

IF I CAN RAISE SIX CHILDREN, ANYONE CAN

I've been saying for the last eight years that I could write a book. Well, I still could but I'm either too busy or too lazy (don't know which so this will have to be the next best thing.

In the early days of my life I thought when I reached this month of this year it would really be a crisis. I would be an old lady of thirty and my life would be half over. Now that the time has arrived I'm not ready for my wheelchair at all. In fact I feel like my life is really just beginning. The reason: A husband, six children going on seven, a dog and a hamster.

I have a few helpful hints for other mothers but first I would like to tell you something about my family so that you will know I qualify to pass on this information. I will tell you about my husband later. First the children. Their ages are seven, six, five, four, three, and nine months.

The oldest is Lori who is in the second grade in the best school with the best teacher. Lori can jump rope the best, fix her hair the best and ride a bike the best, and I let her think this way as long as she's my best helper. Wouldn't know what to do without her.

Next comes big brother Jeff who can get into trouble before school, in school and after school. He called from the principal's office one day to inform me he took his dog to school who in turn bit his teacher. That happened just a few days before a neighbor and former friend called to say Jeff was teasing her kids on the way to school which was a few days before Jeff's teacher called to say he caught his head in the window while trying to get in from recess. He gets dog food all over the kitchen floor, half of the trash on the garage floor and "forgets" to pick up his dirty clothes from the bedroom floor-but otherwise he's perfect.

Then comes Lindy, our favorite kindergartner. She thinks the fairy cheated her because one of her classmates got a quarter for her bottom tooth and Lindy only found a dime under her pillow. Life is really tough. She's really going to be mad when she finds out about Santa.

Jan is our scavenger. She hordes old purses, old sacks and anything else that can hold more than a thimble. She stores things that were thrown in the wastebasket months ago. She has all "mailbox-to-wastebasket" advertisements in those sacks. We can't keep anything loose around our house cause in a sack it goes. If we can't find something we just ask Jan.

Nick is our clown. Sometimes he is a big boy and sometimes a baby. But either way he loves cars. He plays with them all day and at night he sleeps on top, in between and underneath them. Once in a while he might share one with his baby sister. He then follows her from bed to high chair to play pen and back to bed with it.

Anne Marie, the baby, is the cutest, sweetest--well you've heard all the adjectives from mothers before but Anne Marie is the cutest and

the sweetest etc. She can crawl but I keep her in the play pen for self defense but someday she's going to break out and join the group.

Sam the dog: I'd just as soon forget him but he keeps drawing my attention when he takes after the milkman, trashman, mailman and any other kind of man who is brave enough to step within ten paces of our property.

The hamster's not so bad. The only time he causes trouble is when he has to go to school for "show and tell" or Jeff forgets to feed him and I have to trapse downstairs after hours with something for the hamster to munch on so he can survive.

Put them all together they spell MY CHARACTERS.

My husband and I don't have a name picked out for child number seven yet. We wait until after we make the trip to the hospital and find out what kind it is. That eliminates one argument. Our four girls are praying for a girl and our boys are praying for a boy. I'm praying for either one just so it's not one of each. I do know that when I wash that last diaper I'm going to hang it on a high pole in my front yard so everyone around will know about it. That probably won't happen till I reach minopause though.

Now to start on my husband. People told me when we were married that I would never live a dull life-that's puting it mildly. This ole world just couldn't and wouldn't be the same without him. He believes that parents should learn to live with their children. As a result I do such stupid things like ging to the store with them. That's really where I meet the outside world. If anyone is lonely, bored and can't find anybody to talk to I have the cure-take six kids to the store. Boy, that's living and people really know you are alive too. In between my simple remarks such as, "don't touch this, don't touch that, get away from the drinking fountain, stop eating the grapes, don't turn the cart over and, OH NO", I answer such questions as: 1) "Are they all yours?" My answer to this is "no, they belong to my husband too." 2) "How old are they?" My answer- "seven, six, five, four, three and one. The two year old is missing because we took a vaction that year." 3) "Don't you know what causes them?" Answer-"Yes, but by the time we found out we had already formed the habit." 4) "how do you do it? I couldn't." To this question I just smile and deep pushing my cart down the aisle like I had a deep dark secret. I do this because how can I tell a strange lady she just doesn't have the kind of a husband that I do. I know she doesn't because he is one in a million. He even thought up the answer to those questions. Well, anyway he thinks the womens place is in the home like the good Lord said- bearing an teaching her children. I only get the sympathy when he knows a really, really need it otherwise I get the pep talk- "That's what a woman is made for- she's happiest when she has a housefull of kids. She's found the true meaning of life. That's what marriage is for, the procreation and education of children." Yeh- but sometimes I think the neighbors wish we'd stop all this pro-creating and fix our attention a little more on the education. All of our neighbors are fine people and we get along just great, but I keep thinking it would be just our luck to have a member of the Planned Parentheed Association move into our neighborhood.