

A new and growing body of research is revealing that there are marked and generally positive physiological changes that occur in a mother's brain as a result of giving birth to a child.

Research suggests that motherhood enhances certain types of cognition, improves resistance to stress and sharpens some kinds of memory. The fact that the nervous system manages to transform a new mother from a self-centered organism into an other-focused caregiver is quite impressive. All it takes is for new neurons to sprout, certain brain structures to blossom in size and waves of powerful hormones to batter the pregnant woman's physiology. The result is a different and in some ways better brain - or at least, one capable of juggling the challenges of everyday life while maintaining a laserlike focus on the baby.

If this research is true, I figure after having seven babies, I should be absolutely brilliant. If, at any time, this enhanced brain condition does take place, by the time that baby reaches the terrible twos and there's another one approaching the frightful fours and another one on the way, it doesn't take long for the brain to revert to its original state. As far as sharpening the memory, sometimes Mommy wonders what she has to remember. While the nervous system is transforming to accommodate the newcomer, it sometimes seems as if that system might be breaking down. If those researchers who propose that brain change supposedly makes one capable of juggling the challenges of every day life, they never had more than one child.

Every child is different, coming equipped with his or her own special plans to make mommy's life more complicated. There has been so much research regarding child psychology and child physiology that one begins to wonder if these professionals are writing papers and books because they don't have enough to do. I say give them seven kiddies.

I hope all this doesn't give you the idea that I have been a wicked mother who has produced a brood of dysfunctional offspring. I wrote all of the above with tongue in cheek. I love all of my children dearly and unconditionally. Looking back, there is really only one thing that I would change if I could. Our eldest daughter died when she was only sixteen years old. This created holes in all of our hearts that will never completely heal. However, it drew us all even closer together and made us realize how precious and fragile life really is. I believe it was a life experience that helped the other children face reality. I believe it may have made them stronger somehow, and it certainly taught them the difficult lesson that life wasn't going to be all that easy. My children have been blessings in more ways than I could ever set down here. They have brought about a life of love and caring and happiness that never would have been possible without them.