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At-Home Mommy – Entry Level

By Sherri L Dodd

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When I left my high-tech corporate job to be an at-home mom, I had no idea of the changes I was going to encounter. No, I am not talking of the usual baby stuff like not freaking out when food or something worse gets rubbed on my nice clothes...if and when I get a chance to where nice clothes. Nor am I talking about the fact that I could no longer have extravagant and expensive knicks-knacks on my coffee table. What I am talking about is something else...and someone else. I am talking about having to relate to those other, more seasoned, at-home mommies.

Sure, everything seemed okay. Friendly glances at the park followed by a short spurt of conversation, but getting into those little cliques are just as tricky, if not more difficult, than the ones I encountered, and came to master within the corporate environment. Though I was efficient in my conversation and quick with my wit; though I laughed at the right jokes and wore appropriate attire; and, even when I stood in the widest opening of the park letting everyone see that I was available for chat, the mommies shied away from me. My best bet is that they probably gathered in a far counter to chuckle over my desperation. Heck, I may have even laughed at me too had I not been distracted by the small hovering cloud of post-partum depression.

You can liken this to the city gal in the country. There are many movies with a similar story line about the loud and obtrusive outsider that everyone sees as the square peg. While she may want to fit in, she knows from the get-go that it is going to be a long journey, due to all that tension she feels from her new peers. That is where I began to find my thoughts. (And let me tell you, if you think your co-workers in their Armani suits are pretentious, try a mommy-clique in t-shirts and capris. I kid you not, they can be downright condescending.) While acceptance is hard, it is a form of closure, and after a year or so, I decided that I was just not going to fit in with the bobby-socked, sneakered mommies littered throughout my day.

But, then...and here is the light at the end of the tunnel...something happened. To this day I cannot tell you how we came across each other, but I was invited to a play date by one of the

sneakered-mommies. There, I met another mommy. The playdate started slowly and was light in discussion. But, it was consistent...and stayed consistent on a weekly basis. I began to look forward to my sessions. At the time, I did not know much about them, but every week that knowledge grew. To make a long story short, the friendships stuck. These days I do not always see them as much as I used to, but it is more of a hectic schedule issue than a lack of want. As well, more mommies came and I am proud of my little mommy network that I have slowly gained. Good-bye Armani, hello Gap.

A few times since, I have seen a new mom on the playground fresh from corporate, possibly on a trial period of this new career. I observe what those other mommies must have seen in me. There is a look of uncertainty on the face of an entry-level at-home mom. Perhaps it is a mix of "Am I doing the right thing (I loved my work, not to mention the money and acknowledgement), "I absolutely did the right thing (the proof is toddling before me) and "How the heck did I get here (What a completely different world). This uncertainty is projected in facial expression as well as through actual conversation. I reflect and believe that my uncertainty mixed with a mild case of PPD must have made

me real stimulating conversation. No wonder they ran the opposite direction. As well, trying to bring a corporate mentality into the position of at-home mom was another stumbling block. I looked at building the new relationships as a strategy to accomplish and, subsequently, master. When really what it takes to build relationships with other at-home mommies is genuine honesty and a grounded sense of self. Only after that takes place and solidifies can a dash of cattiness be added. But, the details on that topic are a completely different article.

The next time you encounter a corporate mommy grasping for the sense of her new entry-level position, have patience and compassion. Yes, she could quite possibly start off awkward and maybe even insulting, but most likely, she wants to succeed in this new career. Mentor her in a non-invasive way and she is sure to become a great friend.

Sherry Dodd is an ACE-certified Personal Trainer and Lifestyle and Weight Management Consultant. She is also the creator and author of Mom Looks Great – The Fitness Program for Post Partum Women. With over fifteen years of exercise experience, she is dedicated to a life of fitness as well as encouraging others to seek healthy habits and a better quality of life.

"Renee's Mommy is Here"

By Kimberly Chastain

I still remember the scene vividly. I was getting out of my car at the baby-sitter's house and a little boy comes running out the door. The little boy begins to yell – "Renee's Mommy is here!" I remember stopping in my tracks and thinking – "Oh, that is who I am now – Renee's Mommy." My whole identity is now Renee's Mommy – or is it?

As a Christian Working Mom I have multiple roles, I am Renee's Mommy and Zachary's Mommy as well. I am John's wife, Betty and Eldred's daughter, Karen's sister, church worker, school helper, a therapist, professional coach, and a child of God. Do you often wonder who you are? Where do you fit

in with all your roles?

Women have had many roles since time began. The Proverbs 31 woman is a: wife, mother, businesswoman, charity worker, and many other roles. You will recognize in here some of the stresses we modern women face. Proverbs 31:15, 18 states she gets up while it is still dark and her lamp does not go out at night. Does that sound familiar? We are often burning the candle at both ends.

Although there are many roles that can be stressful there can be great joy in all our many identities. I love being Renee and Zachary's Mom. There is great joy in watching them grow and learn about God and His world. I also thoroughly enjoy my work as a professional coach and therapist. Work provides me great satisfaction. Christian Working Moms often receive a lot of support and encouragement from co-workers. As Christian wives we give and receive companionship, support, and passion (when we pencil it in) with our husbands. Our work at church and school also gives care and comfort for others. We often receive the greater blessing when we work at church or at our children's school.

As a fellow Christian Working Mom I celebrate and applaud all our different roles. Variety in our roles often allows us to manage turmoil in any one area of our lives. The other parts of our lives seem to compensate for the difficult times and help us to maintain balance. I encourage you to rejoice in all God has given you and your many different roles.

Oh, by the way if we meet virtually or in person I'll answer to Kimberly, Renee's Mommy, Zachary's Mommy

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Kimberly M. Chastain, MS, LMFT is the Christian Working Mom Coach and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who specializes in helping Christian women make the most of their lives. She is the author of the on-line course, "I Can't Say No" and Pearls of Encouragement for Christian Working Moms, a free e-book. If you suffer from "I Can't Say `No" Syndrome, visit Kimberly's site today for the

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