



A Working Mom's Sanity Plan for Less Overwhelm at Home

Nicole Fabian-Weber March 23, 2017



It shouldn't come as a surprise that the majority of working moms can't fully relax -- as a parent or human -- after they walk in the door from work. As some say, that's when the "second shift" begins. Countless studies have shown that, whether they work full- or part-time, moms always

wind up doing more for the kids and the house during their "off hours" than dads, which leaves them -- you guessed it -- stressed and without much time for themselves.

A 2015 study showed that mothers play a larger role in managing their children's schedules and activities than fathers in roughly 59 percent of dual income households. Similarly, when it comes to taking care of sick children (which often involves altering one's work schedule), 55 percent of couples said mom does more than dad. Researchers also found that moms tend to take on the majority of household chores and responsibilities in 41 percent of working households, compared with the 8 percent who say dad does more.

Not exactly relaxing.

We asked top experts how working moms can create a game plan for achieving more harmony. As it turns out, these five small changes can make for a much more peaceful, balanced existence at home.

Serenity now.

1. Recognize your guilt triggers. You arrive at daycare to pick up your children, or head home to where they are with a babysitter, and you're met with a less-than-lukewarm response from your little ones. *Uh, guys? you think. A little more excitement?* That's when the guilt sets in (as if you didn't have enough of it at work!).

Whether your guilt stems from the fact that you didn't spend the day with your kids cutting out snowflakes, or from the fact that not being around them all day *kind of* felt like a vacation, working mom guilt can rear its ugly head at any given moment, and, not surprisingly, it isn't helpful. The key is not letting it take over by spotting it at the first signs.

"Guilt is a self-limiting, self-sabotaging thought that can hold you back and divert your energy away from more important, meaningful things in your life," explains Amber Rosenberg, a San Francisco-based life coach who helps working moms manage time and

stress. **"The first step in managing it is noticing when it happens. Get really curious about what's going on and spend a minute writing down whatever you notice."**

For instance, ask yourself what happened right before the guilt came on or how it's showing up in your body. The idea is that a greater awareness of guilt will lead to better management of it. **"By shining a spotlight on the guilt and removing it from the shadows, it takes away some of its power," says Rosenberg. And, of course, without guilt, you can be a more present parent and happier person.**

2. Plan ahead. The last thing you probably want to do after a long day of working and parenting is stand over the counter and make sandwiches and coffee for the following day (hello, those *Real Housewives* aren't going to watch themselves!). But if you're not a morning person -- or your mornings are always rushed -- this small task can reap huge benefits.

"Each night, take 30 minutes to lay out your outfit and the kids' outfits, make the kids' lunches, get the coffeemaker ready, and get the cereal out for breakfast the next morning," suggests Rosenberg. "The more you're able to do at night, the more relaxed and at ease you'll be in the morning."

3. Create a post-work ritual. Just as it's important to switch from your mom role to your work role at the start of the day, it's important to do the same when you get home. Give yourself a little ritual to turn off the workday, so you don't have one foot in the office when you get home. It may be an easy meditation you do as soon as you hit your driveway, or enjoying a quick check-in (via text, FaceTime, whatever) with a friend or loved one.

4. Remember: You can't get water from a dry spring. When you're working, spending time with the kids, and attempting to do the 874 chores that need to get done, try to find time for yourself. Not only do you need it, but also your family needs it.