

Go ahead, take time for you!

On a very special day that recognizes mothers, shouldn't you recognize yourself, too? By Sara Yates



One of the most amazing roles a woman can take on is that of a mother. A mother's love is an endless ocean. And, her care and devotion teach children to grow and learn. Mothers are not just "moms." They're teachers, healers, counselors and even secretaries and financial accountants. They hold the title of "heroes" in the eyes of children throughout the span of generations. And, in this busy world that surrounds us, moms all across the world are trying to "do it all." But many are forgetting to take time for themselves to recharge and nurture their minds, bodies and souls. So, the question is "What about you?"

First of all, it is not selfish to take care of your own needs. It is just as important to take care of yourself as a mother as it is to take care of the ones you love. Some of you may realize this but are not quite sure how to do it. Maybe you feel guilty for taking time out for yourself or putting your own needs higher on the list of things to do.

Truth be told, mothers can't afford not to. Finding the much needed time and space for relaxation, reflection and centering within actually has amazing benefits for the entire family. Being mentally, physically and emotionally fit will give you a better sense of self. And, being a better YOU is actually teaching your children to be a better THEM. It shows you really care.

What it means to "take care of yourself"

Needs of an individual may vary from person to person, so it is important to look at what works for you and your personality. Perhaps there is a hobby that really sparks an

interest. Time set aside to read a good book or write in a journal may work for some while getting out of the house and finding an adventure or enjoying nature may work for others.

What goes in

Some important things that should be done in everyone's life to reach a fully satisfied healthy feeling is to make sure you are eating right. What works for kids may not work for your body. There are many books, such as the 28-day Plan book series by Christine Green, that focus on the right kinds of foods to help energize and stabilize your health.

Get moving!

Exercise can get your blood flowing and leave your mind clearer and your body in a better state. A 10-minute walk, a 30-minute Yoga video or a more rigorous routine can do wonders. It's about what works for you and what you want to accomplish. Regardless, not taking care of your physical well-being can cause damage to your mental state as well.

Slow down!

Yes, it is important to get the cleaning done and make sure you keep up with the daily grind, but giving yourself time to relax and meditate daily is just as important ... if not more. A nice bubble bath may do the trick. Cuddling up with a good book or a journal gives your mind time to get off "pilot mode" and reflect on the more important things within yourself. Simplifying your surrounding can also give you a new calming perspective.

Girls just want to have fun

You are a responsible person. After all, you hold down the fort most of the time and manage so many of life's demands. It's OK to schedule a day or night out with your girlfriends or just get out of the house to pamper yourself a little! Go for it. You deserve it, just make sure you leave any guilt at the door. You shouldn't feel guilty about giving yourself alone time to enjoy life once in a while.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

There will always be some degree of challenge in trying to take time for yourself. You are a mom and being a mother is a full-time job. But the good news is you don't have to do it alone! If you don't let people know when you need help, they won't know how to help or that you even need it. Trying mommy swaps with friends who have children is a great way to utilize your options. If you are in a situation that is more complicated and you feel you don't have anyone who could give you a helping hand, there are many programs and organizations designed to help mothers, such as the YMCA, Mommy & Me groups, churches or local organizations that offer a mom's day out, and camps and activity programs.

You can also find interesting ways to incorporate your children into your new routines. Perhaps even teach them a great lesson in taking care of themselves as well and the importance of that goal. After all, if being a better you creates a better them, then the benefits will outweigh any challenges that may seem present. Just remember you are important and you should treat yourself that way. **MS&F**



A Living Example: Jennifer Nicole Lee

"Champion of Moms" Jennifer Nicole Lee, who was featured on the November 2006 cover of Max Sports & Fitness, boasts an unparalleled ambition and drive. Not only is she a mom of two adorable boys who keep her busy, but she hosts bikini boot camps, does lifestyle consulting, models, holds seminars and trains other women. Here's what she had to say to other moms about the importance and benefits of taking time for "you."

MS&F: Why do you think it is important to focus on yourself as a mother?

JNL: If mom is happy, then the whole house is happy. I say, happy healthy mom equals happy healthy home!

MS&F: What challenges do you face in taking time for yourself?

JNL: You must schedule it and put yourself back on your to do list. Becoming the master of budgeting time is another technique I coach women and moms on during my phone consultations. Have a bi-weekly massage, mani and pedi or a hot soak in the tub to keep

yourself balanced and happy.

MS&F: What does "taking care of yourself" mean to you?

JNL: Time to set goals, reflect, meditate, give thanks and just be grateful for all of my blessings, even when I am having one of those "bad" days.

MS&F: How do you think it affects those you love?

JNL: My home and family feel my balance in my life and therefore they feel more safe and secure.

Jennifer Nicole Lee's ideas for other moms searching to make time for themselves include ...

- Hot soak in the tub
- Mani and pedi
- Reading a book in bed
- Getting an hour-long massage
- Going for a walk or a brisk jog
- Heading to the gym for a power pump!
- Taking a spa day
- Enjoying the luxury of setting goals in your life

For more information about Jennifer Nicole Lee, visit www.shopjnl.com.

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