

## ACTION PLAN

ADVICE FROM JEFF DAVIDSON, *At Your Best*  
ADVISOR AND AUTHOR OF *BREATHING SPACE*

### The Case of the Stressed-Out Mother of Two

One of our readers is a working wife, lawyer and mother of two. She gets up around 4:30 a.m. to work, gets dressed at 5:45, dresses and feeds her two young daughters, takes them to day care, commutes an hour to work, and arrives at work at 8:45 a.m. After returning home from work, she prepares dinner, feeds her girls, plays with them, reads to them, and tucks them into bed around 8:30 p.m. The hours after that may be devoted to office work or housework. Weekends, she looks forward to shopping, household chores, dance class and church. Her husband travels frequently, so she's responsible for bills and home repairs.

Here's my advice for what she can do to live a more-relaxed, less-stressful life.

- Condition your car to support you and your family. Pack it with the commodities you need—lip gloss, pocket change, dance shoes—so that you don't have to pack things every morning.
- Don't fold and put away your daughters' laundry. Stack it on a table, pull out what you need to dress them.
- Take advantage of errand services like dry cleaners or supermarkets that deliver. Or hire a teenage helper occasionally.
- Start regarding Saturday or Sunday as true leisure time.
- Free up your calendar for an hour or two, two nights a week. After the girls go to sleep, do something for you. For these two nights don't catch up on the office work. Tell yourself, "Tonight I'm going to read my novel. Tonight I'm going to exercise, or meditate." Your whole week will feel better.
- To cut down on disrupting your work, ask for a specific time when a repairman is coming. Ask to be first in the morning, or ask for an evening appointment. Once the disruption is over, mentally acknowledge that what you had to take care of is over and you're ready to begin the day's work—or relax for the rest of the evening. It's all about attitude. You can allow a disruption to upset your whole day—but you don't have to.

## At Your BEST

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**PURPOSE:** To provide authoritative, useful, easy-to-understand information that will help our readers reduce stress, be more energetic and balance the demands of home and work.

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