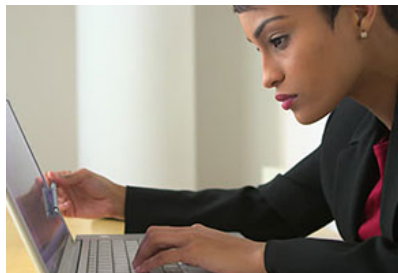




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How to Get Over the Working Mom Guilt and Burnout

By: ANN BROWN
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Working moms never seem to have enough time. You have a lot on your plate--you're trying to focus on your career while raising a healthy and happy family. And sometimes it feels like you should clone yourself. But maybe there are things you are doing--or not doing--that are sabotaging your efforts.

One of the main things is not creating a work/life balance. Jessica Walker, Motherhood Mental Wellness Coach and founder of Mom in Me Network,

says she likes to create a balance using the "2-2-2-2" strategy. "Spend two minutes each day honoring yourself; take two breaks a month to do something nice for yourself; twice a year plan a getaway; and volunteer in your child's class or pop up visit two times a month," she says.

Try to live in the moment more. "One way to nourish positive emotions is to take a moment to appreciate and write down your goals and wishes. Make a 'Grateful' list. Instead of thinking about what you don't have, focus on what you do have! Things like shelter, kids who need and adore you, health, two eyes, two legs, a wig or weave (if you have one)," Walker says with a laugh. "I'm grateful for all these things. You should be, too."

Examine your priorities. "First things first: you must decide what is important to you. Then, clearly set your priorities. Figure out what really matters in your life. Honestly assess what you want your priorities to be--and not what you, or everyone else, think they should be. Is your job interfering with your personal time? If so, you may want to reassess your priorities at work. The key to a well-balanced life is to understand that true balance comes from home and work," says Diane Randall, of Diane Randall Consults, who conducts sessions and workshops to help professionals with demanding schedules live healthier.

There may be a perfectly good reason you are feeling overworked: because you are. It's time to reach out for help. There is no such thing as a superwoman and everyone needs a helping hand sometimes. "Have your spouse help! Don't abuse your spouse, but don't forget that he or she can be a huge source of support. One couple I know, the husband takes charge once a week and gives his wife the night off," advises Walker. "Join or form a babysitter exchange group where you can earn points for watching people's kids, or use points to get help with yours. And, find or start a mother's group in your area. You can do this with Facebook or another social media site to help you connect with others and ask for help when needed. Or hire a mother's helper. I use to have my 11-year old neighbor come over after school and help me for about an hour or two," notes Walker, who describes herself as a "Happy Black Mom."

Do your best to stop stressing out. "Stress is a killer! Really," Walker points out. "According to Harvard law school reports, constant stress — whether from a traffic-choked daily commute, unhappy marriage, or heavy workload — can have real physical effects on the body. It has been linked to a wide range of health issues, including mood, sleep, and appetite problems — and yes, even heart disease."

Adds Randall, "Constant exposure to stress can lead to exhaustion and burnout. To minimize the effects of stress on your health, pursue the following: 30 minutes of sustained daily exercise, eat healthy foods high in antioxidants, drink plenty of water and make sure that you get 6-9 hours of sleep each night. Focused relaxation, such as meditation or daydreaming, is a great stress reliever and energy booster. Find time for it every day. If you suffer from poor health, it is a clear sign that your life

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Quick Poll

Do you think a college education is the route to obtaining the "American Dream"?

Yes, I do.

61%

No, I don't.

39%

Total votes: 94

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is out of balance."

Working women often feel guilty about devoting time to their careers. "Know that these thoughts are fallacies. You work to care for your family. The key word is 'care.' You care so much about your family that you are willing to put yourself to work in not just one job but two! The first job being a mother of course which you receive no compensation for," concludes Walker.

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