do what I call the “push-pull dance of dysfunction”. “I’m right. You’re wrong” is a lesson in futility. You can rarely overcome cultural norms and/or a religious upbringing. However, if we start accepting other people’s choices and celebrating our own lifestyle as proudly as parents seem to, we can enjoy happier moments.

When I began this journey in the mid-1970s, there was little to educate or support our lifestyle choice. There was really only one book: “The Baby Trap” by Ellen Peck, which had been published in 1971. I devoured it and became Ellen’s friend. I helped her create the first convention for the National Organization for Non-Parents (N.O.N) in New York City, and reached many as the president of the Long Island, New York chapter, for three years.

Today, if you google books on the childfree lifestyle, you may become overwhelmed. There are so many terrific ones to choose from, as well as this magazine you are now reading!

In the mid '70s, there were no holiday resorts or cruises catering to the childfree. There were no childfree support groups, websites, Facebook groups, YouTube videos or podcasts. But much of this has changed.

These days we also have a documentary from Canada and two from America. I’m proudly in the two from the US: 2018’s “To Kid or Not To Kid” by filmmaker Maxine Trump (no relation to Donald Trump), and the soon-to-be-released, “My So-Called Selfish Life” by filmmaker Therese Shechter.

This all seems to indicate that times are changing. Many younger women are feeling more and more empowered to choose a lifestyle they want and not what they’ve been taught is their biological destiny. Many men no longer feel the need to have their names carried on. Birth rates are declining worldwide. So is this the “yes” you wanted to hear

regarding the question “do you think the childfree will ever be accepted?” Maybe.

I’ve always sought to find ways to balance the good with the bad. However, when I started researching my second book, I discovered the favouritism occurring in the military (in America) towards parents in housing and leave requests. Parents’ wishes are typically prioritised over those of the childfree or childless.

Work environments generally still favour parents’ needs over those of childfree staff members. A sick parent, partner or dog doesn’t come near the importance of a sick child’s needs. Holiday timing is often given to parents’ choices first. And the childfree are frequently asked to take over their parent’s work without compensation.

“More and more women are feeling bold enough to state their choice and not care as much about negative responses.”



I've also witnessed challenges in travelling in the past four decades. Parents' and kids' needs are prioritised over the needs of the childfree on aeroplanes and in restaurants and hotels. If we dare question if there are any childfree areas, we're given a side glance or an ugly stare and an emphatic "No!"

Over the years I've read gut-wrenching personal emails from many men and more women whose partners later admitted that they thought they could change their minds when they said early on in the relationship that they didn't want kids. Other emails share the anguish of Wills read that exempt the childfree and favour those who have produced grandchildren.

Internationally it's even worse. In some African countries, if you're a woman and dare say you don't want a child, you're thought of as a man. In Greece, you're called soulless. Greek mothers will keep their children away from anyone saying they are childfree, as they fear it's somehow catching. In other countries, not producing an heir may allow the husband to choose another wife or -worse - stone the barren woman to death.

But even within the movement there are haters. To be called "a sham" and "a fake" because you hold the title of step-parent or have a 'fur-kid' shows the great divide between the purists, the moderates, and the liberal childfree.

Until we know that the entire world is accepting of our choice to remain childfree and even

respects us for that -as it helps this overpopulated world with diminishing resources and climate challenges -I won't feel we've reached true acceptance. It may never happen, due to continuing social norms, religious conditioning and false understanding of what it really means.

So what can we do or avoid doing? Write to advertising companies explaining that not every product sold should be depicted with children in the ads. Don't lash out, condemn or suggest to parents that they will regret their choice. Do we want to hear that from them?

If you're on the fence, torn between what is expected of you and your inner heart, stay true to yourself. Keep a journal of what you did each day. Could you have done those things while

raising a human? Educate yourself about the realities of parenting versus being childfree. You can do this by spending quality time with kids of all ages over an extended period of time - not just a few hours babysitting. Spend bulk time with teens, if you can. Your eyes may grow wider every day!

Ultimately, it's not really important if we're "there" yet or not in terms of acceptance. **The most important thing for every single one of you reading this is to feel the pride and sheer joy from the unlimited possibilities of the childfree lifestyle.** Continue to reach out and extoll the benefits. Looking back over 45 years, I've found happiness and contentment in the childfree lifestyle. I've also found it by helping others find their joy. Please carry that torch forward!



**Marcia Drut-Davis** is an awarded septuagenarian pioneer in the childfree lifestyle. Her delight is reaching hearts in need of her support and hosting childfree group cruises. Her books *"Confessions of a Childfree Woman"* and *"What? You Don't Want Children?"* are both on Amazon.

# FUNNY RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION **WHEN ARE YOU HAVING KIDS?**

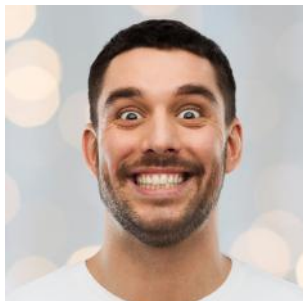
I already have to put up with so many inane conversations, why add to it?

I can't be a better mother than Angelina so why try?

It would be unfair to my cat/dog/pet frog.



Not interested, by the way is yours supposed to look like that?



I'm an Aries.

That's just what the communists want.

I don't think I could get a good price on the black market.

I literally just got here / sat down / said hello.



We already have an even number so...



I promised my first born to a witch and I don't want to make good on that promise.

Santa didn't bring me one last Xmas so I guess it's not meant to be.

Oh no, I've seen those Disney movies, I know what happens to the mother.





# DISNEY'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS, KAREN

L'ERIN CARMODE-HOGG REVEALS WHY SHE AND HER HUSBAND LOVE VISITING THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS CHILDFREE COUPLE: MICKEY AND MINNIE.

When was the last time you visited any of Disney's 12 theme parks? Not since you were a kid? My husband and I first experienced the Disney magic as adults and we now visit frequently.



As a childfree-by-choice couple, everyone asks us, “Why are you going to Disney AGAIN?” Newsflash: Disney isn’t just for kids. Walt Disney himself believed that “adults are only kids grown up, anyway”. But many still think Disney parks are essentially for children, including one mother whose Facebook tirade went viral in July 2019. If you missed the overuse of caps and expletives faulting childless millennials for creating the long line that deprived her three-year-old of a Mickey pretzel and led her to call for a ban on childless guests, do a quick Google search and have a good laugh.

Disney never officially responded to the post, but most people (childfree or not) shot back and shut down her “Karen-style” rage. The rant created a niche market on Etsy that I gladly gave in to. My husband and I proudly wear our “childless millennial” T-shirts in the parks, and I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of laughs and “smart choice!” responses from parents with kids in tow.

Yes, Disney commercials flaunt traditional families of four on holiday, and there’s no admission fee for kids under

three, which can be seen as an incentive for parents. But, Disney has intentionally been expanding its charm to entice a variety of ages and family structures in the past few years. They offer a plethora of options for the childfree -for all interests!

But I understand the critics. I don’t like theme parks either! Most are heavy on thrill rides and don’t offer much else. At Disney parks, however, there are not only rides for every type of thrill level, but also entertainment shows, plenty of exclusive shopping and -my personal favourite -unique dining opportunities.

If you really want a not-your-typical-theme-park experience, you can visit during one of the many festivals throughout the year (such as the Epcot International Food & Wine Festival) or buy special events, such as the dinner-show packages or tours (behind the scenes, animal encounters, and wine tasting, to name a few). Speaking of wine, where else can you have tequila from Mexico, sake from Japan and wine from France all in the same day? The answer is Walt Disney World’s Epcot in Florida!

In terms of accommodation, there are cheaper options that are geared towards families with a tighter budget (and often children), and we avoid Disney’s value resorts for this reason. Typically there are fewer children at Disney during off-peak times such as weekdays in the winter months, and you may even snag a great deal at an upgraded resort during these periods.

Of course, Disney is an international affair, with parks in Paris, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo. You can also book “Adult-Exclusive” holidays at more than 30 global destinations through Adventures by Disney. And each Disney Cruise ship offers adults-only areas, such as pools, lounges, nightclubs, restaurants, gyms and spas on their voyages.

When you consider all that is available, it’s easy to see why nearly 156 million guests enjoy Disney’s theme parks each year -more than 58 million to Walt Disney World in Florida alone, making it the most visited holiday resort on the planet. Essentially, Disney is a place for the childfree, the young, the old and everyone in between. Afterall, the more the merrier!

Writer **L’Erin Carmode-Hogg** is a project manager at a not-for-profit university and resides in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, with her husband, Jared, and their rescue dog, Coda.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** All cruises and many theme park experiences are currently unavailable due to COVID-19. For the most up-to-date information, please visit [disneyparks.disney.go.com](https://disneyparks.disney.go.com)





# ARE YOU NOT 100% SURE IF YOU WANT TO STAY CHILDFREE?

OR ARE YOU STILL FEELING A LOT OF PRESSURE FROM FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS OR YOUR PARTNER AND NEED SOME EMOTIONAL SUPPORT?

The **Childfree Choices Program** is designed to provide support and mentoring for people who not 100% sure if kids are for them and for childfree people who want support for the ongoing pressure they are getting from loved ones.

**Childfree Choices Program** is a step-by-step program that looks at the key areas that might impact your decision including:



How to navigate expectations & difficult conversations



How to manage your loved ones when they are pressuring you to have children



PLUS hear firsthand stories from other women (mums and non-mums)

*"I want you to know that your content was such great assistance, it really helped me absorb what my life could look like from the childfree angle." - **Margot***

*"I found Tanya's program to be very helpful with making my decision. I loved the articles and exercises, but especially the interviews. You always read about people who are childfree, but never see real-live people talking about their decision. It just makes you realize you're not alone and others have the same exact feelings." - **Christina***

*"This program has helped me immensely. Thank you for doing this important work and being a lifeline for women like me." - **Erin***

Click or tap here for more info:

**childfree  
choices  
program**

support for the childfree + undecided





# CHILDFREE THROUGH THE AGES

CHILDFREEDOM MAY FEEL LIKE A RELATIVELY NEW CONCEPT BUT THERE'S ACTUALLY BEEN EVIDENCE OF WOMEN MAKING THE LIFE CHOICE AS FAR BACK AS ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME, HÉLÈNE WRITES.

Written by Hélène

**B**eing openly childfree can be challenging, even in 2021. Parents might expect grandchildren, friends and colleagues can be pushy, and the media is relentless about portraying the ideal family as a married couple with kids.

For women especially, the fact that most people conflate femininity with motherhood can feel suffocating. Defying expectations can be met with shock, condescension, ridicule

or even anger by those who either do not understand or, worse, refuse to accept childfreedom as a valid life choice. Even successful and powerful women, such as Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, former British Prime Minister Theresa May and former US Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, have faced insulting comments due to their lack of children.

While the childfree lifestyle is not fully embraced even today, we should remember that women without children have always been part of society.



For centuries, women have been pushed into marriage and have typically had little reproductive choice after becoming wives. This changed six decades ago with the popularisation of birth control, but that idealisation of the nuclear family (two parents and their child/children) as the main model of a complete family lingers today.

On the other side of the coin, women have also been rebelling for centuries against society's expectations to marry and thus become mothers. Some joined religious orders (the nunnery etc) as an alternative, others stayed at home with their parents or lived on their own through independent means, and some even created alternative communities such as the Beguines in Europe, which began in the Middle Ages. There are even records from the Antiquity period about women rejecting marriage and motherhood in order to pursue their interests, such as the Gallo-Roman physician Aemilia Hilaria

(who died in 363 A.D) or the Greek philosopher and mathematician Hypatia (who died in 415 A.D).

Today's childfree women should find inspiration in the lives of these females, including the more widely-known women who never had children, such as the Queen of England and Ireland Elizabeth I (who died in 1603), author Jane Austen (who died in 1817), suffragist Susan B. Anthony (who died in 1906), nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale (who died in 1910), sharpshooter Annie Oakley (who died in 1926), scientist Rosalind Franklin (who died in 1958), cosmetics entrepreneur Elizabeth Arden (who died in 1966), Hollywood actress Greta Garbo (who died in 1990), dancer Ginger Rogers (who died in 1995), tennis player Althea Gibson (who died in 2003), chef Julia Child (who died in 2004), politician Shirley Chisholm (who died in 2005), author Harper Lee (who died in 2016), and architect Zaha Hadid (who died in 2016).

While it isn't always possible to determine whether these women were childless by circumstance or childfree by choice, it is comforting to realise that they existed and, for the most part, society did not erase their achievements. While the childfree lifestyle is not fully embraced even today, we should remember that women without children have always been part of society, even if information about them might sometimes be sparse.

Thankfully, recent times have only provided more and more examples of famous childfree women, such as feminist journalist and activist Gloria Steinem, actress Betty White, talk-show host Oprah Winfrey and former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. They have all been vocal about their choice not to have children and helped younger women feel more confident in their own child freedom.



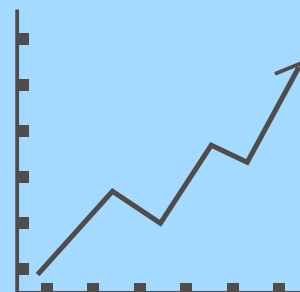
**About H  l  ne:**

*Born into a traditional, religious, natalist French family, H  l  ne, an aspiring writer, now advocates for the childfree lifestyle by highlighting the significance of historical women who never had children.*

# WTF!

## WHAT THE FACT

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE OVER 65 WITHOUT ADULT CHILDREN IS SET TO RISE FROM OVER 1.2 MILLION TO 2 MILLION BY 2030



Research shows most women who choose a childfree life are **confident in their decision**.

80%

Increase in number of single, childless older people needing care by 2032.

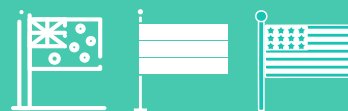
The American fertility rate is at a historic 35 year low.

Since the 2008 recession, however, the total fertility rate has fallen by close to 20%.

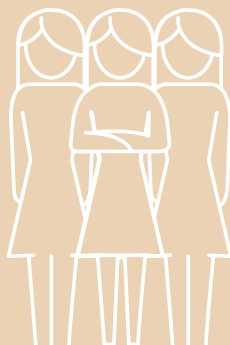


More men & women are opting for sterlisation at an earlier age.

In Australia, Germany, Italy, and the USA the proportion of childless women in their late 40's has doubled over the past 3 decades.



Japan's birthrate is plummeting even as the backlog of daycare enrollments increases.



An increasing number of Indian women are choosing not to have children in India, a country where motherhood is revered.



# THE VOTES ARE IN

We asked the question “Do you think the government should pay for childcare if you chose to have a child?”

This is what the childfree community thought...

**YES**  
**15%**

**NO**  
**85%**





# HIS AND HERS

JO VRACA, HOST OF THE (UN)RIPE COMMUNITY PODCAST FOR THE CHILDFREE AND CHILDLESS, CHATS TO TWO WOMEN AND THREE MEN FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH STERILISATION.

Written by Jo Vraca

**D**o a quick Google search for "How do I get a hysterectomy?" or "Can I get my tubes tied during my lunch break?" and you will receive a plethora of articles from webmd.com and 'Psychology Today'. Even England's National Health Service chimes in on the subject, explaining that women want a hysterectomy for many reasons, including heavy periods, cancer or prolapse of the uterus. Yet there's barely a mention of avoiding pregnancy as a reason on page one of my Google search (and we all know that nothing much happens beyond page one).

On the other hand, search for

"How to get a vasectomy" and it's all about avoiding babies. Even in 2021, it seems that it's still taboo for women to ask for a tubal ligation, Essure or a hysterectomy to avoid pregnancy. We must want to use our uterus, our ovaries and our fallopian tubes because they are there, right?

It's been a minute since second-wave feminism, when women such as Australia's Germaine Greer and America's Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem told us in the 1960s and '70s that "just because we have a uterus, doesn't mean we have to use it." But, 40-plus years on, try that argument with a doctor.

"We have people tell us often that we will regret it, that we will change our minds."



I spoke with Mia from New Zealand about her experience. "Growing up, I assumed I would have kids," she explains. "It was the normal thing to do. I also grew up in a community where kids are hugely important. [It was] a very 'it takes a village' type of environment, so it was the default to have kids."

In her late teens and early 20s, life distracted her from thinking about babies until she met her current partner. Almost nine years into their relationship, they made the decision together that, although they like kids, they don't want to have their own.

After some research, Mia decided she wanted to get a salpingectomy, which is the surgical removal of one (unilateral) or both (bilateral) fallopian tubes. Fallopian tubes allow eggs to travel from the ovaries to the uterus. Remove them and the problem of accidental pregnancy is solved.

"My GP is great and supportive," Mia says. "She was happy to refer me to a gynaecologist in the public health system. But she did take care to explain that they would likely counsel me to make sure it is what I want."

In many circles, not wanting children is high on profanity, and this was pretty much the attitude of the gynaecologist Mia was referred to. "Within a fortnight I received a letter rejecting my referral," Mia recalls. Despite her doctor's referral, which was objectively detailed and complete, Mia's surgery is yet to be approved.

Over in Wisconsin in the US, Tony's story is quite different. Now 31, Tony has been with his

wife for 12 years. The decision to opt out of having kids wasn't always clear-cut for the couple. "I think we both always knew that's what we wanted," says Tony. "But [we] struggled to really figure it out because of what everyone around us was saying. We designed a life together that we love and that includes a lot of travelling, focusing on our careers and spontaneous adventures."

Tony and his wife became clear that kids were not going to be part of what they wanted to focus on. "When we finally officially made the decision, we talked extensively over a long period of time about our options," he says. "We put tons of thought and consideration into this decision, much more than most realise."

Tony's wife had been on birth control for years and finally asked for a more permanent solution. Tony's sterilisation made the most sense to both of them. "When going to the appointment, I was expecting to have to convince [the doctor] to do the procedure, [so I] had talked extensively with my wife about what I would say and how I would handle that. I was absolutely shocked when [the doctor] agreed to do it without hesitation."

The doctor confirmed Tony's age, performed a physical, asked if he had any kids, and when Tony explained his decision, he was met with "okay, cool". Within a few weeks, the procedure was done.

"We have people tell us often that we will regret it, that we will change our minds," Tony says. "I noticed that [my wife] gets even more grief for it than I do. People are quicker to dismiss her when she makes a comment about not having children than they are me. My dad makes comments about carrying on my family name; some ask who will take care of me when I'm old; and people often assume that it will be a 'when' [not an 'if'] I change my mind."

Let's talk facts. Currently, three in four women go on to have babies, and while one in four won't, the number of households without children is expected to outnumber those with children in the next few decades. Let that sink in for a moment because that is going to throw pronatalism on its head, changing policies and the way we think about 'families'.

Increasingly, young people are considering their options, and given environmental degradation, the cost of living,



and the desire for a very different lifestyle from their parents' it's no longer a matter of "when" they'll have kids, but "if". This will disappoint politicians who, in the not-too-distant future, won't be able to rely on the "working families" soundbites, and growing "families" for economic growth, and how integral it is for women to have "one for herself, one for her partner and one for the country".

For women, a hysterectomy can solve a lot of issues that stop us from getting on with our lives: endometriosis, heavy or painful periods and accidental pregnancy. There are, of course, other procedures that will do the trick, but the information is hard to come by because nobody wants to talk about them – because "women are supposed to have babies".

For men, it tends to be simpler: they want to enjoy sex without the complexities of an accidental pregnancy. But a man proactively taking responsibility for contraception is a very modern concept!

Sean, 26, is in Zimbabwe and really isn't keen on being a dad. "I have been fantasising about a vasectomy since I was 17 years old and I got one on the 9th of April, 2020," he says. "I am never getting a reversal, not now, not ever. I won't change my mind for any girl."

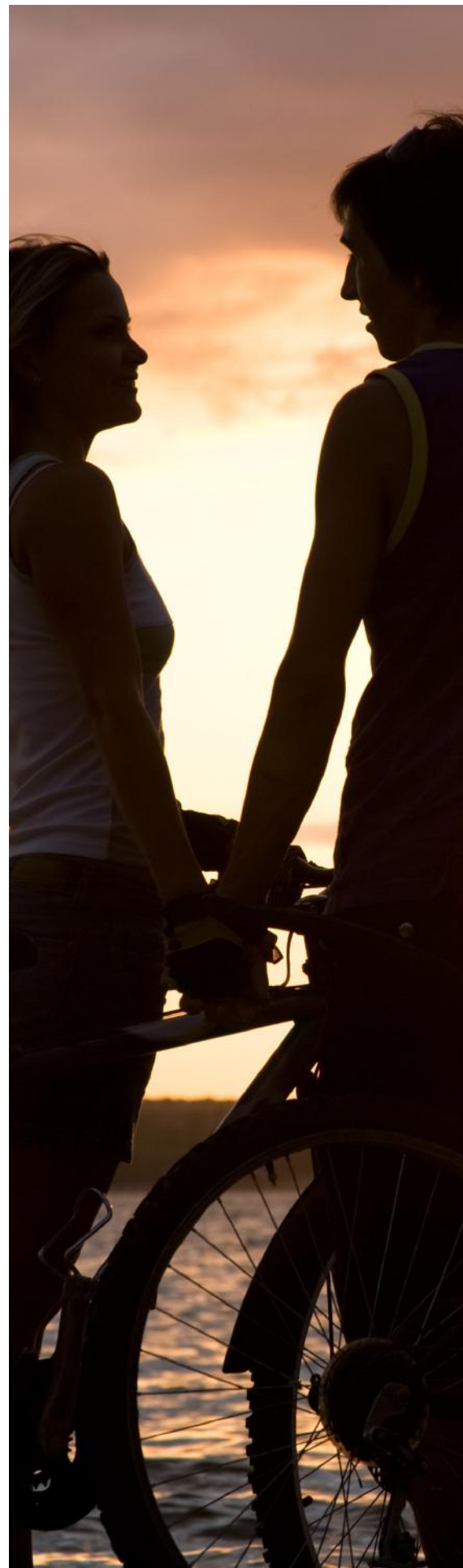
Sean's GP was far from helpful, literally getting up and walking away laughing after he told him what he wanted. He did eventually get his wish though, and after 20 minutes and \$150 it was done. Nothing that a bag of frozen peas couldn't manage.

For Sean, the decision was mired in cultural backlash. He says, "There have been times when I have been distraught by suggestions that the world is not overpopulated, that there is plenty of land so it was imperative that I join the baby-making brigade ... especially in African culture where a man's respect and adoration is measured against his virility."

In New Zealand, Samualla's experience was not quite so cut and dry. "I went to my GP at 18," he recalls. "[I was] denied because I was too young and might change my mind. I came back at 22, midway through a long-term relationship. I was denied because, A, my partner might change her mind and want kids (which she did, it turns out) and, B, I was too young. I came back at 25 following the end of that relationship and was given the same response again 'because I might meet someone who wants kids' and 'I might change my mind'."

"It's your body  
and your  
choice."

At 28, Samualla tried again but his doctor "didn't feel comfortable" providing a referral because he "might just be wrong". "My GP [made] it difficult and dismissed my opinions and desires based on his own feelings." At 30, he found another doctor and he was booked in after a five-minute chat with the referral surgeon.





"The procedure was easy - 35 minutes from the table to recovery - and I felt fine," Samualla says. "It was just so easy. The surgeon did clarify reversals were possible but it was very unlikely to succeed." Samualla drove himself home from the surgery.

Regarding his reasons for getting the snip, Samualla admits, "I intensely disliked the idea of having children [and] procreating [amid] an already overpopulated planet. I don't like kids or the idea that I need to give up all the things I enjoy."

There is a real sense in society that unless you have a child, you are not a fully realised adult. In Australia, Charlotte's initial investigations into having her tubes tied was met with laughter and comments like, "you're too young, you need to be in your 30s and have had at least three children".

After a few years, an offhand comment to her GP was met with "it's your body and your choice". With socialised medicine in Australia, the procedure was fully covered. "I still remember getting the call for my surgery date," Charlotte says. "I was at Movie World in line for the spooky coaster, one of my happiest moments. I had keyhole surgery [and] I was in and out of the hospital within four hours."

For some, convincing a doctor to take your wishes seriously is one matter, but asking the same from friends and family is another. For Charlotte, who has always been open about her decision to remain childfree, her family accepted the choice. "Friends completely understand too," she says. "Strangers or work colleagues probably have the hardest time understanding, and at times it can be exhausting as it feels as if they are demanding an explanation."

"I have come to accept that because it's not always seen as 'normal' for a woman to not want children that it may scare or make people feel uncomfortable, as maybe it's tapping into a fear they might have (dying alone, maybe) ... but I've accepted it's not me that they have the issue with, it's their own discomfort with my choice and I can't really change that."

"It used to anger me," Charlotte admits. "I'd get so angry and upset constantly defending myself and my choices. My favourite [comment] is, 'You're too young to make a decision like that, what if you change your mind' to which I now respond with, 'There are women having children who are younger than me but they're not [considered] too young to make that life-changing decision. What if they regret [it]? If I change my

mind, there are other ways to have children."

Now 28 and, ironically, studying midwifery, Charlotte is the first to admit that she and her partner of more than six years are selfish. "We like being able to travel whenever, move interstate just because, spoil our two dogs, wake up late if we want to and go out for dinner together on a whim," she says. "[I love] that leaving the house takes two seconds. I value my freedom, love my life the way it is and I feel fulfilled without a child."

Society, social media, movies, TV, even music tell us that to live a fulfilled life we need a purpose, and often that "the greatest purpose of all is having children". For some, maybe it is. But for those who have chosen to control their destiny and take their bodies into their own hands, shouldn't we congratulate them? Because - here's the rub - maybe they are too young, and maybe they will regret it, but who hasn't made a life-altering decision that they have regretted, such as maybe marrying the wrong person, smoking too many cigarettes or choosing an unsatisfying job/career, but we get on with it and live to see another day.

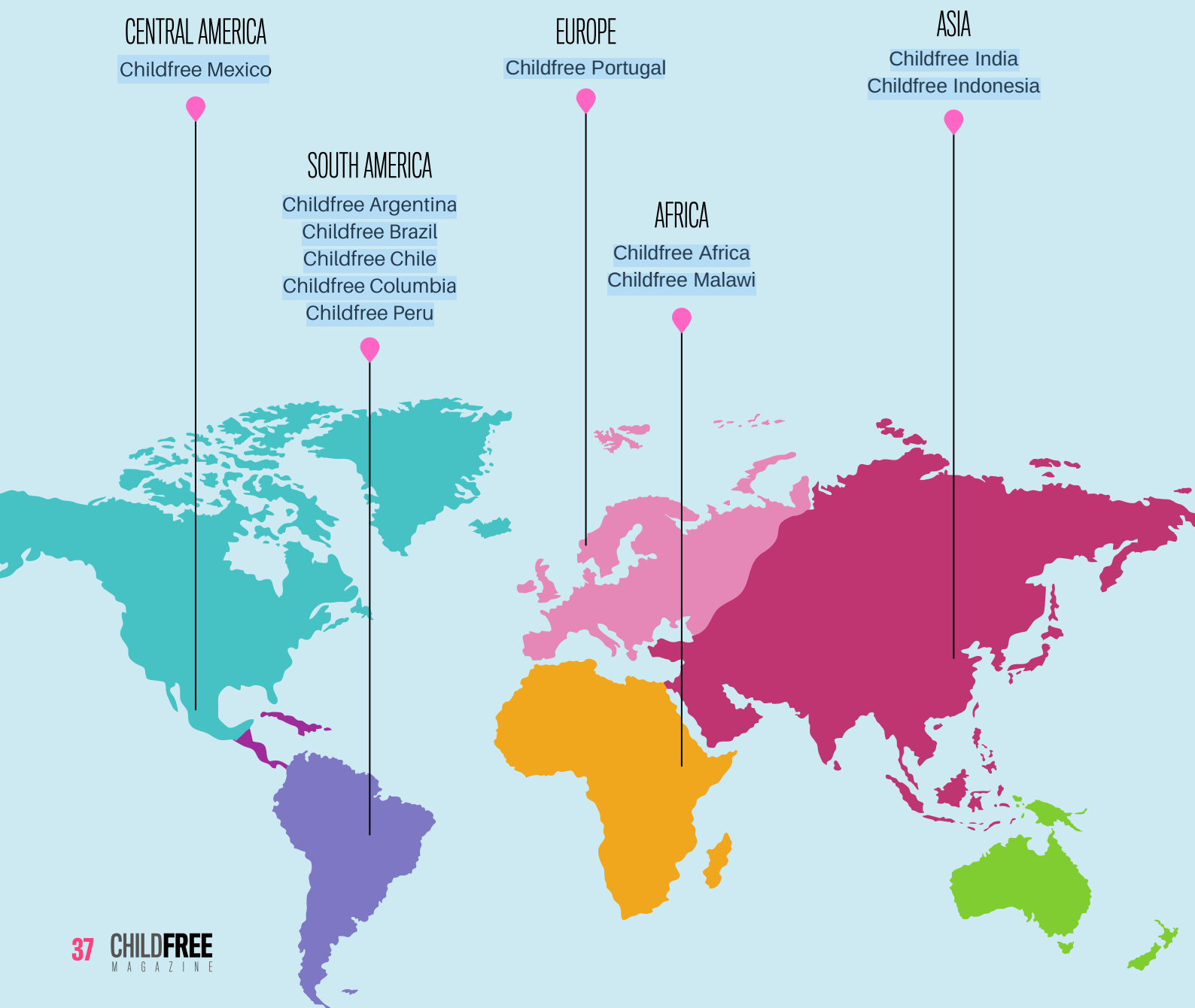


**Jo Vraca** is an award-winning author, coach, journalist, businesswoman, traveller, chef-in-training, one-time roller derby wanna-be, wife and fur mum. Jo is on a mission to get women talking, to create a supportive environment & community for childless and childfree women to share our stories and experiences.

# CHILDFREE ACROSS THE WORLD

**W**ith the childfree choice now a popular one across the globe, it's encouraging to see childfree groups popping up in traditional pronatalist countries. They are showing people in their country that being childfree is a valid life choice.

Shout out to these childfree groups across the globe – be brave, stay vocal and support your childfree community.





# WILL YOU DATE ME?

THE TOPIC OF KIDS CAN BE A TRICKY ONE WHEN YOU START DATING SOMEONE NEW, SO WE'VE PUT TOGETHER SOME TIPS, AND WE SHOW YOU WHERE YOU CAN FIND OTHER CHILDFREE PEOPLE ONLINE.

**TIP ONE:** Even though it can feel like an issue you should deal with later, the fact we still live in a society where wanting kids is the default position means you should talk about your desire not to have kids ASAP with your potential partner, so you don't hurt yourself or the other person down the track.

Talking about your childfree-by-choice stance on a first date might feel like a buzzkill, but the earlier the better - especially if you are in your 30s or late 20s - so you know you are both on the same page. You don't have to plan a "special talk" or make a big deal about it. Just make sure the information is known to your prospective partner.

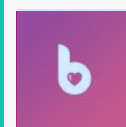
Whether or not to have a child/children is one of the most important decisions of a person's life, and it's usually a deal breaker in a relationship. Parenting and being childfree are incompatible lifestyles. Be honest with yourself and your romantic partner. Not doing so will lead to a strained and likely failed relationship down the road.

**TIP TWO:** Trying to talk/force someone into having a child - or not having a child for that matter - is not the way to go. Too many relationships are damaged when both parties aren't able to participate openly and equally in the decision regarding children.

**TIP THREE:** If you and your partner agree on the childfree option, take it a step further and test yourselves. Check out some childfree websites and spend time with other adults who are childfree. Alternatively, if you've decided that you both want to have a child, spend time with the children of friends and relatives to see and hear how it feels.

**TIP FOUR:** If your new partner tells you that they would like kids one day but still want to date you even though you don't, only you can decide what to do next. If someone's long-term goals don't match yours but you both still want to hang out, it might be that you simply have a casual or short-term relationship. In that case, though, it's better if you clarify this with them, as they may be hanging onto the idea that you'll change your mind.

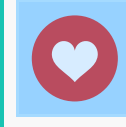
**Where to find other childfree people:** The good news is, there are now a number of apps and websites dedicated purely to childfree people.



**Biyü**  
Childfree Dating App



**CFdating**  
Childfree Dating Website



**Childfree Passions**  
Childfree Dating Website  
(US only)



**Childfree Singles**  
Childfree Dating Website  
(UK only)

For more info on childfree dating, check out this [article from Reddit](#).

Also look for childfree Facebook and Meetup groups in your local area. And don't forget to have fun along the way!

# WHO'S CHANGING THE WORLD?

WE SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT ON SOME GLOBAL CHARITIES THAT ARE MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE



## KIVA

An international nonprofit, founded in 2005 in San Francisco, with a mission to expand financial access to help underserved communities thrive through micro lending.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## ONE GIRL

Helping girls get back to school so they can educate themselves and have more opportunities and choices in life.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

An international and independent medical humanitarian organisation delivering emergency medical aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters, and exclusion from healthcare.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## GLOBAL GIVING

Connects nonprofits, donors, and companies in nearly every country in the world. They help fellow nonprofits access the funding, tools, training, and support they need to serve their communities.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## GLOBAL CITIZEN

A movement of engaged citizens who are using their collective voice to end extreme poverty by 2030.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## CHARITY TIP



Collect the toiletries from your travels and donate them to your local homeless shelter or women's refuge.



# READER SPOTLIGHT

# LINDSAY LEYSON

**Location:** Hampshire, United Kingdom  
**Age:** 27  
**Marital Status:** Married  
**Occupation:** Police Dispatcher



## Who inspires you:

It may be cliché, but my mum. She sacrificed a lot for us growing up and her unwavering love and support for all my life choices (especially being childfree) gives me the strength to keep going when things are tough.

## Hobbies:

I love to travel, crochet and cook (but obviously not at the same time).

## Fave toy growing up:

My Gameboy colour! I loved playing Pokemon the most.

## Why don't you want children?

For a multitude of reasons. My health (I'm physically disabled and struggle with mental illnesses), but mostly because I love the life I have with my husband and dog right now, and wouldn't want to change anything about it.

## Do your parents accept your decision?

They do! They were always fence-sitters and I'm not the first in my family to have no children.

## Most offensive thing someone has said to you about your choice?

I've been quite lucky and just get the usual "Oh, but you might change your mind". James

(husband) and I joked that 2019 was the 'year of the house and the spouse' as we got married and bought our first bungalow, and people kept asking us if 2020 would be the year of 'dogs and sprogs' to which we replied "I think you mean dogs, not sprogs".

## Your story

I've known since I was in my mid-late teens that having children was something I was really averse to. My mum remembers me reacting to my younger brother screaming as a baby by sitting on my bed with my hands over my ears asking someone to make him quiet!

I met my now-husband James on an archaeology excavation in 2015. When I first brought up not wanting children, he was a bit unsure about the decision for himself, but as time has gone on he's grown to love having our own space and time. I had a life-changing accident in 2018, causing me to become permanently disabled, and always having to walk with a stick. Due to the mental and physical impairments and how much more difficult getting about and travelling has become for us, it's only cemented our decision to remain childfree. It's difficult enough for me to walk our dog, let alone run after a child!



**MY GPS IS FIRMLY SET  
ON ONE DESTINATION-  
TO REMAIN **CHILDFREE****



# A CHILD OR THIS...?

We know the costs of having a child are massive but have you ever looked at the numbers? It's super scary when you look at the real cost then compare it to what you could buy with that money. Take a look for yourself.

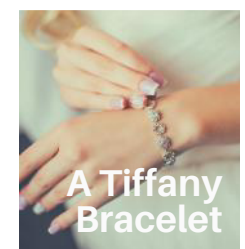
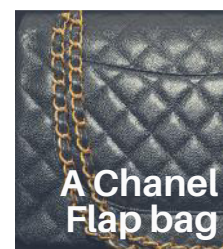
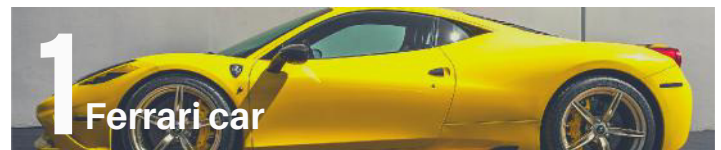
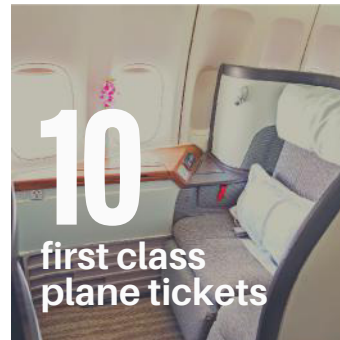
The environmental toll                      58.6 tonnes of  
of having one child ..... carbon per year

Average cost to raise  
a child to age 17 ..... \$233,000

Lost wages &  
retirement assets due  
to time out of career  
(based on 5 years out  
of workforce)  
..... \$642,000

Cost to sanity,  
freedom and  
happiness ..... Priceless

**TOTAL                      \$875,000**



# TUNING INTO THESE PODCASTS



## THE HONEST UPROAR

A podcast where modern childfree women share their life stories and they discuss topics important to the kidfree community.

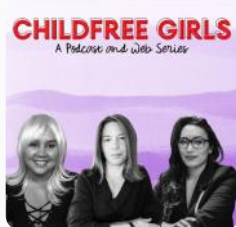
[LISTEN](#)



## UNRIPE

Juicy conversations of women at different stages of their childless or childfree lives, as well as professionals from the fields of psychology, grief counselling and life coaching.

[LISTEN](#)



## CHILDFREE GIRLS

A bold and incisive talk series for the happily childfree.

[LISTEN](#)



## CHILDPROOF

An Aussie comedy that pokes fun at relationships between friends with and without kids. (Its hilarious)

[LISTEN](#)



## WE ARE CHILDFREE

A recently launched podcast about childfree women and the lives they lead.

[LISTEN](#)





# COOKING FOR UNE OR DEUX

Written by Gwendolyn Smith

I don't know about you, but I get super frustrated going to the supermarket and seeing all the discounted 'specials' that are Buy 2 or 3 packets of.... It is totally geared for families with kids. After all, who can eat 3 loaves of bread in 2 days?

I think it's about time the focus was put back onto finding recipes for one of two people. Hope it inspires you to new culinary heights.

## Tips When Grocery Shopping for 1 or 2 People

- 1 Shop your pantry and refrigerator first.**  
Build meals around ingredients you have and need to use instead of starting from scratch every time.
- 2 Have a few weeknight go-to meals that you both enjoy.**  
Keep the staple ingredients for them on hand.
- 3 Learn how to use your freezer well**  
Don't be afraid to buy bulk meat deals and then break them down, freeze and use later.



# Vegan Sweet Potato & Black Bean Tacos

Serves 2

## Ingredients:

1-2 Cups Black Bean Salad  
(recipe below)  
1 Large Sweet Potato  
1 Avocado  
1/2 Lime, Freshly Juiced  
Hot Sauce  
Kosher Salt  
Black Pepper  
Granulated Garlic  
Cumin  
Chili Powder  
Corn Tortillas

## Procedure:

Peel and cube the sweet potato. In a bowl, toss sweet potatoes with enough olive oil to lightly coat + 1/2 tsp each of kosher salt, black pepper, cumin, and 1 tsp each of chili powder and granulated garlic. Toss until all cubes are well coated. Add in a single layer to a sheet pan and roast for 20 minutes at 425°F.

Slice the avocado and toss with freshly squeezed lime juice.

Wrap corn tortillas in foil, 3-4 per packet, and warm in the oven for about 3 minutes. Remove and build tacos as pictured, with a spoonful of sweet potatoes, a generous spoon of black bean salad and a few avocado slices. Top with hot sauce to taste.

Enjoy!

## Black Bean Salad

### Ingredients:

1 can Black Beans  
1/2 can Sweet Corn  
1/2 cup Diced Tomatoes  
1/4 cup Diced Scallions/Green Onions  
1/2 cup Freshly Chopped Cilantro  
1/4 cup Fresh Squeezed Lime Juice  
Olive Oil  
1/2 tsp Cumin  
Pinch of Cayenne  
Kosher Salt  
Freshly Ground Pepper

### Procedure:

Prepare the veggies:

- Drain and rinse the beans and corn.
- Dice the tomatoes.
- Chop the scallions and cilantro.

Make the dressing:

- In a large bowl, add 1/4 cup of olive oil, the juice of the lime, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp pepper, 1 tsp cumin and pinch of cayenne (skip if you're not a fan of heat).
- Whisk together.

Combine: Add the black beans, corn, tomatoes, scallions, and cilantro to the bowl. Stir to combine. Chill and keep in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.







## Irish Cream Crème Brûlée for 2

### Ingredients:

⅔ cup Heavy Cream  
 2 tbs Sugar  
 2 Egg Yolks  
 ¼ tsp Vanilla Extract  
 1 tbs Irish Cream liqueur  
 Coarse Sugar

### Procedure:

Preheat the oven to 300 F (150 C).

Make the *bain marie*. Place 2 ramekins in a small roasting pan, deep enough that you'll be able to add hot water to the pan and it will come ½ way up the ramekins. You may want to place a folded strip of parchment or foil under each ramekin (ends sticking out of the water) so you can easily lift out the ramekins

later. Set a tea kettle full of water to boil, heat and then set aside.

In a small saucepan, over medium heat, heat the cream. Cook until very hot but not boiling.

In a separate, heat proof bowl whisk the egg yolks and 2 tbs sugar.

Slowly add the hot cream to the eggs and sugar, whisking it in a couple tablespoons at a time until incorporated. (Be careful to add the first half slowly or you will curdle the eggs). Once incorporated, add the vanilla and Irish Cream liqueur and stir to combine.

Divide the custard between the two ramekins. Fill the roasting pan with the boiling water from the tea kettle until it comes halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Carefully transfer the *bain marie* to the oven and bake

for 50-60 minutes until the custard has set and giggles just slightly in the middle.

Remove from the oven and using hot pads, carefully remove the ramekins to cool on a wire rack. After about an hour, cover and refrigerate until cold. The custard can remain refrigerated until ready to serve and will keep for several days.

When ready to enjoy, unwrap and sprinkle 1-2 tsp of coarse sugar on top of the custard and shake gently to distribute evenly. Using a small hand torch, melt the sugar by quickly moving the flame over the top of the custard until it turns slightly brown.

Alternatively, brown underneath a broiler. This may take 5-10 minutes. Rotate occasionally so they brown evenly, watching carefully that the sugar doesn't burn.



**Gwendolyn Smith**, founder of *The Wandering Hearth*, an ad-free food blog designed to help you overcome stress in the kitchen, has been happily married and childfree by choice for 11 years.

# CHILDFREE PRODUCTS WE HEART

- 1 "I Don't Have Kids, I Have Fun" T-shirt
- 2 Negativity - Pregnancy Test Water Bottle
- 3 No Kids Club Pin Badge
- 4 Enjoy Childfree Living Long-Sleeve Tee
- 5 "My Hands Were Made for Diamonds, Not Diapers" T-Shirt
- 6 Childfree Vinyl Sticker Pack
- 7 Nope Coffee Mug







STRONG



# BEHIND THE SCREENS

Written by Maxine Trump

FILMMAKER MAXINE TRUMP REVEALS THE JOURNEY BEHIND HER LATEST DOCUMENTARY FILM 'TO KID OR NOT TO KID' AND THE GROWING NUMBER OF CHILDFREE STORY LINES ON SCREEN

**T**he decision of whether to have children or not affects nearly everyone on Earth. That means more than 7.5 billion people - a huge number! So why, in 2013, when I started filming 'To Kid or Not To Kid' was there nothing in society that reflected the personal reproductive choice I wanted to make? I started to feel this great burden - some may call it responsibility - to answer the question: why can't we talk about not having kids?





Thankfully, after much research, I found one short documentary that had interviewed couples. It didn't seem to have gone on TV, and felt a little like a couples' therapy session, but it was something. It also had an accompanying website: hallelujah! And there were some books, not many, but they were so helpful: Laura Carroll's, Elinor Burkett's, Ellen Peck's... Peck's was from the 1960s!

One of the few TV shows to ever show a childfree character was HBO's famous 'Sex and the City'. It featured women with and without children all getting along well. We all remember childfree Samantha Jones by how much fun she had! But 'Sex and the City' finished in 2004 - 17 years ago!

So, where did I see myself on screen, if at all? The nagging responsibility I felt to make something just wouldn't let go. As you may know, making films is bloody expensive. You put all your blood, sweat and tears into it and you're often left in debt. But making films was one of the reasons I didn't want children. I chose a life of lowered responsibility with few ties, so that I could throw all my time into being creative. So how could I not do this?

Halfway through my filmmaking, in 2015, I was delighted to hear of a film that might be for me: Noah Baumbach's 'While We're Young'. Yes, it centered on a couple who are childfree (Naomi Watts and Ben Stiller), but I felt this older couple looked desperate trying to hang out with a younger couple. It left me with a bitter aftertaste.

Making sure I impacted an



*Maxine Trump (right) interviews Alysia Reiner.*

audience was important to me. If I needed 'To Kid or Not to Kid' I thought there must be others who did too. I also knew I had to be braver than a dry, unemotional documentary with a host interviewing one character after another, as the film wouldn't connect this way.

Very early on in the process I knew how I was going to open the film, which is rare, as that's usually the last scene to be finalised. I knew I was going to pull up my shirt and show a crosshatch of scars from the gynaecological surgeries I'd had when I was young. I needed to tell the audience that this film is going to concentrate on this part of our body, it's going to be raw and intensely personal. Yes, we're talking wombs here: 51 per cent of most populations are born with one, and 20-25 per cent of us may not ever use it. And you know what? That's okay.

As I was nearing final filming in 2017 and entering the long editing stage, a fiction feature film called 'Egg' came out. I was super excited, as it features some of my favourite actresses - Christina Hendricks and Alysia Reiner - and they were playing characters whose relationship is threatened when they make different reproductive decisions.

In an interesting parallel, Hendricks and Reiner - like their 'Egg' characters - have also made very different reproductive choices. Reiner is a mum, while Hendricks is childfree (there was a huge amount of press coverage when she "came out" about it in 2014). I managed to meet Reiner for an interview in New York. She was also a producer on the film and wholeheartedly believes in spotlighting these difficult subjects. "This subject matter hadn't been explored, and that's what attracted me," Reiner said. Preach sister!

Reiner's mission statement for making the film was that every human should have the courage and curiosity to find and live their own truth. Although I love that, I still didn't recognise myself in the characters. (That said, I discussed the film with one of my "childless" friends and she loved it.) I just wish there had been a more nuanced portrayal of Reiner's childfree character, as opposed to one simply referred to as "a witch" who doesn't hesitate to be hateful to "breeders." Childfree people have already heard these tropes many times. In 'To Kid or Not to Kid' my mission was to break up these myths at full force.

It made me even more certain I wanted to make a difference. I wanted people to talk about my film, and I wanted to make “childfree” a term that people could start to understand. To be honest, it wasn’t a term I really understood when I first started making the film. I mistakenly used to call myself childless. The evolution I go through as a character in the film is a very real transformation. I made the film to help solidify my own identity, to find a way to be loud and proud about being childfree, and to help others in the same way I needed help. I wanted the audience to finally see themselves reflected.

People have told me they’ve laughed and cried and laughed again watching my film. I wanted people to enjoy it, feel awakened by it and not feel preached at but recognised. I also wanted a film that parents could share with their childfree friends, to say “I see you.” And that is exactly what has happened. I’ve had amazing messages from the childfree, and parents have been a surprising audience too.

Something great happened in the years since I began making the film. Although it started slowly, there were soon more and more articles on the subject and Facebook sites springing up - it felt like an awakening! It was an amazing time to add the first English-language feature film to what felt like the burgeoning of a movement.

And the current TV landscape now has some strong female characters without children, such as Issa Rae’s character Issa Dee in HBO’s ‘Insecure’ and Sandra Oh’s Eve in the BBC’s ‘Killing Eve’. In real life, Oh is childfree too. Same for Alison Brie’s Ruth in Netflix’s fabulous series ‘Glow’. The last season of ‘This is Us’ featured Kevin with a childfree girlfriend named Zoe (although they eventually split up because of this). At least she didn’t change her mind, which we’ve seen in other series’ storylines.

And I just finished watching Norwegian Netflix series ‘Home for Christmas’, which covers a childfree storyline. And thank

goodness for all the childfree comedians, TV performers and hosts, such as Oprah Winfrey, Betty White, Sarah Silverman, Ellen DeGeneres, Margaret Cho and more. They inspired me when there truly was nothing out there.

And now that ‘To Kid or Not to Kid’ is out, a huge goal for the film has been realised. We hit the mainstream with a flood of press, and when I went on ‘Today’ (the big morning TV show in the US) in February 2020, one of the co-hosts turned to the other and said, “We really should do more segments on the childfree”. Hallelujah!

Major newspapers, TV segments, radio interviews and more than 100 articles later, it’s thrilling, seriously amazing! But (and it’s a shame to have to have a “but” here) we still have some ways to go to make a difference in how we’re treated. Just this week, I re-interviewed Megan Turner from ‘To Kid or Not to Kid’, and five years on she’s still desperately trying to get sterilisation! She has had a tragic



Maxine Trump (second from right) on NBC’s ‘Today’ show.



time while waiting, and it's a painful reminder of how much is still left to do. (You can see her update and more in our deluxe special on the website)

Not only is Megan in my heart, but so are women who aren't as privileged as I am to be able to make a decision - the women in countries where they risk being cast out of society for not having children and being labelled "a witch" or worse. And I feel for the women in countries where governments crank up the pressure to "do it for your nation".

I am delighted there are more childfree films coming out, too. A French one was recently released, an American one is coming out soon, and I know Spanish and Russian films are in the works. But in every language we need more TV shows and more fiction films and fiction books. I sincerely hope other filmmakers - from communities and experiences outside of mine - make their own childfree movies. The reasons to not have children are so varied and individual that I know I'll be waiting to hear your story. And now I can hope they show up in Tanya's new 'Childfree' magazine too! Another first for the childfree community, way to go Tanya!

**'To Kid or Not to Kid' is available now to screen through the website [tokidornottokid.com](http://tokidornottokid.com), and will launch on Amazon Prime Australia in spring 2021.**



## ABOUT MAXINE TRUMP

*Maxine has worked as a documentary director since 2008 for clients such as Sundance, TNT, BBC, TLC, Discovery, PBS etc. Her first documentary feature film 'Musicwood' was a New York Times Critics' pick, festival award winner and played on TV and in theaters around the world. 'To Kid Or Not To Kid?' is now on worldwide release. Maxine is a Sundance Documentary instructor and author of the book 'The Documentary Filmmaker's Roadmap' published by Routledge. She lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband and inquisitive cat.*



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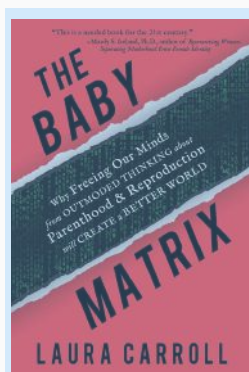
## BOOKS

# WHAT WE'RE READING

WHO DOESN'T LOVE A GOOD BOOK? THESE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVES TO GET YOUR CHILDFREE FIX. HAPPY READING!



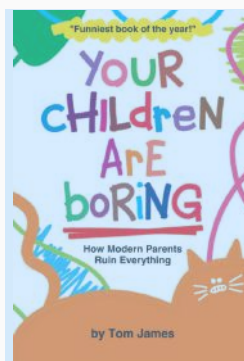
### NON-FICTION



**The Baby Matrix**  
by Laura Carroll



**What?! You Don't Want Children?**  
by Marcia Drut-Davis



**Your Children are Boring**  
by Tom James

### FICTION



**The Childfree Society Club**  
by Jaclyn Jaeger



# LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOYS

WHY IS THE CHILDFREE CONVERSATION SO DIFFERENT FOR GUYS?

Written by Tanya Williams

AUTHOR TANYA WILLIAMS INVESTIGATES.

**S**o, you have kids, yeah?" How many events, parties or workplaces have you been to in your lifetime where you've heard this question - often as one of the first - from someone you've just met? Countless times I'm sure.

It's such a personal question and really no one's business, yet it's somehow deemed an acceptable one to ask a total stranger right after the ever-safe weather chat. It feels like something of a qualifier question, to determine if you're a relevant and acceptable enough person to be talking to.

I have never understood why the topic is raised so quickly by people, and what baffles me even further is why the proceeding questions are often vastly different for men and women. Do a Google search and most articles and media on the topic of being childfree are firmly directed at women. And while we know that close to one in four females are choosing not to have children in OECD countries, finding relevant stats for males is decidedly difficult. This doesn't help dilute the feeling that society wants to put all the blame and pressure regarding children on us gals.

"Blokes are very different from women. We ask the question, accept it, then move on. That's all that is needed."



The stats I could find were limited and rather dated. In a 2001 study of Australians, 13 per cent of men aged 45-59 were childless, which was higher than the rate among similarly aged women (10 per cent). (Today - two decades on - the percentages in Australia for both sexes are no doubt much higher.)

More recently, in the US, the 2014 Census Bureau found that just under 25 per cent of men between ages 40 and 50 are childless. In European countries, there is a substantial share of highly educated men aged 45-49 remaining childless: between 20 to 25 per cent in countries including the UK, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Finland, according to reports from 2015.

The numbers show that there are plenty of men and women who are childfree or childless across the world, but why is the stigma and the conversation so different between the sexes?

Back in 2002, a paper by Florida University titled 'I Don't Want Any Children... Ever' claimed that there are more stigmas related to females who don't want to enter parenthood than there are for males, as "motherhood is seen as a sign of achievement and femininity, while a man's accomplishments are viewed through his income and career".

Traditionally, childfree men were considered playboys or players and received hero worship from their peers. Among these were

actors John Cusack and George Clooney (pre Amal in 2014), who were long revered for their life choices.

Such a blatant double standard is surely frowned upon in a time when everything and everyone is expected to be equal. Parenting has undergone a reinvention in the past few years and - for many men - fatherhood is no longer an obligation, it's a lifestyle choice or a goal.

When I was writing my book, 'A Childfree Happily Ever After', I asked my husband Shayne, 52, about the conversations he has had with other blokes regarding children. He said that they usually asked about it when you first started a job, but when he said that we were 'childfree by choice' that was always the end of the conversation. He was never hassled about his decision and it wasn't raised again.

"Blokes are very different from women," he explained. "We ask the question, accept it, then move on. That's all that is needed."

I asked some more men about their experiences and found varying responses. Sean, 22, from Zimbabwe, believes most people have the assumption that all men want to be fathers. "After careful personal evaluation, thought and self-introspection, I decided at the age of 22 that children weren't worth the hassle," he said. "I love my personal time, money and autonomy. People think you will change your mind, or that one day you will meet the woman of your dreams and you will be itching to make her barefoot and pregnant. People think I am going through a phase, but little do they know I have made it permanent."



"When you tell other guys that you do not want kids, they immediately look stunned, as if they didn't know there was another life that was possible without kids," Sean continues. "I think most men have kids because their friends also have kids, so they don't want to feel left behind when they have beers at the pub."

Jared, 34, from Sioux Falls in the US, says, "I don't believe I am judged by any guys [for not wanting kids]. It's the women I get asked by the most, like my grandma, female co-workers and past women I have gone out with. I tell ladies on our first date that I don't want any kids. I get to see their reactions ... It can be fun seeing what they say next!"

Kirk, 29, from Denver in the US, says that his mum consistently tells him that he would be a great dad. "I've heard this from other family members, my therapist

and female friends," he adds. "I can't remember any man ever telling me I would be a great dad. I have encountered more envy and curiosity from men regarding being childfree. I have felt judged by women, especially older women and women with children ... [who] are usually offended that I do not want children. They feel like I am rejecting their lifestyle."

It's interesting to hear that so much of the judgement blokes hear is from women. Kirk, who recently had a vasectomy, continues, "Surprisingly, men with kids have never asked if I'll regret getting a vasectomy. They usually seem envious and make jokes about wishing they did that. The conversations seem to differ depending on who I'm talking to though. Men without children sometimes ask if I'll regret my vasectomy. Women without children seem relieved when I tell them I've had a

vasectomy. I think a lot of women would not have to endure hormonal birth control if more men had vasectomies. It would take that burden away."

Lucas, 39, from Texas in the US, has also had a vasectomy. "I've had close friends who knew I got a vasectomy tell me 'there's still time!' in terms of having kids. They knew me and my wife were firmly childfree by choice and we still got those statements! It's bizarre to me. It just goes to show that pronatalism is strong in society - even one as 'open' as America.

"I wish I had \$5 for every time I've heard 'but you'd be a great Dad' and [then] try to change your mind," Lucas continues. "There's a lot of other tropes they use to try to convince you to change your mind ... You know the 'Childfree Bingo Cards'? Yeah, even as a male, I've had every single one of them. I know







it's much harder for women to be childfree, but the male perspective isn't a cakewalk either."

For Lucas, those early conversations with his mates related to the fact that because they were all having kids, they couldn't understand why he would want to live a life without them. "We had some good open conversations about it, and they learned that what they want and what I want are completely different," he says. "But we both respect each other's choices and continue to have terrific friendships.

"I think part of it was that they wanted me to be part of 'the dad pack', so I could be going

through the same experiences with them and have play dates and stuff like that," Lucas continues. "But I think they really like what I bring to the table [now] ... a friendship that allows them to get out of 'dad mode' for maybe just a little bit ... [They aren't] envious of my childfree life, because they wanted kids in their family, but what they might be envious of is the freedom I get to enjoy and that I can spend all of my money on my hobbies - like my car pursuits. Now that I'm close to 40 and it's been well established, my childfree choice doesn't come up all that often anymore in our conversations."

A whole new generation of men are proudly waving the childfree flag. English comedian Ricky

Gervais and American actors Jon Hamm and Leonardo DiCaprio are celebrated among their peers. Yet celebrity childfree women are often judged or pitied, which is something actress Jennifer Aniston has raised publicly. And the mums are the worst offenders in this conversation. It's like a club you are expected to belong to.

The narratives for childfree/childless women can be awful, but they are changing, because we are talking and writing about them more. The reasons for men and women not wanting to have kids isn't that different, so it's time the conversations and judgement stopped being different too.



**Tanya Williams** is author of #1 Amazon Best Seller *Childfree Happily Ever After* and founder of *Childfree Magazine*. Her mission is to change the dialogue in society from judgement and criticism to support and acceptance for all childfree people.

# READER SPOTLIGHT

# JARED HANSEN

**Location:** Sioux Falls, South Dakota USA  
**Age:** 34  
**Marital Status:** Single  
**Occupation:** CDL Driver

## Who inspires you:

Tony Robbins, he lives life with passion. I have listened to his CDs and read books of his and what he talks about makes sense.

## Hobbies:

Sports, history, astronomy, fitness, games.

## Fave toy growing up:

I was always on the basketball court shooting the basketball. I also loved Ninja Turtle action figures.

## Why don't you want children?

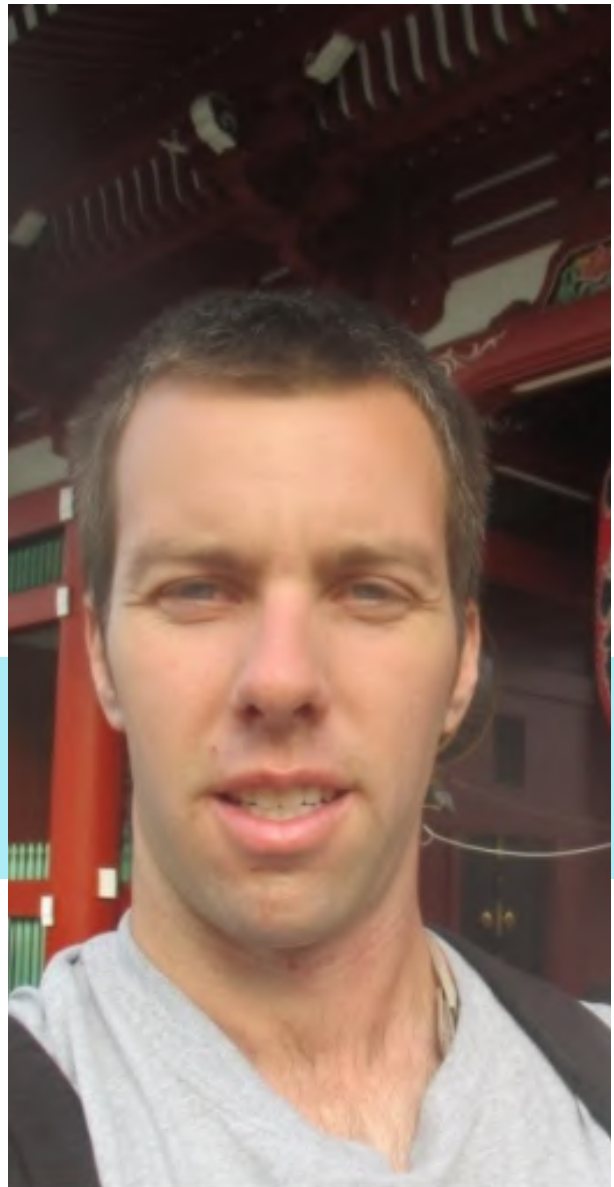
The costs that come with children. I see the pattern that many people become miserable after having kids.

## Do your parents accept your decision?

My mum has been supportive. My dad wanted me to pass on the Hansen name which was a very stupid reason to have kids for.

## Most offensive thing someone has said to you about your choice?

"You will make a great dad." But the absolute worst is when women ask if I can reverse my vasectomy so they can have my children.



## Your story

I grew up seeing my mum slave at work to provide for my sister and me. I wanted to go a different path and have the most fun I can have on this earth. Music is a huge part of my life. I would travel 600 miles round trip to attend concerts and music events. Then travelling became my passion. I would travel to new places by myself because no one wanted to join me. I can't wait forever for someone to be there with me. I have travelled to the Caribbean, Canada, Mexico, England, Japan. I have had a blessed life so far.

I have goals that I aim for and I try to go after those dreams. Right now I am passionate about my Facebook group, Best Childfree Life Possible, and the new Childfree Conference coming this summer 2021! I want to bring childfree people together as one international movement.





# MY SO-CALLED SELFISH LIFE

A DOCUMENTARY BY THERESE SHECHTER, PRESENTED BY TRIXIE FILMS

**I**n a world filled with a pronatalist agenda, where motherhood is put on a pedestal and both women and men are supposed to have or want to have children, it is refreshing and exciting to see projects that explore this issue on our screens.

As we know Hollywood and mainstream media is all about pushing the “mummy agenda”. With close to 1 in 4 women in OECD countries now choosing to not have children the rise of the ‘childfree movement’ paves the way for films to explore and choice that defies the deeply embedded roots that are the very fabric of our society.

**'My So-Called Selfish Life'** is an in-progress documentary feature film that will do just that. Award-

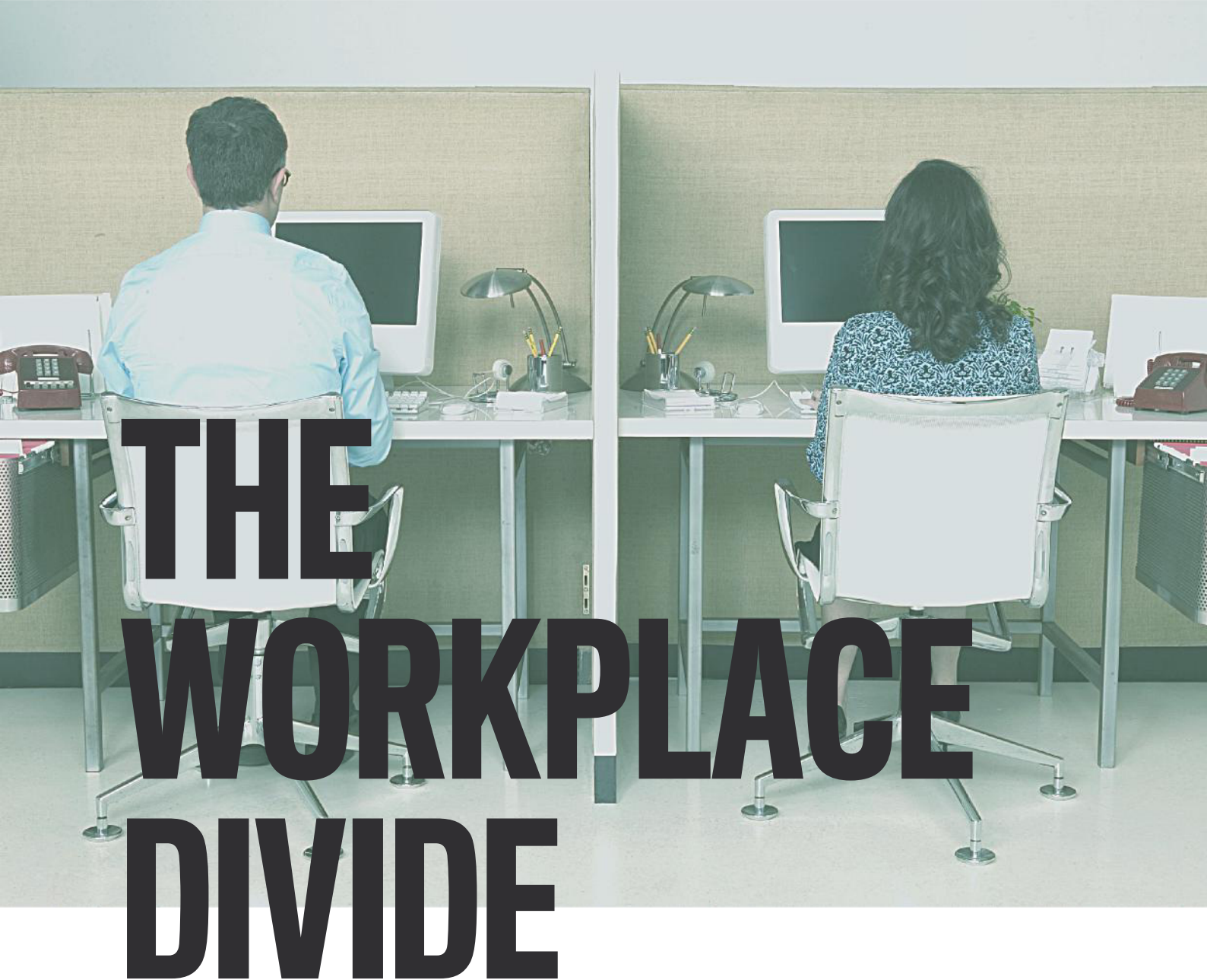
winning filmmaker, author and activist Therese Shechter ('How to Lose Your Virginity', 'I Was a Teenage Feminist') deploys her characteristic wit and keen intellect to confront the entrenched assumption that motherhood is not only a biological imperative but the defining measure of womanhood.

Drawing on interviews with women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, a vivid tour through pop culture's obsession with motherhood (or the rejection of it) and Shechter's own reckoning with her choice to remain childfree, 'My So-Called Selfish Life' questions a cultural narrative so ingrained in the fabric of society that we're no longer aware of how it shapes our lives and identities.

Titled after the very myth it seeks to dismantle, 'My So-Called Selfish Life' challenges the all-too-prevalent idea that motherhood is not just what every woman wants, but that women who choose not to raise children are selfish, unwomanly, unnatural or even mentally ill. From a childfree Brooklyn rapper who hopes to grow old like The Golden Girls, to a sociologist teaching Reproductive Justice at a Southern U.S. college, to a midwestern woman whose unsuccessful fertility treatments led to a total life transformation, the film reveals both the rich lives of renegade women who have chosen to say no to motherhood—and the forces that marginalize them in society.

**'My So-Called Selfish Life'** follows Shechter as she pulls back the curtain on “pronatalism,” the cultural, economic, and historical forces leading us to believe motherhood is the most natural and necessary choice for every woman. The film explores an array of pressing, timely issues tied to motherhood and reproduction that are as personal as they are political: the ongoing erosion of reproductive rights; the effect of population growth on the environment; and the racial undertones of panic around reduced birth rates, ultimately sparking a debate about who's really in control of women's identities and bodies while reframing the conversation about what being a woman really means.

**Add this to your  
MUST WATCH list  
when it launches.  
Expected Launch  
Date: 2021**



# THE WORKPLACE DIVIDE

WORK POLICIES THAT ARE PRONATALIST, PATRIARCHAL AND TRADITIONAL ARE RENDERING THE CHILDLESS/CHILDFREE INVISIBLE, AND DO NOT PRIORITISE EVERYONE'S NEEDS EQUALLY, SAYS JO VRACA.

Written by Jo Vraca

**I**n August last year, when Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff announced that employees could continue to work from home until August 2021 if they wished, there was applause all round. After all, work from home no longer means we have it easy: there's no more water-cooler chat or kitchen banter, and household dishwashers have been taking a beating as we make more lunches at home. Corporate employees now know

that working from home is not quite the "bludge" we used to think it would be.

Also popular for Salesforce's parents is the generous six weeks of paid leave extended to them in 2021. If you don't have kids, aww, too bad! This was a real slap in the face to the company's childless/childfree employees at a time that has seen more loneliness and depression than ever. And those

There is a massive blind spot in the workplace, and this systemic discrimination encourages a divide between the childless/childfree and parents.



at the very bottom of the ladder? Singles. Not only have they suffered loneliness from stay-at-home orders, but they are usually 100 per cent responsible for their lives, from cooking and cleaning to managing their health and wellbeing.

LinkedIn responded on the Salesforce announcement, saying that it's discriminatory against childless/childfree staff. But it did not go so far as to admonish the company and, in fact, agreed it was a worthy decision.

While the events of 2020 brought attention to "working parents" with home schooling or no childcare, those who have been brushed aside are the rest: the childless/childfree, regardless of circumstances, who have heard the rhetoric and picked up the slack at the same time. But do not be fooled into thinking this is purely a Covid issue. Discrimination against childless/childfree employees is not new.

"I worked for a company when I was 21 and everyone else was 25+ with children or married with the intent to conceive," remembers Chelsea\*, "I remember fainting at work due to a serious health condition and my boss said, 'eat some chips; you'll be right'. The second anyone got morning sickness it was 'go straight home'."

The assumption from employers (and CEOs such as Benioff - a father-of-two) is that the childless/childfree have all the free time in the world and no real stress, so are best-positioned to help out wherever needed. We may not have school pickups,

but we may have ageing parents to take care of or, shock horror, we may have decided to go back to school, or perhaps we have an illness we need to get to the doctor for or, actually, it's nobody's business why we don't want to pick up the slack for our colleagues who are parents.

Jules\* agrees. "I had a boss who always thought being a single parent was more difficult to manage than my chronic illness and pushed a lot of responsibility on me, including travel, because she just didn't respect that my needs for down-time and reduced stress were equal to or greater than hers."

More than a few people I spoke with have been told, to their face, that they get last pick of time off because staff who are parents want to take those dates off with their kids for school holidays. Which sounds fair, right? Ronnie\* disagrees. "My partner is a mechanic and I'm a teacher," she says. "He can never take leave during school holidays, as

all of the workers with children get preference. This means it's very rare for us to have extended time off together, as obviously those are the only times I can take off work."

Chelsea, who also works in education, says, "I see inequality every day around this subject. As a shift worker I am expected to pick up shifts and cover the other parents when they are unable to work because 'what do I have to worry about'? I have had leave rejected by management at my previous position because the dates I applied for were during school holidays. I have worked most Christmases in some form for the past 10 years as I don't have children, so apparently spending time with my family doesn't matter."

Shelley\* remembers her time in the Australian Government where staff with children were discouraged from working overtime and it was accepted they would take a lot of time off and often go home early. "One of





my friends who is childfree used to take lots of time off, leave that she had saved up over a 20-year career, to go on long hikes and short trips away and the whole office always complained that she took too much time off," she says. "There were definitely no complaints when a mum took time off to volunteer on school trips. It's just far more accepted that children are a legitimate excuse."

The experiences of men and women varied little as employers and other staff assume that without a "family", childless/childfree staff would not need to take time off over school holidays because they didn't have anyone to look after, as though children are the only people who need care.

Mike\* admits, "In the past, I have experienced the assumption that I won't want Christmas off as I didn't have kids. There is also the issue of equality. Some can take maternity/paternity leave, but for those who are childless/childfree, do they get considered for some kind of mental [health] leave? At one workplace, parents were paid more for the same role as those without children because "they

had greater costs".

And before anyone says that the childless/childfree are just whinging, we are mostly in agreement about one matter: when in an equitable workplace, people will gladly pick up the slack when somebody has to take time off work to look after their health or the health of a loved one, or even to take a (much needed) holiday or, yes, to go to the school play. But when the workplace so evidently discriminates against the childless/childfree, that willingness to help out tends to vanish.

"A woman I know, who is a mother, even bragged about being able to take her kids to work and leave them with colleagues when she went to meetings," says Heather\*. "The level of entitlement is a bitter pill."

For some, it is these situations that make working from home far more appealing in the long run. "I must say, I don't miss the office," admits Myra\*. "I would find it triggering, people bringing their kids to the workplace, or having lots of conversations about kids. It would make me

feel low and often dread going into work. Working from home has helped my mental health."

We all saw that video from 2017 that went viral of the "BBC dad", as Professor Robert Kelly has come to be known. The associate professor of political science at Pusan National University in South Korea, was speaking live from his home office when his kids barged in, followed by a panic-stricken mother, who quickly whisked them away. The video went viral again this year as news outlets reviewed it "in solidarity" with the work-from-home parents of 2020. These days, however, nobody seems to bother apologising for their kids' interruptions during a Zoom meeting, instead opening the conversation to a parade of war stories about home schooling.

Myra agrees. "There is no escape from it," she says. "There was one occasion where I was in a multiagency video meeting and the chairperson's son came home from school and she said, 'come and say hello to everyone'. I don't even know this woman!"



While Amy\* is now self-employed, she remembers the meetings that turned to social conversations. "It always reverts to the children," she says. "I still feel very uncomfortable and I end up smiling politely (but secretly wishing the ground would swallow me up)." Amy is not childfree by choice and these triggering moments continue to affect her confidence.

Nobody is denying that trying to work full time, whether from home or not, while managing parental duties must be a hard prospect, but there is a massive blind spot in the workplace, and this systemic discrimination encourages a divide between the childless/childfree and parents. Work policies that are pronatalist, patriarchal and traditional are rendering the childless/childfree invisible, and do not prioritise everyone's needs. So, is it up to employees to encourage conversation around real inclusion?

As a manager, Gloria\* felt there was a lot of judgement that she did not have kids. "[They assumed] that I was cold and wouldn't understand, particularly when I moved into working in healthcare with middle-aged women who were former nurses and all had kids," she recalls. "At

Christmas, it was expected that I would work on call over those periods. And when kids had school plays or end-of-year functions, everyone would leave early and that was fine. Yet if I wanted to support my best friend who was performing at the opera house for the first time and needed to leave early, that was seen as selfish."

As for my situation? I'm lucky. Many years ago, after a few years of failed IVF, I decided I did not need to work a five-day week in my publishing job. My parents and husband were healthy. I was not a carer. However, my mental health was failing. Lucky for me, my manager was a childless woman and understood my needs. I was able to drop back to four days, although nobody had to pick up the slack, I just worked harder on the days I was in.

At another corporate job, this time at Lonely Planet in Melbourne, all employees had flexi time - not just parents. There was greater engagement and teams were not separated by the visible thread between "them" and "us" because most people want to do the right thing when they are treated equally and with respect.

Marcella\* works in HR and recognises, firsthand, that change is needed. "It's a long, hard slog to try to shift the dial on this issue," she says. "Everything needs to change in the workplace so that employees without children are appropriately factored into workplace policies and practices. The systemic discrimination that goes on unfettered around this issue needs to be stopped."

There's no doubt that greater flexibility needs to be extended to all employees, without the assumption that staff without children simply do not need as much time off, or that their commitments are not equal in value to those of their colleagues with kids. We all have lives, commitments and choices that we have made to, say, go back to university while working a full-time job, or to volunteer over the holidays at a food bank, or sporting obligations, cooking the biggest lunch Christmas has ever seen, or whatever makes us who we are as connected individuals with rich lives.

Of course, if you want to create a divided workplace, take a leaf out of Salesforce's book. Let's see how that experiment goes down in 2021 and beyond.

**\* Names have been changed to protect identity**



**Jo Vraca** is an award-winning author, coach, journalist, businesswoman, traveller, chef-in-training, one-time roller derby wanna-be, wife and fur mum. Jo is on a mission to get women talking, to create a supportive environment & community for childless and childfree women to share our stories and experiences.



# CHILDFREE TRAVEL

## TAKE ME THERE



**Excellence Oyster Bay**  
Montego Bay, Jamaica



**Excellence Riviera Cancun**  
Cancun, Mexico




**Lizard Island Resort**  
QLD, Australia





 **Windermere Boutique Hotel**  
The Lake District, Great Britain



 **Sparkling Hill Resort**  
British Columbia, Canada



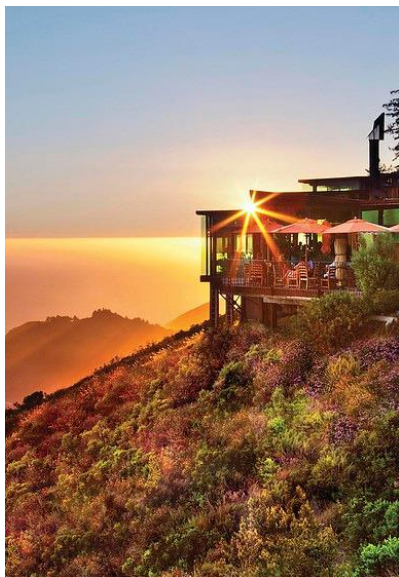
 **Post Hotel Achenkirch**  
Tyrol, Austria



 **Layana Resort**  
Krabi, Thailand




 **Anantara Medjumbe Island Resort**  
Mozambique



 **Post Ranch Inn**  
California, USA



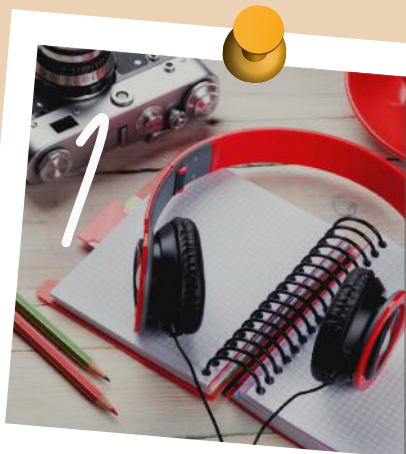
 **Hôtel de Glace**  
Quebec City, Canada

*Big shout out to Katie Hart at Fulfilled Travel Passport for her suggestions. You can find here at [cf.travelconnect](http://cf.travelconnect)*

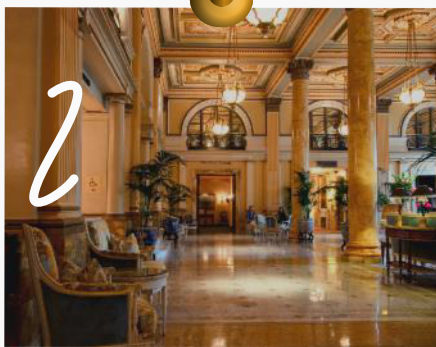
# TOP 5 TIPS FOR TRAVELLING WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S KIDS

I love travel but like most of us, I hate traveling with OPKs (other people's kids). I would always choose to go to childfree hotels and resorts, but let's face it these are few & far between. And you still have to deal with OPKs at the airport, on the plane, and everywhere in between. So how do we deal?

Here are 5 tips for travelling with OPKs...



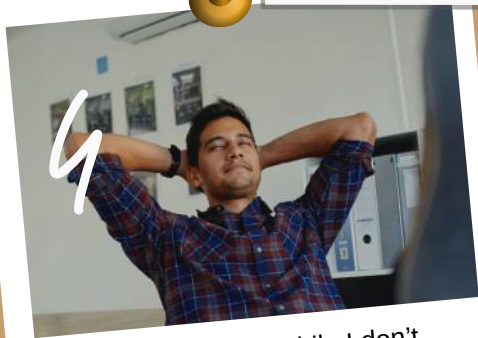
Noise cancelling headphones –  
overwhelming No 1 tip



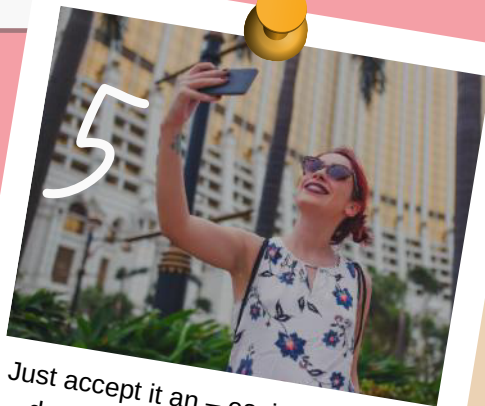
More expensive hotels – the more  
you pay usually equates to less  
children (but not always). But if you  
are on a budget try a hostel. Won't  
find no kids there.



Distance yourself – I usually ask to  
not be seated near children or babies  
section where there are change  
tables. Also ask for your room to be  
away from kids play areas or family  
rooms where possible.



Light sedative – while I don't  
endorse the use of drugs, a sedative  
or sleeping tablet might be (consult  
your Dr first, I am not qualified to  
give you medical advice).



Just accept it an – easier said than  
done but I do admit when your  
mindset is one of 'Hey I have to deal  
with it', it does make it easier.



A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing an orange shirt, and a woman with curly brown hair, wearing a white shirt, are shown in profile, looking at each other. They are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, respectively. A large, abstract, pink shape is overlaid on the lower half of the image, partially obscuring their bodies. The background is plain white.

YOU CAN BE PART OF REFRAMING  
THE CONVERSATION FROM "WHEN  
ARE YOU HAVING CHILDREN" TO  
"IF YOU WANT CHILDREN."



# ON THE LINE

WHAT WE'RE HEARTING ONLINE 

We love seeing the abundance of childfree memes, quotes, articles, support and fun cartoons across our screens. We selected a few we think are pretty cool. Check out the feeds of these accounts yourself for more childfree content on your screen.

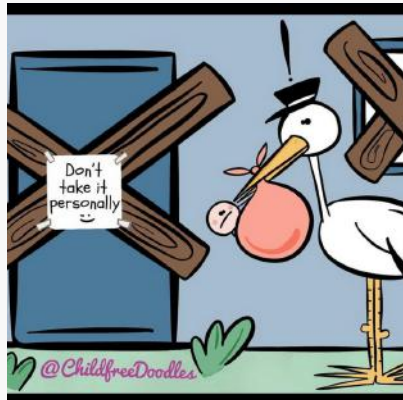


childfreeandhappy

I fully support this policy



childfreedoodles



theuprisingspark

Marked safe from the 2020 Pregnancy Wave  
Today



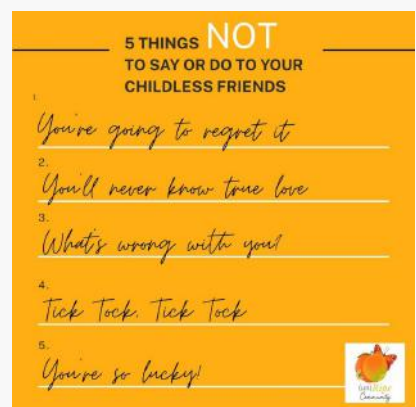
childfreeindonesia



trixiefilms



unripecommunity



childfree.brasil



childfreegirls



childfreeindia







# CREATING OUR BEST LATER-IN-LIFE YEARS, CHILDFREE STYLE

CHILDFREE EXPERT LAURA CARROLL  
SUGGESTS THREE WAYS WE CAN  
PLAN FOR HAPPY LATER YEARS.

**A**ll too often, when childfree people tell others that we don't want children, we hear the question, "But who will be there for you when you're old?" Why do we get such a common retort? For generations, society has held a strong assumption that adult children will care for their parents when they are old, and keep them from being lonely in their later years. In other words, people feel they 'need' to have kids to ensure their elder welfare.

Written by Laura Carroll

This entrenched belief comes from a large, old system of social and cultural beliefs called pronatalism. Meaning “pro baby”, pronatalism encourages reproduction, glorifies parenthood and promotes the idea that parenthood should be the central focus of every person’s adult life. It pushes the notion that we should all want children. If we don’t, not only does it mean something is wrong with us, but that many negative things will result in our lives - such as never really reaching ‘normal’ adulthood, never experiencing ‘true’ fulfilment, and feeling sad and alone in our elder years.

In my book ***The Baby Matrix***, I challenge pronatalism and how none of these and other pronatalist beliefs reflect truths. As childfree people, we know firsthand that parenthood does not buy a magical ticket to ‘true’ adulthood or fulfilment in life. Looking around us, we also see that having kids does not automatically guarantee parents will be cared for by their children in their old age.

What *is* true? We all, parents or not, need to take responsibility for our later years. What does taking this responsibility look like for childfree people? As a childfree 60-year-old, I’ve identified three important areas that can help ensure these years are as positive as possible.

## Your Chosen Family Network of Support

Whatever your age right now, you might already have your chosen family, which can include a combination of blood relatives and others you consider your



closest connections and kin. This chosen family can change with time. No matter how it changes, it becomes even more important as we reach our later years.

While it’s easy to believe our chosen family network of support has to be a good size, this doesn’t necessarily need to be the case. A small, strong collection of bonds works for many childfree people. No matter what size, as you move towards your later childfree years, consider integrating a range of ages. As we age, it becomes even more important to have our support network include people younger than we are. Why? They will be more likely to be around when we are in our later years. They can include nieces, nephews, other extended family relatives, godchildren, or younger people you connect with through professional or volunteer endeavors.

Does your chosen family network of support currently have two generations in it (yours and

people of the next)? If you are in your 20s, 30s, 40s, even 50s, it may not seem like it now but it’s never too early to begin cultivating a two-or even three-generation later-in-life chosen network of support.

## Home and Care

When you think about your later years, do you envision yourself living in your own home? Or would you be more open to living in a senior community type environment? What would that have to include and be like so it would be a good fit for you? Would you consider sharing a house with a close friend(s)? If or when you need assistance and care, how would you want to arrange it? From chosen family, or in-home care workers? Both?

Exploring, researching and homing in on answers to these kinds of questions well in advance will help you prepare and create the situation you want. Again, while it may seem too early to worry about your





elder living and care situation in your 20s, 30s, 40s or even 50s, the sooner you begin to plan for it, the more likely you are to make it happen when it's time.

## Wellbeing and Happiness

What contributes most to our wellbeing in our later years? Studies indicate that it's not having kids as much as having our life partner with us. However, happiness in these years does not always have to mean a romantic partner. Some people have them, some have companions, others are single, and many are widows/widowers and want to stay that way.

Other studies point to the importance of having friends to



our wellbeing in our later years, whether you are parents or childfree. When it comes to not feeling lonely, having friends your own age makes more of a difference than having children around.

Studies also point to a third component that contributes to our wellbeing: cash. Financial stability strongly predicts wellbeing in our elder years. I can't stress enough seriously planning for the financial realities of these years long before they arrive. This means making it a priority to set savings goals and sticking to them. In addition to having the financial pieces in place for these years as it relates to overall wellbeing, making and meeting financial goals also make home and care

supervisions possible when the time comes. It's never too early to make and begin implementing a plan for having the financial means in your elder years.

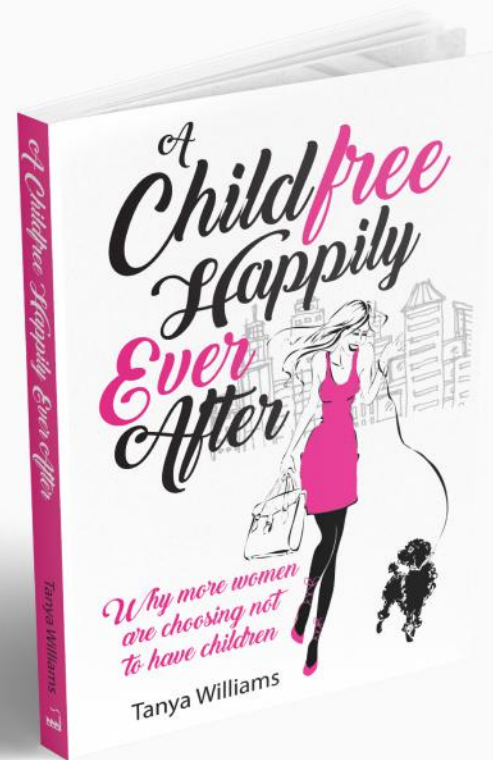
We all, parents or not,  
need to take responsibility  
for our later years.

Parents might stick to the notion that their children will be there for them when they are old, but the childfree can't do that. Instead, we can and do model what it takes to prepare for and live a full life in our later years. And I can tell you from personal experience, these can end up being the best years of your life - if you plan them right!



## ABOUT LAURA CARROLL:

*Laura has been a leading voice and internationally known expert on the childfree choice for more than 20 years. Her books include *The Baby Matrix*, *Families of Two*, and *The Joys of Otherhood*. Laura's next work will present findings on a 10-year longitudinal study on childfree women. Learn more about Laura and her childfree writings at [lauracarroll.com](http://lauracarroll.com).*



# LIVING YOUR CHILDFREE HAPPILY EVER AFTER


Are you getting to a certain age, and starting to feel the pressure to settle down and have kids'? Do you know that you want a childfree future, but don't know how to share that with your friends and family?

In **A Childfree Happily Ever After**, entrepreneur, fur-parent, and childfree advocate Tanya Williams dives deep into the reasons why women choose to have, or not to have, children, including the social, cultural, and biological factors that influence our decisions.

**A Childfree Happy Ever After** brings the childfree conversation to life, lifts the veil on how childfree women are treated in society, and shares true stories of women from all walks of life.

Buy Direct, support the hard work of the author and get a signed copy.





# UNDER PRESSURE

PERSISTENT PUSHING FROM MY MOTHER-IN-LAW TO HAVE A BABY WHEN I DIDN'T WANT ONE ALMOST BROKE ME, SHARES ALI WYLLIE.

Written by Ali Wyllie

**Y**ou don't have to have lots," my mother-in-law said. "I'm begging you, just one child, for me!" Eight years on, the memory of these words still causes me to prickle with irritation. I'm still angry at the constant harassment I endured from her. And I feel frustrated at myself for not enforcing my boundaries.

My partner - her son - was an only child. We lived together, had two beautiful dogs, and she clearly thought the next stage was a baby! She desperately wanted grandchildren and I

vehemently didn't want children. My partner was on board with being childfree but he provided no support.

Circumstances had prevented my mother-in-law from having more children. I felt her pain; I felt the crushing weight of dashing her dreams. So I sensitively communicated to her that our future did not involve children. She chose to ignore this and continued with baby comments every single time I saw her. It was exhausting!

"The pressure and comments were relentless and with each one I felt invisible, abnormal and anxious I was a disappointment."

On one occasion, while I was pushing a baggage trolley at an airport, she swooped in, saying, "I'll take that. I need practice for when it's a pram." Another time, she took great pride in telling me she had ordered a toilet-training seat and that it was in the attic for when I had a baby. She even spoke of my future labour, saying, "I hope you will let me in the hospital; I hope you will let me be a part of this." She even talked about buying the house next door so she could look after her non-existent grandchild!

The pressure and comments were relentless and with each one I felt invisible, abnormal and anxious I was a disappointment. It caused me to question myself, to analyse my psyche. What was wrong with me? Why didn't I want children? Was I being selfish? Why couldn't I just be like everyone else? I wished (and still sometimes wish) that I had an overwhelming desire to have children. Maybe she was right, maybe having a child was the answer to everything? Maybe it would allow me to fit in more with society, join mums' groups and face less stigma.

At this stage in my life, I did not know that choosing my own path and being childfree by choice was absolutely fine. My anxiety grew and my self-confidence plummeted.

Things came to a head one afternoon. As we walked to our cars, my mother-in-law gestured towards the playground beside us and said, "I can't wait until my grandchildren play in that park." "Erm no," I replied. "I am not having children. You know this." And so the begging began: "You don't have to have lots! I'm begging you, just one child, for

me. You don't even have to give up your dogs. You are great with your dogs, so you would be great with children. Please, I've got all this jewellery to give to them." What a ridiculous reason to have children, I thought. And no, I would never ever give up my dogs, daft woman!

I knew she was being unreasonable, selfish and manipulative. I told my partner that he needed to put a leash on her, but he would always reply that this was between me and his mum. Looking back, I am angry for accepting this pathetic excuse. He shied away from the issue when he should have owned it and supported me.

When I finally pulled the plug on our relationship, the greatest relief was shedding his mother from my life, once and for all. I have always known I did not want children. My close friends and family are very accepting of this, however my experiences with my former mother-in-law almost broke me.

I have since read numerous books and blogs and research papers on being childfree. I've listened to podcasts. I've spent hours scrolling through childfree websites and social media platforms. I've had conversations with other likeminded people and I have found peace within myself. I now feel liberated, seen and understood. I feel normal.

My experience with my former mother-in-law has fuelled the fire in my belly to help others navigate the difficulties of being childfree. I am now strong, steadfast and unapologetic of my choices.

If you are in a similar position to the one I was in, please know you have a choice. It is your life to live and you have to be true to yourself. Having a child for someone else's happiness is never a good reason to have a child. While the trauma and conflict I endured because of this woman was horrific, the impact of having a child against my will would have been far worse.



**Ali Whyllie** is a dog loving, running obsessed, outdoors enthusiast from Scotland, who believes passionately in the power of kindness and community. Ali is determined to help reduce the stigma endured by the childfree, and she can be found on Twitter under the handle @ChildFreeBC.



A woman with brown hair styled in two large, fluffy buns. She is wearing large, round, copper-colored sunglasses and a bright neon green sleeveless top. She is resting her chin on her hand, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is split into three solid colors: blue on the top left, yellow on the top right, and red on the bottom left. The text is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

Let's stop commercialising the mum  
brand and start promoting the  
**'me' brand**



# WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT GRANDCHILDLESSNESS

WITH AN INCREASING POPULATION OF CHILDFREE PEOPLE, THERE IS A GROWING GROUP OF WANNABE GRANDPARENTS FEELING A VOID THEY STRUGGLE TO FILL, WRITES AUTHOR TANYA WILLIAMS.

Written by Tanya Williams

**M**any childfree-by-choice people feel pressure from their parents to give them grandkids. "When are you going to make a grandma/grandpa?" seems to be a phrase uttered around the world! And considering that childfree people are called selfish constantly for their choice, why is it acceptable for parents to demand grandchildren and not be called selfish? There seems to be a massive double standard here. So why are there different sets of rules?

Perhaps it's because many view becoming a grandparent as a right of passage. Their friends

have kids and typically the mutual sharing of photos and updates about "what the grandkids are doing" is part of the catch-up ritual. But their childfree kids are denying them this right.

Dr Bronwyn Harman, a family expert from Edith Cowan University's School of Psychology and Social Science, says it's a trend that has been happening for some time. "Little is known about grandchildlessness," she says. "These are the people who would love to be grandparents but aren't and they've got no control over that."

"They were disappointed in a way in not becoming grandparents because they had purposefully nurtured their own children's relationships with their grandparents..."



Dr Harman and one of her students conducted a study in 2019 to understand the lived experience of grandchildlessness, looking at whether it was a source of stress and, if so, how to best support them. "The people we interviewed said they were disappointed in a way in not becoming grandparents because they had purposefully nurtured their own children's relationships with their grandparents and had good memories themselves with their own grandparents," Dr Harman says.

"Another point they all spoke of was how they found it difficult to raise the matter with anybody, particularly their own children, as they didn't want to put unfair pressure on them. They also wondered whether they had done something wrong themselves as parents to lead their children to make that choice. And, rather than feeling bereaved or grief, they said they felt ... an emptiness, something that hasn't ever been fulfilled."

Hearing this, I can't help but wonder if it impacts how people feel about their decision to be childfree. Chloe, 30, from London, says, "I know my mum wants to be a grandmother really bad and it makes me always question my choice not to have kids. I feel so guilty. I then start to question my own beliefs and wonder if I am doing life 'wrong'

for not having kids. It's hard because I am such a people pleaser and the thought my mum might be disappointed with my choices is hard to deal with."

Kim, 32, from Florida, says, "Growing up, my mum always told my brother and I that she only had kids to have grandkids. My brother has a son but my husband and I don't have kids. She's disappointed but pretends to love her grand-dogs."

Personally, I feel lucky to have had the support of my parents in regards to my childfree choice. When I had this conversation with my mum while writing my book 'A Childfree Happily Ever After' she said that she and my dad were always supportive of my decision. "It is your life and we just cared about you being happy," she said. I wonder if the conversation might have been different if my younger sister hadn't had three kids.

But, believe it or not, not every parent wants to become a grandparent! Nancy Wurtzel, an American public relations professional and creative writer, is happy with her daughter not having kids. And while she is happy for friends with grandchildren, she is also content to go home to her books, music, writing and the adorable puppy she adopted a few months ago.

"Not craving grand-babies is a realisation I've come to over time," Wurtzel says. "For many years, I played a bit of a charade with friends and family. When they would pull out pictures of their grandkids, I'd dutifully look at the snapshots on their smartphone and then say with a pout, 'Don't you think having four grandkids is a bit greedy, when some of us have none?' This little joke always generated a laugh and a comeback of, 'Oh, don't worry, you'll have grandchildren someday!' While I'm no doubt in the minority, I don't think I'm entirely alone. I'm betting there are other Baby Boomers out there who do not feel that burning desire to be a grandparent."

For the grandparentless who do feel the void, there are ways to fill it, however, including: volunteering, babysitting other people's children or signing up for organisations such as Find a Grandparent

[www.findagrandparent.org.au](http://www.findagrandparent.org.au).

I can't help but wonder though: if you have raised children already, why is there a desire or need to go another round? Is it maybe just a case of FOMO among their friends who have grandkids, or a reminder that they no longer have a say in their children's lives now that they've left the nest? What are your thoughts?



**Tanya Williams** is author of #1 Amazon Best Seller 'A Childfree Happily Ever After' and founder of Childfree Magazine. Her mission is to change the dialogue in society from judgement and criticism to support and acceptance for all childfree people.

Inventing a new narrative for marketing  
to childfree people in society.

# CHILDFREE

## M A G A Z I N E

Want to reach one of the **largest**,  
**fastest growing** demo's in the world?



Close to 1 in 4 women in OECD countries  
are choosing to be childfree.



The ABS predicts the number of families  
without children will overtake those with  
children sometime in the 2020's.



Childfree people (typically) have more  
disposable income than parents.

This is a massive chunk of the population and you can  
put your product in front of them in the next edition of  
**Childfree Magazine.**

**You cannot continue to ignore this growing demo.**  
Our audience is global, they are passionately childfree,  
love to travel, have disposable income, spend more on  
entertainment, luxury goods & beauty, spoil their pets  
and love life experiences.

**If you are:**

- ✓ a business or corporate,
- ✓ know someone that is,
- ✓ or want to promote your childfree product

Next step is to get in touch for our Sponsorship &  
Advertising Pack.

**EMAIL US**





# WHAT DID YOU THINK?



This is the very first edition of **CHILDFREE Magazine**. It has been a lot of hard work, tears and tantrums to pull it together. We know it's not perfect but we have tried to create a mix of content and give it a global feel.

We already have a growing list of ideas for the next one but would love to hear your ideas, what you loved and what you didn't to make the next one even better.

Help us to make future editions. Your feedback will guide the content and themes we share moving forward so we appreciate you taking the time to do this short survey:

[ANSWER SURVEY](#)



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**BLAZE YOUR OWN  
GLITTERY PATH AND  
NEVER LET ANYONE  
DULL YOUR SPARKLE!**

*Tanya Williams*





# CHILD FREE

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