

ELLEN. There really should be a twelve-step program for mothers. You know, in the list of compulsions – drinking, gambling, shopping – you would just have to add motherhood. You talk about needing recovery! Your playgroup could form an intervention to get you in. Or, even better, the hospital could put discreet information in the diaper bag on the way home with your local chapter listed. A New Way of Life. The Fellowship of Group Meetings. There is no group on earth that needs that kind of support more than mothers. Think about it, Mothers Anonymous – or “MA.” Hello, my name is – uh, Trixie, and I am a mother. Easy Does It. One Day at a Time. The Serenity Prayer. I could have a sponsor, someone to call when I hit bottom and am about to inflict semi-permanent psychic damage on my young children. I could learn about co-dependency and enabling. If I go on a binge of awful parenting, I quickly hit a meeting, secure in my anonymity. And okay, maybe there’s not twelve-steps – who has the time? Maybe just three-steps for moms. And on-site babysitting. And you would have to SERVE WINE and crudité instead of coffee and snacks. As soon as my kids are in school, I’m forming the first chapter.

(ELLEN exits, STEFANIE enters down left.)

STEF. So during one very long week of motherhood I had to go to Wal-Mart with my son and youngest daughter to load up on various things, including presents for my son’s birthday. So, at the entrance to Wal-Mart I stop to ask for their cooperation and help getting through the store. *This is to a three year old and a four year old...*

Piece of cake, right?...The cart is too small for them to ride in so we are making our way through the aisles and I’m frantically throwing supplies in, hoping to get everything I need before a major melt down. My daughter is so not cooperating... By aisle three, the cart was full and I had already exhausted the *full range of behavior modification techniques*. I had tried positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, the carrot, the stick, pleading, yelling, begging, whispering, kind words, angry words and various threats. In aisle four, I give up and kneel down to have the big talk with the little.... My son, in the meantime, is fiddling around with the shelves behind me and says in a calm voice “Mommy, my thumb is stuck.” Without taking my eyes off the offending child, I say, “So pull your thumb out.” “Mommy, I can’t.” I whip around and sort of semi-yank his thumb out of the tiny metal hole he has stuck it in and oops – blood....Gushing blood... Not so bad as to alert Wal-Mart personnel but not so great looking either. I frantically start digging through the cart looking for the wipes from aisle two while trying to shield my son’s vision from the birthday gift I had surreptitiously slipped into the cart. I find the wipes, rip open the package, apply pressure and pick up my son. Holding him in one arm, barking orders to my daughter and pushing the overflowing cart with my elbow, I make my way through the aisles, trying to find the Band-Aids and Neosporin. I find I can’t stop myself from continuing to throw stuff into the cart – oh look – a great deal on tissues – that’s the carpet cleaner I’ve been looking for. This is insanity... I am insane... Something... Find the Band-Aids and Neosporin, apply copious amounts of both to the bleeding appendage, drag both kids to the checkout counter and then to the car, yelling instructions and threats the whole way, load everyone in, start the car and burst into tears. Just another glamorous, fulfilling hour of motherhood.