



Ten Golden Rules for Mums Who Want an Easier Life

1. Be thankful

When you feel like screaming at your partner or the kids and you're feeling very sorry for yourself, then it's the time to start a Gratitude Diary. Make a list at the beginning or end of each day of at least 20 things that you are thankful for today. You can write it down or do it in your day. Start noticing the little things. For example; "Thanks for the smile my son gave me at breakfast"; "Thanks for the taste of that first sip of my morning coffee"; "Thanks for the compliment I got about my work from my boss". Keep this diary for at least 2 weeks, and it will become a useful tool to help you keep a positive attitude when life is challenging!

2. Build a Community



There is a saying that "It takes a village to raise a child", but this village has become a ghost town for many people now. If you don't have family and friends who can help you out with babysitting and all round support, go out and find it. The web is a great place to start. The National Childbirth Trust supports parents with young children through local groups. Or start your own group of supportive mums – you'd be amazed at how many people are desperate to build a community themselves.

3. Make Time for You

You've heard this before and you're going to hear it again! Imagine you are a fish tank. Where are the holes in that tank? What are you going to do to plug those holes and stop the tank leaking? You must make time for you. If you don't believe you deserve it right now, then do it for your kids. If you're

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happy, they are more likely to be happy. What would you really like to do that you haven't been allowing yourself?

4. Slow Down

Now this will be a challenge for over-programmed, multi-tasking women: Let's face it, we pride ourselves on our ability to juggle. You might get things done faster by approaching several things at once, but you are not experiencing anything. If you are talking to your best friend on the phone and cooking a meal at the same time, you're not experiencing the good things of either activity. Enjoy what you are doing and learn to savour each experience. Give yourself permission to slow down and do one thing at a time.

5. Be Active



Raising children is a marathon, not a sprint, and your children need you to keep going. That means that you need to be fit and healthy, which means physical activity. Even two x ten minute walks per day and five minutes meditation will benefit your mind, body and spirit, and make you a nicer person to be around! Ponder on this question: Say if your life depended on you exercising for half an hour four times a week... what would you do to achieve this?

6. Be Present

You might find that your mind is often two places at once. You might be watching TV and planning tomorrow's evening meal. Start focusing on what you are doing right now, rather than diluting your thoughts into past or future. Start taking notice of your present moment, because you'll never have it again. Now that's really important when you have kids. Shift your focus into the here and now – this is where bliss is found. Does your mindset need to change to live more in the present? What needs to change so you can enjoy life more right now?

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7. Do Your Own Time Management

There are so many time management techniques, and the message here is that there is no magic "one size fits all" formula. Ask your friends, do some research. What has worked well for you in the past? Perhaps an element of it worked well – take that element and adapt it to suit you and your family. One that works for me most of the time is allocating things to do in my diary rather than on a "to do" list. That way I have to allocate the time and I can see if I'm being unrealistic in the amount of things I plan to do in the time available.

8. Get Organised

What systems can you put in place to make running a household a bit easier? For example, if you get stressed about not having a meal planned and you find yourself rushing to the shops for last minute ready meals for your family, sit down and do a rotating weekly meal planner – and shop with it. If you rush around first thing in the morning looking for something to wear, lay your clothes out the night before. And get the kids to do the same. All tried and tested tips that you already know, but sometimes a nudge to the obvious helps!

9. Take a Ride in a Glass Bottomed Helicopter

This is all about seeing things from a different perspective. When we're in the heat of the moment and things aren't going our way, we can't "see the wood for the trees". Time out! Take yourself away from the conflict, take some deep breaths, go for a walk or do whatever it takes to calm yourself down. Now ask yourself "What's going on for my husband/son/daughter...?" "Where is he/she coming from here?" The idea of the glass bottomed helicopter is that you mentally fly above your situation and look at the bigger picture.

10. Change Your Habits

We all have habits, and often dissatisfaction within our lives is of our own making; it's so easy to fall into habits that deplete, rather than nurture. Try this exercise – write down all the bad habits in your life, both as an individual and within your family. Be brave and honest and think of the

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habits that bring you grief. Now choose one of these to change into a positive habit that nurtures you. You can choose the easiest or quickest one, but whichever you choose, take a baby step towards that change now. It takes about 30 times to make a behaviour into a habit. So do yourself a "habit chart", and tick each time that you "do" that habit, knowing that once you've got 30 ticks, you've cracked it.

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