

## Hey Mom... Lighten Up!

If you're like most moms today, you're struggling to find the balance between work, family and self. You're taking care of the needs of everyone else, leaving you little time, energy or motivation for your own self care. You have a heaping pile of obligations, responsibilities, commitments and chores and it takes focus, organization and excellent time management skills to get it all done. You accomplish in a day what most people do over the course of a week. You cross off tasks on your "to-do" list with a heavy sigh and a sense of relief. So, instead of feeling great when you get it all done, why is it that you have that nagging sense of unease?

Chances are, in your effort to "get it all done" you've disregarded the need for fun, joy, passion and purpose. Maybe there's a dream unfulfilled and your busy schedule doesn't allow for any time to pursue a passion. Maybe there are needs unmet such as extra sleep, exercise or spending time with friends but your obligations don't allow the extra time to fit it all in. Maybe you're so busy, you haven't even had the opportunity to think about what it is that you actually need and what is necessary to make you feel happy and complete. Yes you may be getting it all done but there's a good chance it's at the expense of a healthy and balanced body, mind and soul.

This is the way many moms are living today. They're putting their needs at the bottom of the priority list because they've been conditioned to care for everyone else. They feel guilty when they show themselves any self care and they've resigned themselves to thinking that this is what motherhood is. Well moms, the way you travel through motherhood is a very unique and personal decision. There is no "one size fits all" method, but instead many styles and choices to choose from. So here's a thought. Look at yourself through the eyes of your children and try to see how they view you. Are you silly, fun and relaxed or stressed, anxious and impatient? Does the way you look, feel and live set a positive example for your children to see and learn from? Once you get your answer, determine if that's how you want to be viewed and if that's the model of behavior you want to instill in your children.

You are the single biggest influence in your children's lives. They watch, learn and emulate your thoughts, words and actions. If you don't like the image you're projecting or the role model you've become...change! Every home has a feeling within it. Almost like the many different styles of music, if you were to go from one house to the next, you'd find a certain harmony within the home. Some homes are melodious and soothing, while others are so noisy and thrashing they can give you a headache! Well, much of the harmony begins with mom and it's determined by the way mom feels. If mom is feeling peaceful, happy and content she will enhance her family with the benefit of these emotional states. If she's feeling drained, unfulfilled and unhappy she'll bring these feelings into the home as well.

When mom feels strained, stressed and harried, it's natural to want to feel better. This is when many moms gravitate towards self soothing behaviors like overeating, overspending, drinking or smoking. Every self soothing behavior is a signal that mom is looking to feel better. While these behaviors may give mom a quick burst of energy, relief or satisfaction, the results are short lived and the problem is never solved. Often, the problem is made worse as mom is now struggling with additional weight gain or a maxed out credit card.

When mom finds the time for whatever brings her joy, she feels better. When she feels better, she finds more energy, patience and satisfaction in all that she does. Because she feels better, she has less of a need to self soothe by overeating or overspending. She's able to bring a lighthearted, peaceful feeling to herself, her family and everyone benefits as a result. She's becoming the role model she'd always hoped she'd be and NOTHING looks or tastes as sweet as that.

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