Book Review

Leslie Cree, BA, IBCLC

Share this:

To Three and Beyond: Stories of Breastfed Children and the Mothers Who Love Them
Janell E. Robisch © 2014 Praeclarus Press, 270 pages, paperback, \$18.95

Available from: <http://stores.praeclaruspress.com/to-three-and-beyond-stories-of-breastfed-children-and-the-mothers-who-love-them/>

How to start a review when you can't stop reminiscing? This lovely book brought back a flood of memories of my now college senior daughter and high school senior son. They tandem nursed for almost 2 years, although they no longer remember it (or at least they tell me they don't!).

This compilation of mothers' stories, in their own words, is a heartfelt look at the rewards and challenges of breastfeeding long past what is the cultural expectation for Western countries. The vignettes are organized into chapters, starting at Chapter 1 "How Did We Go From Three Weeks to Three Years?" through "Advantages and Moments of Joys," "Making It Work in Everyday Life," "Support Makes All the Difference," "Challenging Situations and Special Needs," to finally Chapter 6, "When the End Finally Arrives."

In their stories, mothers reflect on learning to trust their babies and their bodies and to accept that there will be reactions ranging from curiosity to hostility. Lara Audelo in Chapter 2 summed it up, "It is normal to nurse a 4-year old,

but it is just uncommon in our society. So, telling people that he still breastfeeds at age 4 is always a little interesting because the looks on people's faces are priceless."

Some mothers had to navigate through partner conflict around the right time to wean. Letting a child self-wean can be as uncertain as beginning to breastfeed. As Brandy Hansen shared, "As supportive as he was, there hit a point with breastfeeding where he became very vocal about wanting our younger daughter, Ripley, to stop nursing."

Finding the right time to wean is bittersweet. Helen, from United Kingdom, states, "There have been times when I've thought 'I've had enough!' Some mornings I feel so touched out. . . . So this notion that it is the mother who does not wish to let go or, worse, that is some way it is abusive of the mother is utter nonsense."

A fun wrap up is found in Appendix A, a list of some of the names for nursing that the author has collected. Is your code word in there?

Leslie Cree, BA, IBCLC, is a hospital-based lactation consultant at a small community hospital in Central Pennsylvania. After earning her degree in Journalism, and working for several years, she welcomed her first child in 1996. Enjoyment of breastfeeding led Leslie to become a Peer Counselor in 1997, and in 1999 she welcomed her second child. Baby #2 came with significant breastfeeding challenges, and in overcoming them Leslie realized her true calling. After completing coursework and clinical requirements, Leslie began a second career as an IBCLC. Her areas of interest include nursing past age two, tandem nursing, and impact of tongue-tie on breastfeeding dyads.