

Choosing To Be A Mompreneur

The decision to be a mother today involves many more complex choices than it did for the women of previous generations. As women today, we have different priorities and needs, because many opportunities are available to us. With the high cost of living, it is not always possible to be a stay-at-home mom. We often ask ourselves, How can I be there for my children and still meet my own needs for intellectual stimulation and making an income? While the choice is not an easy one, we can make it easier with adequate planning and support. Here are a few steps for moms who are looking to follow their entrepreneurial passion while raising their children.

Be Easy on Yourself

As moms, we need to avoid comparing ourselves and our lives to working women who do not yet have children or may have decided not to have children. This is a personal choice, and one that is never right or wrong. At the same time, however, we need to recognize that if we have made the decision to have children, there will be limitations—unless we have a genie in a bottle who looks after things while we sleep—on how much time we can devote to our career, especially when our children are young. Acknowledging limitations doesn't mean giving things up. It means being realistic and preparing ourselves accordingly. It also means being easy on ourselves and not beating ourselves up.

Ask for Help

Once we have recognized our limitations, the next step is to go beyond them. Yes, that's right! Go beyond them by acknowledging that we cannot do everything alone and then, using our muscle of courage, asking for help.

Make a list of all the things you either don't like to do or don't have the time and energy for, and give those things away. You don't always have to pay for help—there are many creative ways to find it. For example, I had a mom-client who was investing a considerable amount of time each week responding to customer queries, like e-mails, and it was draining her energy. What she longed to do was design ads, as this is what she enjoyed most. Being a mom and having limited time, she felt she had to choose between designing and answering e-mail queries. When I asked her what she would choose if she could do anything she wanted, her answer was clear. She would spend her time designing.

After a little brainstorming, we discovered she had someone in her life who needed help with design and trusted my client's designing skill. My client's assignment was to approach this person and ask her if she would like to barter. My client would design ads for her, and she would take care of my client's e-mails. The friend was very happy with this arrangement, as my client had had great success with the friend's ads. As soon as my client decided to get help with a task she didn't like, and exchange it for something she did like, the solution popped up. And now, both are happy. My client is able to spend her time doing what she loves—designing ads—and her friend is enjoying the services of a great designer in exchange for responding to queries. If you are willing to look deeply, you will almost always find the resources you need.

Make Wise Choices

When it comes to asking for help, use your heart instead of your head. If what you really want to do is stay home with your child, but you think you have to do the administrative part of your business, give the work to another mom in exchange for babysitting her child. This way, you can be with your child. Of course, if you enjoy the administrative part, then by all means do it and find other creative ways to be with your child. One of the most important lessons you can teach your child is to do what you love. This may mean you temporarily take away some time from your child, but in the long run this will be good for both of you.

This is one of the hardest lessons I had to learn on my mothering journey. I did a research and discovered that it is healthy for children to get used to different styles of caretaking. This was a relief to me. I learned that it is actually good for my child to be looked after by another adult, to become flexible and adaptable. Of course, you want to make sure your child has a trusting relationship with the adult and that the adult knows how to take care of young children. But once the trust is established, have the courage to let go.

Enjoy the Journey

Last, but most important, remember that your children will grow up before you know it. Enjoy them! Enjoy life's journey with them! Take the time to relax, and take care of yourself. You have many years ahead to pursue your career. If you have to make choices, cherish and enjoy the choices you make. Life is full of adventure and opportunity just waiting for you.