

Week 4: Five senses of motherload

Hi Mothers, this week we're getting sensual! We'd love you to tell us about what the mental load of motherhood feels like to you? Looks like? Smells like? Tastes like? Sounds like? Pick one or more senses and write about it in the comments below (or take a photo or record a sound if you're feeling extra inspired).

'Mine feels like the hard corners of lego, dry toast crumbs and sticky keyboards.'

'The mental load of motherhood smells like a primary school classroom - a series of disjointed and competing smells that combine to create something faintly saccharine, like apples left too long in the bottom of a schoolbag. There's a safe familiarity to the smell, but after a while the familiarity becomes cloying, overwhelming. You want to be able to clean away that smell, but the scent of bleach combines with the other scents competing for your attention. Cleaning products form part of the bouquet of the mental load, along with the pencil shavings and the overripe fruit. The scent reminds you of all the moments that came before, that form the natural rhythm of life as a parent. It reminds you of the meals made and cleared away, of the washing left too long in the basket, of the muddy socks and of the lasagna of drawings and school forms and information sheets layered in the bottom of bags, stuck together with the fluid from leaking juice boxes and bruised fruit. The scent evokes both joy and boredom, and a faint ache for something just out of reach.'

'Euky Bear Rub and Vicks Vapoursteam are the scents flowing from my 6 Month olds bedroom as we try and recover from chesty coughs and sniffles.'

'The motherload smells like... pink pancake breakfasts, playdough, sticky hands that have been eating who knows what (when did we last eat... mustard?), draped and fiddling at the nape of my neck. It smells like that foreign smell my toddler smells like when I collect her from Little School, the foreign smell of perfume my baby absorbs from literally any person who isn't me (why does it always smell like musk something?!). It smells like projectile milk vom in the face while boobing back to sleep in bed at 4am. It smells like stinky little cheese hands with hidden fluff even though we had baths yesterday. It smells like eternally washing poop out of cloth nappies, until you're not and you're being hollered at for "mum! My help my wipe my buuum!" which elicits an urge to run to the bathroom to avert disaster. It smells like cold black coffee and stale breast milk on my shirt because I never seem to be able to remember to put breastpads in. It smells like digging in the garden, covered in dirt to find "Biiiiiiig worms mum! BIG ONES! Ohhh look a baby one! Cuuute!". It smells like dishes that have been marinating in the sink for... 2 days? 3? A washing basket full of wet washing, that now needs washing again, that I emptied to put on the line, and I still haven't found the time to have 2 free hands. It smells like that hot cup of coffee you finally made time for. It smells like... home.'

'Glen 20. My kids think that is what vomit smells like. Probably because whenever someone does vomit, I spray it on every available surface. I swear that if the Zombie apocalypse comes the Aus Govt should give me a job in infection control because I am a gun when it comes to containment....'

'Books - old musty kids books unread between generations. Then revelling in the kids' appreciation of the new book smell as they open up another adventure in the joy of literature.

Warm cosy bed snuggling over favourite stories being read for the umpteenth time but no less exciting and kid farts when the laughter gets raucous!'

'Cake. Sugar craving from exhaustion in the first year especially. Snuck chocolate eaten from behind the cupboard doors after that!'

'Some days it is the taste of combantrum washed down with a dry Riesling'

' https://youtu.be/Xu_6hdGZ6gU

It feels like this song to me - always one more thing, and even when I seem calm my brain is whirring away. The mental load tastes like chocolate hidden in the back of the cupboard and eaten in the bathroom, or secret salty chips that only come out after 9 pm. It smells like that sweet baby-head scent I still sometimes get when I kiss them goodnight.'

'Feels like a hand on permanently my boob, smells of sweet toddler morning breath that I can't stop inhaling. Sounds like an orchestra of primates learning the violin, constantly screeching, and tastes like cold coffee'

'today felt like the slow motion as I walked up a long street, holding the hand of a two year old who does not want to go in the pram, followed by the high alert frenzy of going to a grocery store with the same miss two who now runs away and gleams triumphantly as she plays a game of cat and mouse amongst the aisles (holding a wedge of brie cheese).....'

'Feels like a piece of cold wet porridge on my sleeve, little arm hugs, cool lip kisses, a finger in the eyeball, two-kid horsey rides, both warm and snuggly in bed and cold and bloody uncomfortable in bed. Smells...So many smells...fresh urine in the potty, shit, so much shit! Motherhood also smells like the way my kids heads still smell so good...Sounds like 27 people talking at once, Mum...mum...mum...that's not fair!...mum...mum...can you draw with me?...mum, I don't want to go to school...mum...mum...mum...I love you. Sweet, sweet deep breathing sleeping babes, such a good sound.'

'At the moment mine feels like getting stung by nettles. A teenager with issues who has decided I am the enemy. In my mind I am trying to walk the peaceful path towards her but I'm getting stung a lot! And the pain radiates for a while. But of course I keep walking towards her as best I can.'