

## **Putting Yourself Back on the List-Making Time for What Matters Most “Wellness Matters”**

**By Lisa Schilling RN**

With Mother’s Day approaching, I wanted to send a message to the mothers and grandmothers. It is time to put yourself back on the list. To allow yourself some time that is just for you. Too often, women feel it is their duty to care for everyone else in their life, while at the same time, neglecting the very one that keeps all the plates spinning, themselves!

Today it is time to reclaim your schedule. There are only so many hours in the day, and trying to add more things without taking something away becomes a burnout issue. It is good to visualize how you spend your time. Organizing a schedule is much like organizing a closet. There is room for only a certain number of items before it becomes too full to find anything.

So it is with your time. You need to visually see where all of your time goes. Whatever your issue is, it can be uncovered by keeping a detailed calendar or time journal. You can use this information to create changes that will allow you to chip away at problem issues.

You also need some room left to move things around. This is called *margin*. Margin needs to be built into your schedule. It is a REAL challenge to say no to back-to-back activities. Allowing a nonnegotiable time buffer between each activity will pay huge dividends when things do not go as planned.

No time for you? Then you need to prune from your schedule the activities that no longer bear fruit or reward you. They are there if you earnestly look. You must ask yourself, “Is this activity adding to my life, does it make a difference or is it really necessary?” Sometimes we continue an activity just because, we always have. Consider if an activity may have run its course in your life.

Begin this personal evaluation by creating a “What Matters Most” list. If an activity does not line up with your list, look for ways it can be removed. If an activity or duty does not bear “fruit” in your life, consider “pruning” it so YOU may grow! As your schedule is opened up, you may begin to add time for personal improvement activities that recharge your batteries.

Relaxation time and hobbies can help people become happier and more personally

fulfilled. Freeing up time by dumping unproductive time-sappers will help you regain control of your life. You may then see the “fruit” of your better choices. Begin by doing what you can do—now. The roots you spread will affect your ability to grow.

Total wellness also includes your mental health. In order to safeguard your sanity, you must create healthy boundaries. Boundaries serve two main purposes. Just like a traditional fence, they keep out what you don’t want in your space, and keep safe what you do want in your space. For many different reasons, it is often difficult to set boundaries.

With the constant barrage of stimulus we encounter daily, it becomes necessary to filter the incoming information and emotions you are confronted with. Setting boundaries gives you the power to control the gate and allow into your life only what is useful and beneficial. It also gives you the authority to shut the gate on people, information, and behaviors that are harmful to you and your goals.

Creating personal boundaries is important when people make demands on your time. You need to have clear guidelines to measure against when deciding how to spend your time. By establishing your personal time boundaries up front, you will be able to make more beneficial and consistent decisions. You will have a clear-cut “yes” or “no,” based on whether the activity lines up with the criteria you have set for yourself. These should be based on your “What Matters Most” list and personal values.

It has been said that a man makes time for what a man wants to make time for. That is the truth. What does how you spend your time, say about you? Your challenge is to start creating a REAL desire for personal wellness improvement. When you really want it, you will figure out a way to make it work. Moms will sacrifice for things they want and for things they feel are important.

If you are not making time for yourself currently, then you are saying, by your actions, that you don’t feel you are important. It is time to realize that you will do everything, and care for everyone, better when you first learn to value caring for you own personal health. So start today. Put yourself back on the list and keep your appointments with your self-care activities. Everyone who loves you will thank you for it. “Cause if momma’s not happy, nobody’s happy!”