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**The Martha Complex – The problem with being a 1950's mom**

**By Lara Shecter**

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"It's a good thing" is a mouthful for a new generation of working mothers

Poor Martha. For five long months she will be forced to leave all her "good things" behind as she serves her sentence in federal prison for obstruction of justice. While Martha Stewart's recent run-in with the law is nothing to gloat about, it can be seen as a kind of vindication for mothers everywhere. It demonstrates in a rather spectacular fashion that while maintaining perfection at work and at home is a commendable goal, it is about as realistic as wanting a toddler who changes his own diapers.

While they grew up with the mantra "You can have it all," many women are realizing that being a loving wife, a wise and gentle mother, and successful business woman is more than they can handle. Unlike their mother's who struck a blow for feminism by joining the work force, the most recent generation of mothers finds itself trapped in a web of feminist ideals and feminine pursuits.

Old-fashioned values are all the rage with countless magazines and television programs detailing how to make absolutely everything from scratch. Gone are the days when a working mother could pat herself on the back for managing to get a TV dinner on the table to feed her hungry brood. If it isn't a gourmet meal made from organic vegetables grown in her garden, today's working mom feels strangely inadequate. If Martha can make her own Christmas ornaments, and seventeen kinds of cookies while running a business empire, the underlying sentiment seems to be, why can't I?

With Martha's public stumble, however, mothers everywhere can breath a collective sigh of relief. Perhaps when it comes to juggling work and family, perfection is only an illusion and women can cut themselves a little more slack. Remember, it's only "a good thing" if you have the time and energy to enjoy it.

Here are 5 ways to break the Martha Habit:

1. Take your kids to the store, let them choose a bag of cookies, and don't look at the ingredients. Once at home, give a cookie to each child and have one yourself. Pour a glass of milk, and revel in the

fact that your kitchen is not covered in flour and that there are no dishes to clean.

2. Get your blood pumping once a week. No offense Martha, but while making your own truffles can be divine, it doesn't leave a whole lot of time to stay in shape. Try an activity that will make you feel like a kid again, like line-dancing, Hip-Hop or Yoga.

3. Despite the hype, most crafts aren't cheap or easy. If you feel your blood pressure rising when you contemplate the amount of time and money you've spent on a project, you should reconsider the whole endeavor. Next time accept that a candle from the dollar store burns just as brightly as one you've molded yourself.

4. If your child is in more than 2 after school activities, think about canceling them. To stop

over-scheduling yourself, you must first stop over-scheduling your children.

5. Take a team approach. Your kids would prefer a piniata of a lopsided fish to a perfect replica of a Disney character as long as they got to squish the papier-macher through their little fingers. It doesn't have to look perfect to be perfect as far as kids are concerned, so relax and get them involved in what you're doing.

Lara Shecter's desire to keep things simple and fun for busy families led to the creation of Now and Then - The Coolest Scrapbook for School-Aged Children. Divided in 9 vibrantly colored sections, covering Preschool to Grade 7, this simple scrapbook allows busy parents to capture the magic and memories of their child's school years with minimal time and effort. Visit <http://www.bodegabooks.com> for more information.

## **5 Ways To Tell If A Preschooler Is Living In Your House**

**By Deborah Shelton**

1. You reheated the same cup of coffee three times this morning.

2. There is always one more person in your bed in the morning, than there was the night before.

3. You can't imagine life without the Cartoon Network.

4. The lock on your bathroom door is purely for decoration... After all, no locked door could withstand, "Mom? What are you doing? Mom? Can I come in? Mom? Can I show you something? Mom? Can I give you a hug? Mom? Can you hear me? Mom?"

5. You have started—or signed—a petition to banish the word "why" from every language known to man.

Deborah Shelton is a mother, freelance writer, and author of the brand new book, "The Five Minute

## The Martha Complex – The problem with being a 1950's mom

Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones." Visit Deborah's website for more family-friendly ideas:

5 Ways To Tell If A Preschooler Is Living In Your House

I'm Sorry! Blame-Game or Accountability?

What Do Mothers Want?

MARTHA MEMORIAL HAS A STEEPLE

Real Women Love Martha

Time Stretching Tips

Profitable Puppets

Ax Gold Collection

File Resource Meter Software

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