

# A Baby Changes Everything

by Delores Bone

When I first found out I was pregnant I had to decide if I wanted to have the baby. I decided to have my child. With that came changes. There were a lot of things in my life that were not suitable for a child. I had a bad living situation and my daughter's father was not going to be there.

The most important thing I learned is that when you have a child, life is no longer just about you. Before I had my daughter I lived dangerously. There was nothing I would not get into. I drank, smoked, partied, and I was stubborn. I did things foolishly without thinking. I had to sit down and really think, "Is this what I want? Am I ready to become a woman and take on my responsibility?"

I had nowhere to go. About two weeks before I was due to have my daughter I was living in a shelter where I was having a lot of problems. After she was born, I ended up in four different shelters because I was selfish and only thinking of myself—not about what was in my daughter's best interest. Because of my actions, the Department of Social Services got involved. They told me that if what I was doing did not stop then my daughter would no longer be living with me. She'd be living in someone else's house. That made me change my attitude about the way I looked at things. I had to



Photo courtesy of the author.

**Delores Bone with her daughter Lashaura.**

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stop shutting people out and realize that I couldn't do everything all by myself. Everybody needs a little help, no matter what it might be. I began taking anger management classes, parenting classes, and even seeing a therapist. The anger management classes helped me to find other ways to communicate with people instead of just raising my voice and getting angry. The parenting classes taught me how to be more interactive with my daughter and how to be more nurturing. My response to this help actually allowed me to keep my daughter.

I had one more additional change to make. I knew that having a father in my daughter's life was important so I decided to let my child's father see her while he was incarcerated. We made an agreement to handle our situation like mature adults for our daughter.

Changes are part of life. I learned to look at change the way other people might see it, not just in my own way. Seeing things from another point of view opens me up so that I can see what the next person is talking about. This has helped me to see other scenarios and options for myself. Your idea of change might be good, but there might be other things you could do that you haven't thought of. But whether it is good or bad, changes always need to be made.

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