What's Up With Mommy Guilt?

When I launched my radio show my mommy guilt skyrocketed. When I was working I felt guilty for not spending more time with my kids during their summer vacation and when I was with them I felt guilty because I had piles of work to do.

Am I a good mother? Yes.

Do I love my career? Yes.

Then why can't I have both without feeling torn?

I posed the mommy guilt question at a Moms' Night Out with several friends last week and you should have heard the groans of recognition.

One mom still feels guilty if she's not home to tuck her daughter in bed at night. Her daughter is 14 and starting high school this fall.

Another mom feels guilty that she didn't let her daughter switch schools when she was being bullied two years ago.

Another mom felt guilty when things weren't “fair” between her kids.

A mother of three felt guilty that she couldn't be at all her kids’ sporting games. She felt like a “bad” mom.

What triggers your mommy guilt?

Is it a messy house? Yelling at your kids? Feeding them junk food sometimes?

Apparently, nearly 96 percent of moms feel guilt about their parenting (1). Moms believe that they’re not doing enough despite research that says we’re actually spending four more hours a week with our kids than our own mothers did. (2)

Guilt can come from three sources: personal relationships, including our children; societal standards; and oneself (3). It seems to me that most of us take on guilt from all of three sources.

I’ve been trying four strategies lately to alleviate some of my guilt and it’s been working. See if any of these strategies work for you.
1) Be present in the moment.

If you decide to spend time with your child, focus on your child and really notice her smile, her hair, the size of her hands, her laugh and whatever else brings you joy. Tell yourself that you will enjoy this moment because it won’t happen again.

2) Be mindful.

If a feeling of guilt appears, recognize it and then let it go. Don’t fret or get upset that the feeling is there, just notice it and then create a visual image of yourself letting the guilt go. It could be a train car that carries your guilt down the track. It could be a hot air balloon that carries the guilt up to the sky away from you. Just create an image that will work for you.

3) Ask yourself, “Whose problem is this?” and it it’s not your problem, don’t take on the guilt.

If your child forgets his/her tennis shoes for gym class, let your child take ownership of the problem of forgetting the shoes. Are you a “bad mom” for not reminding your child? No. Should you rescue your child and bring the shoes to school? No. It should be your child’s responsibility to remember and in fact, you’re doing your child a favor by teaching your child responsibility and not doing too much for him/her.

4) Find a prayer or a mantra that creates peace within you.

For me, the Prayer of Saint Therese brings me peace. She was known as the “Saint of the Little Ways” because she believed in doing the little things in life well with great love. Find a prayer or mantra that calms and centers you based on your values and beliefs.

You can take control of the mommy guilt you feel. Wouldn’t it be far more satisfying to seize the moment and enjoy it?

References:


Author: Toni Schutta, M.A., L.P. is known as the Parent Coach who Gets Results. Toni has 19 years’ experience helping parents find practical solutions that work so their family can be happier. To receive the free report, “3 Essential Strategies to Get Your Child to Listen the FIRST Time” go to: http://www.getparentinghelponow.com now.