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**For the Love of Mommy**

**By Jennifer Ottolino**

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For most of you being a mother is one of the most wonderful and rewarding experiences that you will have in your life. It can also be a time when you feel lost and out of touch with who you are outside of being a "mommy". Maintaining an identity outside of your children is vitally important, not just for you, but for your family as well. So here are ten strategies that not only keep you connected with you, but also have the added bonus of being an important life skill to teach your children.

1. Be present– Often when we spend time with our children we are thinking about the things that we should be doing or we multi task and we are not really present with them. Then, when we are not with them, we feel guilty. Make the decision that when you spend time with your child to just be there for them, enjoy them, listen to them, and focus on them 100%. Spending this type of quality time with your child will lessen the guilt and help you focus on other activities with the same 100% attention. Added Bonus: Teaches your child to focus on and enjoy the moment.

2. Take care of yourself– This is a big one for most women since we get so busy caring for others we tend to forget about ourselves. Define what taking care of yourself means to you and develop a schedule to do it. Keep tweaking your schedule until you are actually fitting taking care of yourself into the day. Taking care of yourself helps to replenish your spirit, it helps you to relax, and it helps you to feel good about yourself. Added Bonus: Teaches your child to develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

3. Connect with you partner– It is so easy to get wrapped up in the kids and in everyday life that you forget about your relationship with your partner. Connect with your partner as often as you can, make a point to sit down over coffee on a Sunday morning and just talk about anything and everything, but the kids. It can be silly or profound, just make sure you connect with each other as a couple. Added Bonus: Teaches your child how to maintain a healthy relationship.

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4. Get involved— Get involved in some activity that is only for you. It can be work, volunteering, a class, or a book club. Just get involved in some regular activity where you are not a wife or a mommy, you are just you. Added Bonus: Encourages your child to participate in outside activities.

5. Have meaningful conversations— Sometimes when you have children your day gets so caught up with "kid stuff" that you can't remember the last time you had a meaningful adult conversation. Have you ever felt frustrated, aggravated and on edge and then gone out to a long dinner with a friend and felt like a new woman at the end of the night? That is why it is important to have meaningful conversations. Added Bonus: Teaches your child to get their needs met by more than one person.

6. Read— Who has time to read? We all do. It doesn't have to be a long time, and reading is a great way to be intellectually stimulated. It exposes us to different subjects and new ideas, even when it is a light and fluffy read. Staying intellectually stimulated is important because it keeps us in touch with what we find exciting and gets those brain cells snapping. . Added Bonus: Teaches your child to seek out and appreciate knowledge.

7. Take time for just you— Make sure you get some get some quality time for just you. It can be anything you want from spending time with a friend, to getting a manicure, or just being by yourself. Just do something that is only for you, it will fill you up and refresh you. You will feel like a new woman after you are done. . Added Bonus: Encourages your child to be independent.

8. Remember that you have needs too— We have needs, and it is our responsibility to get them met. If you're feeling frustrated, or unappreciated, instead of walking around feeling angry and misunderstood, figure out a way to get those needs met. Talk about them, ask for support, and be specific. And remember most people can't read minds so you have to communicate with them to get those needs met. . Added Bonus: Teaches your child how to effectively meet their own needs.

9. Give yourself permission— Why do we feel like bad mothers for wanting to do something for ourselves? Every woman who I have ever talked to that wants to express an unhappiness about being a mother feels the need to qualify it by saying "Well, of course I love my child more than anything in the world but...". Of course you do, but it doesn't mean that you can't be unhappy about the way something is going or how you feel. This is how you feel right now, there is nothing wrong with that, you're a normal mother. Give yourself permission to feel the way you do and do something for yourself to feel better. Even if that means stepping back from your child for a couple of hours. . Added Bonus: Teaches your child to recognize and healthily deal with their emotions.

10. Be a role model— When you ask most parents what they want most for their children they say that they want them to be happy and successful contributing adults. The very best way to ensure that comes true for your child is to be a role model. If you want your child to be confident, get their needs met, be sure of who they are, and happy with their life, just remember that they learn that from you. Added Bonus: Teaches your child to act with integrity.

Being a mother in today's modern world is tricky business. We are bombarded all day long with messages of what makes a "good mother". Just forget all that, and be true to you. Being joyful, present, and authentically you is the very best gift you can give to yourself and your child.

Jen Ottolino is a Personal Coach who works with individuals to eliminate blocks to success. She partners with people to actively attract the life they know they deserve, but haven't quite managed to achieve. You can visit her website at

and discover articles, tips, and strategies

designed to enhance your life purpose. She also publishes the bite sized weekly newsletter Little gems to subscribe send an email

## **"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

details on an exciting email course that's sure to set you free!

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