



Belinda Baggs

How motherhood inspired a longboarding icon to commit her life and livelihood to climate activism

Motherhood can be a portal to self-expansion. Before you're in it, it's easy to only envision the explosion of new challenges that accompany parenting: sleep deprivation, frustration, uncertainty, diaper blowouts. It doesn't seem transformative, at least not in a good way. Despite the steep learning curve and encompassing reality of birthing and keeping another human alive, for many women motherhood also represents a transition from a singular sense of self, to a plural one: from "I" to "we." And not only in the familial sense, but also more globally speaking.

Amongst the surprising changes that pregnancy brings are significant alterations in brain anatomy that affect how we relate to others and how we "think about what is going on in someone else's mind," as reported in *Scientific American*.

Early motherhood can feel like a deluge of the power and fragility of life. And the profound recognition that every human being, before they cut you off in traffic, was once some tender new mother's precious baby, like yours. In short, mothering can be our greatest teacher of empathy, compassion and, subsequently, activism.

This was the case for professional freesurfer and longboarding icon Belinda Baggs. "Being a mother is everything. It makes you look at the world differently. You're no longer the center of the universe—your child is. For me, motherhood created empathy and a consciousness for all living things on a deeper level." Belinda says that with her son came the gift of a more macroscopic view of her life and work.