

I think I have been wearing a mask for a very long time. My son, Carter was born February 11, 2007 by emergency C-section. He was a fairly high needs baby and I had a difficult time coping with the trauma of his birth and feelings of failure and inadequacy. I had a very hard time finding help and understanding what was going on. Everything seemed to be fine as long as I could keep up some kind of an image of togetherness. When he was 8 months old I became pregnant again. I think it was a combination of bad medical advice (I had trouble with the birth control pill with my milk supply) and my husband and I had almost 4 years of infertility before we conceived our first baby so we were not expecting to conceive so easily! Jocelyn was born on July 10, 2008 by successful VBAC. Carter was 17 months old at the time and everything was fantastic for a while. I had a great baby moon, which I did not experience with Carter and I thought I had completely gotten over my postpartum difficulties.

About 6 weeks later, Carter got very sick and one morning he was having trouble breathing. I called 911 at the advice of the Healthline, and we were taken to emergency. He had pneumonia and was given medications through the nebulizer and many tests were done, most of which I was not allowed to be in the room because he had to be restrained. All the while I was still trying to care for my newborn daughter and breastfeed and I was terribly sleep deprived. I couldn't stay with him at the hospital because I needed to be home with the baby. He was only in the hospital overnight, and we took him home with many medications and the nebulizer. We cared for him and he seemed to recover well. He got a clean bill of health from the pediatrician and we went about our daily lives. Two weeks later the same thing happened all over again. Overnight in the hospital, all the tests, he was confined to the metal crib and on oxygen and his vitals were monitored.

I broke. I started crying at the hospital and my husband Mark sent me home with the baby while he stayed. She was also stuffed up at the time and would only sleep while I was holding her upright on my chest. We had big plans, and everything was cancelled. Carter recovered well, and Jocelyn was doing great, but I fell behind in the household chores and my routines went by the wayside. I started lying in bed for hours at a time, or sitting in the shower and crying uncontrollably. I was so resentful of my husband for

not understanding what was going on. He didn't know how to help and was getting depressed himself.

I shared some of my feelings at the Y's Mom's group, and Sally approached me after and asked if I wanted to come to her postpartum depression group. I said yes, and have been trying to attend regularly. I have visited my doctor and started antidepressant medication and I have an appointment to see a psychiatrist next week. It already feels like a long journey just to get to this point, although I know I have a long way to go still.

I started reading your book last night and I could not stop. The more I read, the more a sense of peace and strength settled over me. I have not yet found the support and understanding that I need to get through this, but I have a sense of hope and I feel that at least I am moving in the right direction. It has been a huge step to admit to myself that I am dealing with postpartum depression and I am not just wimpy or inadequate. The negative voices and visions are there, and the only thing that will help is to face them head on and quit trying to pretend. Thank-you, thank-you for sharing your stories. I can only hope that one day I will have the courage and strength that you have shown in the writing of this book.

With love and admiration.