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## Why All the Fuss About *Total Momsense*?

by Gina Hagle

"Momsense." "I'm the Mom." That lady on YouTube singing to the tune of "The William Tell Overture." If you recognize any of these, you know I'm talking about Anita Renfroe, the comedian who wrote everything a mom says in a day, set it to music lasting less than three minutes and then gave a gift to all Moms on Mother's Day by posting a video of the performance on YouTube. A post that's gone viral and has wound up with an estimated total of more than 10 million hits - including at least 100 generated by yours truly. So what's all the fuss about?

If you're like me, you're not big on "you gotta see this" e-mails. I know I had some trepidation as I clicked the link and joined this latest phenomenon. But it was quickly apparent that "Total Momsense" is about more than 15 minutes of fame. Certainly, the women in Renfroe's audience - who jumped to their feet for a standing ovation replete with cheers and whistles - found something more meaningful than someone who's a fast singer. They clearly heard something that touched the essence of what it is to be a mom. And they're not alone.

My friend in Australia, a mother of three as am I, saw the video and told me that she's said those same things to her kids. My friends in Japan, Brazil and England have said the same. And the other women in the United States I've shared the video with, old and young alike, have had that same flash of recognition. I can tell you my kids will attest to the fact that Renfroe knows what's been going on in our house! Add to that the "thank you" e-mails Renfroe has received from women around the world, and there's no denying the almost universal response.

Renfroe attributes this to the fact that, "We have all been in that delusional stage when we are considering motherhood when we honestly believe we will be *THE ONE* who is different - who doesn't repeat herself over and over ... This normally lasts about two years into your child's development." Sounds about right to me. She attributes the spread of the video to the fact that, "Women are great community-builders, and we like to share things that delight us with other women. That is the main reason we have so many hits on this piece - women sharing it with other women. And not necessarily mom-to-mom..."

My instant reaction to the video was a visceral sense of that community. Here were women, young and old, recognizing something of ourselves. I could know at an intellectual level that I'm not the only mom who works to get it right every day. I could be told that in multiple ways and multiple times, but to see it, to see those women respond as they did was affirming in a way that mere words had so far failed to deliver. It was tremendous to see that I'm not the only mom who may rattle on all day but is more than willing to "do this all again" tomorrow, "because a mom's work never ends!"

Motherhood is all about caring intensely about something we have no real control over. We can do our best. We can have the most wonderful intentions. We can try to fill our kids with all the love and wisdom we can muster, but eventually we have to let them go. We can hope the things they take with them are the things that came about in the moments when we were truly the Mom we just knew we'd be before the reality of motherhood set in. But we're not really going to know how well we did until our kids are out on their own and returning home with lives of their own. It's sort

of a lonely feeling until you remember there are people out there who also get it. Those other moms. That's why for me, the most important aspect of "Total Momsense" is the way it taps into this one thing all moms have in common: This experience of wanting the best for the incredible people who are our children.... Coupled with the reality of not quite making it through each day at the level our noblest intentions!

Gina Hagler is a frequent contributor to *Washington Parent* and a Rockville mom of three.

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