

The Childfree Choice

Human beings take several years from birth to care for themselves in any sort of fundamental way. Whereas many mammals take only weeks, sometimes days. This is one of the driving factors in my decision not to have children. In this essay I will attempt to give the many reasons I do not want children, and even some for why I should not have them. I came to this conclusion once and for all around the age of 15. I was very sure of myself at a young age. Many people at that time told me that I would change my mind when I got older. I can tell you that 16 years later at the age of 31 I still feel that way. I have encountered many levels of opposition when discussing this topic with others of opposing view points. I am writing this essay as a way to inform others who haven't given this much thought before. I want others to know that it is a choice that you can and should consider. I would ideally like to convince some readers out there to choose the childfree life as well. Or at least have someone further consider their choice to care for children whether they are their own biological offspring or not. It would be great if I could reach many people out there and get them to consider being a foster parent or adoptive parent first. I do not intend this to condemn or persecute those who have chosen to have children. I simply want everyone to be more aware and open to the mindset of one such as myself who opts out of biological motherhood.

My reasons for not wanting children are many and varied. One of the first and most fundamental reasons is that I never felt the inexplicable urge to have

any children. I didn't get that "biological clock ticking". I never went gaga when I would see a baby in a stroller or on TV. I never felt anything. I've always been very up-front about my feelings on this matter. I would say that I don't really like children much, but now that I have encountered so much hatred that the world has to offer, I must further clarify that statement by saying that I also do not necessarily dislike them either. I am usually annoyed by childish behavior, displayed most frequently by children, but often exhibited by adults as well. I was also always disgusted and disturbed by the concept of being pregnant and giving birth. Although, I do not feel this way toward pregnant women in general. It is simply something I find distasteful for myself. In the past 16 years since first coming to this decision definitively for myself, I've had the opportunity to learn and grow as a human being. I have had the chance to further consider my reasons for remaining childfree. I have always wanted to travel and to concentrate on my career.

I am well aware of the fact that having a child is probably one of the biggest responsibilities and decisions that a person can make. A child is not a possession or a toy. It is another complete human being for whom you must provide food, clothing, shelter, education, clothes, toys, and who knows what else? This is not a job that is part-time or one that you can take a break from. Recently I became all too aware of this fact. I did some babysitting for my best friend who has a five-year old son. After only a few weeks I began to get this overwhelming trapped feeling. It was inexplicable and I couldn't quite figure out

what was wrong. After a few times at babysitting off and on, I realized what it was that had me ready to run for the hills. I was having a brief glimpse of what parenthood would be like. Needless to say I found it very distasteful & truly began to understand how claustrophobic people feel. I was vividly aware of the fact that I couldn't leave or go anywhere. It was even more confirmation that I do not want to have to care for children in any long term way. The notion of motherhood is for me synonymous with being trapped. I am a very free spirit who relishes the freedom that I have. I value the freedom to not have to watch what I say, how I behave, where I go or when. I am very appreciative of the freedom that I have in this time and in the western world. Sadly there are still cultures that still do not allow the women to make their own reproductive decisions. I am very thankful that I can make this decision and that it is ultimately my choice. I am very career-oriented and wish to use my life to learn about myself and be the mother of invention.

I have struggled a lot over the years with my finances as well as my physical and emotional health. I wouldn't bring a child into my life as a poor person living below the poverty level. Nor would I have a child given my physical illness, I suffer from Fibromyalgia. I also have been treated over the past several years for severe Major Depressive Disorder. For these latter difficulties in my life, I believe they are evidence of why I should not have children.

For some people global concerns are a factor, but I am not so concerned with that as much as others. It is not just in our decisions of whether to bring

forth more people for whom to care for, but also being aware of and considering the impact that we will have on those children's lives and the others with which we share this planet. Many people feel that the human population is too high and people should use this as the primary basis for their childfree choice. My global concerns reach out further beyond simple numbers and populations, but to those orphans, abused and abandoned children the world over who have no options. I think that not only are we custodians of this Earth but also we should be caretakers of one another. I believe in the philosophy that "It takes a village to raise a child". I believe that we would learn and improve our global conditions if we could first take care of those that are already here before adding to them.

It is for these and perhaps more reasons that I have yet to discover, that I have happily and freely made the decision not bear children. I have been persecuted for my choices and viewpoints, so it isn't my intention here to persecute anyone's views or choices, just to encourage you to make them with a conscious mind. I encourage everyone to make all decisions with consideration as to how you are affecting your life, the lives of others, and the world around you.

Copyright Layla Tichtchenko 2007