

# A Moms Life Finding Balance



Have you ever seen a man in a Porsche pull up next to another man in a Mercedes and watched them size each other up, deciding who's better? Then the light changes and they go on their way, each one thinking their car is better. The car is a metaphor for the men's feelings of success and self-worth.

Women don't do the car thing, but they still have the need to prove their self-worth and success to others. Often it's through the work that they do. Their job makes them feel that they're taken seriously, and they're rewarded by both money and praise. But what happens to these women if they leave the workforce to have children? Do their feelings of success stay with them?

Sometimes, stay-at-home moms feel competitive for respect with their counterparts who stayed in the workforce. The job of full-time mother is difficult. There aren't any commendations for potty-training your child before they're 2, teaching your son how to tie his shoes or reminding your daughter not to bathe the hamster in the toilet. Everyone needs to hear they're successful at something, and Moms are no different. Moms yearn for someone to tell them they're a good mother, other than their husbands, who want to have sex with them, or their friends, who really just want to hear the same thing back. So, how do these stay-at-home moms gain that feeling of success that they once had? Over the last few years, many stay-at-home moms I've come in contact with seem to believe that feeling successful as a good mother is directly related to their lack of free time. I've heard women complain about how many hours a day they're driving their kids from activity to activity, how they never have time to shower or get everything done. It's as if the more miserable they are, the more significant they are. And strangely enough, it comes off as bragging.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't do anything for your kids, but there should be a balance between your needs and theirs. When I was growing up, mothers would never have spent their entire weekend sitting on the sidelines of our games or dance recitals. Our mothers allowed us much fewer activities. We joined things at school, maybe a sports team, but there weren't practices that took place four or five times a week with two games on the weekends. Our mothers had no problem saying no to us when we wanted to add another sport or activity. Does that mean we had uninterested mothers? No, it meant that our mothers had more balance in their lives than we do.

Allowing your child to take over your life by agreeing to everything they ask of you doesn't help your child even if it makes you feel like a better mother. When we were kids, we had time to sit around and do nothing, or just play with the other kids on the block. We were able to find ways to be creative and use our imaginations, without our mothers taking us to 25 different places. Our mothers weren't selfish, they were women who took care of our important needs, then taught us how to be independent and take care of ourselves. As women and mothers, we deserve to have our lives back and to not fall into the trap of competing with other women for validation. Our mothers raised us to be successful adults, and now we are mothers raising other successful adults. That is our legacy.

**THE BALANCED LIFESTAY-AT-HOME MOMSPARENTING WOMENPARENTS**

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