

The Top Ten Ways **Working Parents Can Defray** **Stress**

By Natalie Gahrman, The Priority ProSM

Author of *Succeeding as a Super Busy Parent*



Between work demands, caring for your children, and seeing to everyday matters and responsibilities there is little time left to take care of yourself. So, many working parents put off time for their own needs and desires. However, you are a key influence on your child's development, so the amount of stress you are experiencing in your work, family and personal life has a direct impact on them. Here are some tips to help defray the stress and help you consciously take better care of yourself.

1. BREATHE DEEPLY

Bring in the air through your nose, deep down into your belly and out through your mouth in a slow relaxed fashion at least two-three times to help re-focus, re-center and relax.

2. TAKE IN RELAXING SMELLS

Aromatherapy oils, herbal teas or scented candles are all relaxing to the olfactory system.

3. DAYDREAM, MEDITATE AND CONNECT WITH NATURE

Visit places and experience them newly. Or, give your mind a mental break by simply imagining you are somewhere else and creating a visual image and experience in your mind of being there. Either way, fully connect with your surroundings by noticing sounds, smells and textures. Relax your spirit and body using soothing music and warm lights.

4. AVOID OVEREXTENDING YOURSELF

Stop saying "yes" too often to requests of your time, money, energy or other resources. Say "no" to things and people as a way of honoring you. Allow yourself a chance to think about the request before accepting the invitation. Bow out later if the commitment is contributing too greatly to your stress.

5. EAT HEALTHY FOODS

Eat foods and drink beverages that nourish your body and soul.

6. PARTICIPATE IN A HOBBY OR SPORT

Create an outlet for relaxation that you truly enjoy doing. Use your creativity to write, sculpt, knit, paint, etc. Use physical activities or daily exercise rituals to help "blow off" steam both physically and mentally.

7. LIGHTEN UP

Smile, laugh and just be friendly to others. Friendliness goes far and helps you feel good about yourself. Humor lightens up tension. Notice how laughter is contagious, too. People are more naturally attracted to people who seem happy, positive, enthusiastic, and excited about life. Stop taking things so seriously all the time and lighten up a bit.

8. ENLIST HELP FROM OTHERS

Learn to ask for and accept help (even when things are not done to your high standard level!) You will gain by delegating and allowing others to help, even when things don't turn out exactly as they would have if you completed the task yourself. Allow yourself to be nurtured by your friends and family.

9. SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Have fun and interact with your children. Be fully present with them. Truly listen to what they have to say and connect on a deeper level.

10. GET ROMANTIC

Stimulate your body's release of endorphins by reading a romance novel, or better yet, curl up with your spouse/significant other or make love.

About the Author:

Natalie Gahrman is a dynamic keynote speaker, workshop/seminar leader, author, trainer and a leadership coach certified through the International Coach Federation. She combines life experiences and extensive training to motivate others to achieve better results, unlock creativity and gain personal fulfillment in their work and personal life. She specializes in working with Executives, Entrepreneurs, Aspiring Leaders, Working Moms, and SuperBusy Parents seeking to have a more satisfying and fulfilling personal, professional and/or family life. She has appeared worldwide in a variety of publications, newspapers, online, radio and TV as an expert in work/life issues. For more tips, advice and resources see "Succeeding as A Super Busy Parent: 75 Practical Tips for Balancing Life, Love, Kids, and Career" (Infinity Publishing, 2002) and visit <http://www.superbusyparent.com>. To subscribe to our free weekly e-newsletter for working parents, send a blank email to superbusyparent-subscribe@yahoo.com.