



Can Working Mothers Have Their Cake and Eat it Too Without Parenting Burnout?

By Kelly Nault, M.A.

To focus on the family and put them first is as natural to mothers as breathing. To not focus on the family is rarely a choice for any mom-it's simply a way of life.

Not long ago "bringing home the bacon" was the father's role but now working mothers are "bringing home the bacon" too. Today, 50% of the mothers in our country (with children living at home) are working full time and most moms experience the stress of trying to balance it all especially when it comes to parenting. Sound familiar?

The Only Way Working Mothers Can Focus on the Family AND Have It All

Although working mothers bring home some of the bacon (and if you are a single mother *all* of the bacon), it hasn't changed the fact that most working mothers are literally cooking the bacon too.

Probably no surprise to you, Dr Jody Heymann found that 80% of women report doing far more of the household chores than their spouse. In addition to taking on more chores, it is common for working mothers to put unrealistic expectations and pressures on themselves-to be the perfect mom, perfect spouse, perfect daughter, perfect friend, and perfect career woman too. Yes, many of us working moms have an invisible "S" tattooed on our bellies as we strive to be that unattainable Super Woman! Yet, sadly Super Woman can become super stressed.

When interviewed on the radio, I am often asked if it is possible for working mothers to have it all. My response is always, "YES! It is possible for working mothers to have it all BUT only if they ask for and accept help."

The trouble is most working mothers have difficulty doing this-asking for help.

Three Ways to Prevent Parenting Burnout for Working Mothers

Even though most moms know it take a village to raise a child, most mothers don't ask their village for help. This puts undue stress on both moms and their families.

Three simple ways working mothers can prevent parenting burnout:

1. **Parenting is a big job. Get real you can't do it all alone effectively.** You can't do it *all* (at least do it well) by yourself. Realize that the best thing you can do for your family is to ask for help. Burning your candle at both ends only leads to burnout parenting and this is not healthy for you nor for your family. Your family deserves a happy mom.
2. **Graciously accept help.** When someone asks if they can help you, always answer "yes" and then figure out how. Let others in your life, especially your children and spouse, help you more. We all want to contribute. By accepting help more you will actually be boosting your children's and spouse's self-esteem. Remember to thank them and focus on what they did well. Focusing on what they didn't do well does not motivate our loved ones to

want to help us again in the future.

3. **Find ways to farm out the things you don't like to do.** Don't like to iron? Consider sending them to the cleaner and use this extra time to focus on your family. Don't like to clean but love to cook? Trade chores with household members or with a girlfriend who loves to do the things you don't.

How Mothers Can Focus on the Family and Get Their Work Done

The day you die your inbox will have messages unanswered, your laundry hamper will still hold dirty clothes and your to do list will likely have items left incomplete. But on that day, will you look back and feel that your focus on the family was a fulfilling journey, or sadly realize it **had** become a chore you felt you had to do?

The main key is to love and support your child, and to not allow early teenage behavior problems to affect you emotionally and bring you down as well.

Kelly Nault, MA corporate spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! Sign up for her free online parenting course at www.UltimateParenting.com.

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