



Family Mission Statement

Social worker Dan McGann is a big believer in creating a Family Mission Statement, which can help take some of the stress away from Mom trying to do everything, for everybody. "A Family Mission Statement is an excellent way to heighten family awareness of those important qualities, strengths and abilities that will help a family to sail through life's challenges more smoothly," he says.

Where to start? Here's a guide he developed

- 1) How do you define your family – what values, morals, priorities do you want to stand for?
- 2) What metaphors do you use to describe yourself?
- 3) What roles and/or responsibilities does each family member hold?
- 4) If I were to look up your family name in a dictionary, what would it say?
- 5) What are some characteristics does your family currently embody or aspire to embody?
- 6) What does your family stand for as a foundational belief in life?
- 7) Forget your past – who are you now?
- 8) Specifically what are the family beliefs around how to maintain physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and relational health?
- 9) What do you want to feel or experience more of in your family life right now?

With your wealth of ideas, now write a short paragraph or two that best summarizes the above. You can then type it out, print and frame. The younger kids can create a family crest to be framed and along with the Family Mission Statement be displayed in a visible location for easy access and review.

"I try to take **one day at a time**, but sometimes *several days attack me at once.*"

Jennifer Unlimited

not, but the healthy lifestyles our Moms used to enjoy with frequent walks to the park, ice skating on the pond, swimming at the lake and the occasional game of tennis has turned into a "Program", which often requires the attention of a paid best friend, a.k.a. your "Personal Trainer". All of which has resulted in an attitude of all or nothing – if you can't make it to the gym for your weight class or Cardio-Blast, you may as well take on the guilt, the extra ten pounds, and buy that size larger. Or, take a diet pill or go on an extreme (nationally televised) diet, which is bound to draw your energy down and leave you feeling exhausted and, yes, you guessed it, guilty about not getting everything done.

Lovett admits "I have to schedule in "me time" and that amounts to going to the gym twice2x a week – I'd like it to be four4 but that just does not seem to happen." More guilt? About exercising, and about NOT exercising. You can't win.

Work, kids, staying fit – all worthwhile pursuits which immediately seem to take a back seat to the frustration felt when the Frazzled Mom walks in her front door to be greeted by an array of spilled knapsacks, hockey equipment and dirty laundry. As she walks through to the kitchen, she observes that the cleanest surface is the shelf on the fridge where the milk bags are supposed to be. Thanks to the advent of specialty television channels such as HGTV and The Food Network, many women feel as though they are underachieving on the home front if their houses are not photo shoot worthy, and their meals are not Rachel Ray perfect. Nobody wants to end up on a surprise home renovation show, and the horror of being chosen for "What Not To Wear" doesn't even bear contemplating. Throw in "Last 10 Pounds Boot Camp" and the message is painfully clear: whatever you are doing, it's not quite enough. That's a tough message for women. Many simply do not have the time or resources to dedicate to achieving perfection in one aspect of their lives, let alone every aspect, all at the same time. Throw in the proliferation of the Perfect Mom media images we're faced with (led by their

otherworld Queen, Angelina Jolie), and most Moms are bound to feel a little inadequate next to Heidi Klum's picture perfect post baby body and life.

Catherine Conte, a Commercial Real Estate Vice President, and Mom to Chantel, 17, thinks she has found the key to what keeps her life together. "I'm going strong through the day, but it's a lot of organization and being efficient that helps you manage. If I wasn't organized, I don't know how I would handle it. I go fast." Organization, planning, scheduling – the discipline of a precision drill sergeant doesn't hurt either. Much of the Frazzled

Mom's frustration comes from the fact that she feels she doesn't have a lot of control in her life. Dan McGann, a social worker at The Credit Valley Hospital, agrees

that putting routines in your life can bring some relief to a busy family schedule. "Have daily and/or weekly family rituals that everyone agrees will be complaint free and simply a time for the family to enjoy each other (Friday night Pizza and DVD, Sunday dinners, etc.)" McGann also emphasizes that focusing on the positive and worrying less about the negative can have an overall effect on the entire family. "Do "One Thing" to create positive change gradually. Stop "One Thing" to eliminate negative behaviours (negative habits that once eliminated will create positive change in your life and family," he recommends.

Adding in an ironclad schedule, producing a plethora of lists, and forcing yourself to think positively can bring some of that control back. But it can also kill any kind of spontaneity, and maybe even fun. Remember fun? Remember your spouse? What happens to that relationship in the world of the Frazzled Mom? More guilt? Not necessarily, but recognizing that without scheduling, it is easy for us to simply never find the time to devote to this very important part of our lives. (See Josey Vogel's tips in the sidebar on how to keep things together!)

Dads take note: vacuuming can be foreplay for a lot of Moms. Part of the



reason that Moms have little energy for intimacy with their partners is because they have felt extreme physical and mental demands all day. While it might be easy for Dad to walk past the scattered backpacks in the front hall, traditionally it has been seen as a criticism of the woman 's ability to "keep a clean house", and those old social norms and expectations can be hard to shake. It's hard to relax while doing anything, let alone engaging in sexual activity, while we're worried about the cleaning up for the

"A suburban mother's role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and by car forever after."

Peter De Vries

cleaning lady's visit the next day. AND we know we don't look like Angelina Jolie. AND we know we shouldn't have eaten that half bag of leftover Cheesies. AND

we're three weeks behind on our weekly report at work. AND what is that strange noise coming from the baby's room? Is someone choking?

Not all Moms have it all together, all the time. It's just not possible. However, it is possible to find your Perfect Mom Moments and the key is to revel in them. Does it require planning? You bet. Here are a few tips from some seasoned veterans in the Mom world.

Finding the right balance is always going to be finding the right balance for you – not your Mom, your friend, or even your husband. "I think we all have it hard and you just have to react to what is put in front of you on a daily basis, the best you can and don't complain about it. As soon as you see yourself complaining, you need to do something different." says Conte.

The only person who can eliminate your PMS is you. Finding the time to read this magazine is a good start – even if it is in the stands at the hockey arena.

Kathy Buckworth is a Mississauga based frazzled Mom of four kids, whose latest book "Journey to the Darkside: Supermom Goes Home" can be found in bookstores everywhere. Visit her blog at www.funnymummyfiles.blogspot.com

Keeping the fires burning

RELATIONSHIP ADVICE FOR THE FRAZZLED MOM

by Josey Vogels

Josey Vogels, author, CBC radio host and syndicated Sex & Relationship columnist, admits that the number 1 question she is asked is how to keep the romance and relationship alive with your spouse once children come along. "While sex seemed effortless and desirable way back when, we kid ourselves if we think it was spontaneous.

I mean, how much did you think about having sex with your partner, how much effort did you put into looking hot? All this stuff makes you want it and it seems effortless but really we put a lot of energy into it. Now that energy goes into schedules, runny noses and frustration over who's the bigger martyr." She offers the following tips to help get things back on track:

1. Stop worrying about it so much. It just adds to the tension and pressure and makes everyone hyper aware of the problem.

2. Carve out time. And far from being selfish, if you are a happy, sexually satisfied, erotic creature, you're going to be less of a frazzled grumpy parent. So yes, carve out time, even if you don't have sex during it, reconnect adult to adult.

3. Spend time tapping into your erotic self. Read dirty books. Buy sexy underwear. Flirt with the coffee shop boy. Whatever makes you feel hot.

"We always say that romance and passion go, but I don't agree," says Vogels. "They do change however, this is part of the process of long-term relationships. And you'll make yourself crazy trying to go back wards and "recapture" something that you think is lost.

Let it go and move forward. Who are you now? What do you appreciate about each other? So often we focus on what is negative and wrong whereas a genuine compliment or kind gesture toward the other person can melt a lot of resentment." Visit www.joseyvogels.com for more great relationship advice and information.