

I'm Actually Not Allowed to Curse Anymore and I F-ing Hate It

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"God Dammit."

My head jerks up to meet my husband's amused eyes. And before my overheated brain (it's fucking hot here in Texas) can get a message to my mouth, he says, "I wonder where he learned that from?"

The "he" in that sentence is our five-year-old autistic son who just expressed his frustration with his seatbelt . . . using one of Mommy's favorite phrases.

Now, part of me is proud. My son's language skills are delayed, so whenever he uses a new phrase in the correct context, it's a victory. And honestly? I could give two shits about kids using "bad" words. I'm a big proponent of taking away the thrill of the forbidden; teach the kids what the words mean and how to use them to express themselves, but make it clear they're not to be used to be an asshole to others—you shouldn't call someone names; ad hominem attacks are for pussies.

The other part of me is well aware that large chunks of the local suburban population—to say nothing of those employed by the school district—don't share my laxer attitude concerning cursing. And if my kiddo were at the point where he could understand the distinction between places we can and cannot say certain words, I'd be all about the compromise of teaching him that it's fine to say, "What the fuck?" at home (another one of Mommy's favorite phrases) and "What the what?"—if not an entirely different and equally benign epithet—at school.

Unfortunately, he's not at that point.

So I have to quit fucking cursing. At 33 years old, I have to break a habit I gleefully picked up 22 goddamn years ago and have lovingly cherished ever since. And not just out loud either. That smart little fucker learned how to read in his special ed. preschool (do NOT get me started about the mysterious workings of the autistic brain), so I can't even write the words down any place he might see them.

I am the type of person who calls my dog a cunt. (Don't worry, she is one.)

I am the type of person who adores quoting Samir's car tirade from Office Space. ("Mother... shitter... Son of an... ass!")

I am the type of person whose FB word cloud contains a giant FUCK front and center. (Helps weed out the easily offended riff-raff.)

And now, for the sake of my beloved word sponge of a spawn, I have to become the type of person who says "fudge" and "darn it" and "my stars."

I feel flippin' dirty.

Amanda Johnson engages in freelance writing shenanigans when she's not busy raising her evil genius spectrum child, helping strengthen her local atheist community, or being distracted by whatever she's obsessing about that day. You can find her at www.amandasjohnson.com.