

# Help for the Distressed Super Mom

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She's been called "The Hurried Woman," the "PMS Mom from H..." and told by her children to "chill out." What's going on?

An April 2003 research finding from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia concluded that distress is taking its toll on Canadian women, especially mothers. The researcher, Shelley Phipps, is quoted as saying "Over half...51.2%, of women aged 25 to 54 with full-time paid employment in 1998 felt constantly under stress in comparison with 41.6% of men." And this figure continues to increase.

The Canadian Institute of Stress reported in 2003 that 45% of Canadians are feeling distressed most of the time. However, with women that figure is 52% and if married with a career it is up to 58%. Add children and the fact that mothers still accept the majority of household responsibility, and what do you get? An out of balance, often ill, mother.

In the Calgary Herald on October 12 2003, Dr. Bart Beaty, a professor at the University of Calgary, described this generation of employees as working seven to eight hours longer per week, than the previous generation. Fewer dads are attending parenting classes as they are at their work place longer. Part time employment demands tend to be unrealistic and children are overbooked with activities by parents who feel guilty about lack of time.

Let's slow the machine down. Alberta is full of entrepreneurial spirit—go and go and go some more. Me time, couple time and family time happen when we take proactive measures. Take the following quiz to decide if you are or are not taking those steps.

## Stress Bucket Test

Answer Yes or No to the following:

1. Are you free of anxiety, mood swings, tension headaches, fatigue, frequent colds and flues or insomnia?
2. Are you free of the Super Mom or Perfect Mom trap and think of yourself as a Good Enough Mom?
3. Are you available to your children in a supportive, relaxed, sometimes playful and loving manner?
4. Do you delegate some household tasks to your partner and children?
5. Do you have an attitude of "I appreciate an improvement" rather than insisting on tasks being accomplished to your standards?
6. Do you hold family meetings where you enlist team participation of family members?
7. Are you free of guilt when you see unhappy family members knowing that the only person you have control over is yourself?
8. Do you say "no" to activities that needlessly take you away from personal, couple or family time?

9. Are you aware that one of the biggest gifts you can give your family is your own well being as a healthy and assertive woman who both gives and receives?
10. Do you take daily time to rejuvenate yourself so that you can be present to your family mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually?

The more yeses you have the better you are taking care of yourself first. Then you can know you are of one of the best "good enough moms" on the block.

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