



You might be a mom who has had a pleasant pregnancy and registered for classes, not entirely worried about what your recovery process would look like. You might be at home, feeling like learning something new would serve to keep you mentally stimulated, outside of being with baby daily. Some of you mamas have no choice but to jump right back in immediately post birth; classes needed to graduate are only now or finally being offered. However your situation has presented itself, it's important to not underestimate what becoming a student during this phase of mothering will require from you. For instance, if you are a breastfeeding mama, it is important to note how stress can negatively impact your milk supply. This means, if in undergrad you were the type to put things off until the last minute, the good ol' "work best under pressure" type, you will need to change that approach completely.



With a new baby, there is no better way to heighten your stress levels than to leave assignments until the last minute or to think "I have time." Buy a planner, get a large-font calendar, put alerts on your phone, and constantly plan for your assignments. If you have papers, prepare outlines as you go along because your brain's elasticity is just not the same right after having a baby. If this is relatively early on, within the first 12-week mark, and you need time to study, seek help in acquiring a postpartum Doula who can support you in managing all the transitions. While it is never my intention to put fear in the hearts of my fellow millennial mother's, I do believe it's my responsibility to share both the inspiration and reality of what it takes to achieve success without losing your personal wellness or affection for being a mother. This means sharing the not-so-discussed aspects of being a new mom while trying to keep up with assignments and responsibilities.



In "*The Audacity to Finish*," I share what happened to my breastmilk while on a teaching excursion; while that postpartum journey started off relatively healthy, I still lacked vital information that could have helped me. I would have accomplished my goal with more mindfulness. So if you sign up for an evening class, make it a priority to express as much milk as you can before leaving. Don't assume your milk "will be fine." Expressing your milk before major studying, prep for presentations, and even exams can help to prevent mastitis, an infection of the breast tissue caused by blocked milk ducts. However, what no one ever shares is how within the first three months of early postpartum, emotion directly impacts the likelihood of a mama experiencing this. Frustration, anger, or even sadness over outside factors, like not getting enough sleep before an exam or getting a less than desirable grade, can