

# Moms: Don't Ignore These Signs You Need a Break

One at a time! And you, stop pulling on your sister! Who let the dog out! How many times do I have to say that if the dog is outside you have to ask if he can come back in! No, I said one at a time, I cannot listen to two people at the same time! And Dudley get off the couch, NOW! You are going back outside!"

So before you think I'm describing a situation of chaos in my house, let me tell you what was really happening.

I was sitting/laying on the couch, a perfect spot for a mom to be right in the middle of life, so my oldest took that as an opportunity to tell me about the book she is currently reading and absolutely loving. My middle daughter then asked a quick question, "Can I play with my Nintendo Ds?" My youngest, wanting some of her big sister's excitement, pulled on her sleeve. There was no screaming or loudness, or chaos, really. Well, not from my girls at least.

Then I see the puppy bounding towards us and I am yelling – for no reason, just yelling about it. I think at this point two of the girls said "It wasn't me!" and I was already rabid so I got up, and yelled some more.

No wonder my girls were looking at me like I'd grown a horn and a spiky tail.

What's wrong with me?

I'll tell you what's wrong, I hadn't had any alone time for a few days and I was feeling it.

Have you ever felt that way too? Like you are coming undone at the seams because you haven't been able to catch a break?

I like people, I enjoy people. I am friendly and outgoing and can walk into almost any situation and find someone to talk to. But nothing is as restful and energizing as spending time alone or doing something that I enjoy – away from my children!

I want quiet time to read a .

I want to use the an audience.

I want to take 20 minutes under the hot water.

I want to sit and having to reorganize my mind and my words every 10 minutes.

I want to sit, just sit, and enjoy the quiet for as long as I need.

The fact is I'm one of those people that needs a time-out to be a better mom (and wife). When I've had time for *me*, I find that I don't blow my fuse and I have a much better disposition towards my kids and towards life.

I also know I am in need of a time-out when I get angry at my husband for no significant reason. Maybe I thought he was chewing too loudly, or his joke wasn't funny, or he is not doing "stuff" the same way I do and my way is a better way (or so I think).

"Are you angry with me?" He asks.

"Yes." I say.

"Why?"

"I don't know, or I don't remember, but I am sure there is a reason."

Yep, that sounds like insanity and like a woman that really, desperately, needs a time-out. There is no excuse for the poor behavior, I know that, believe me I do! But when I am spent, my emotions get unbalanced.

When I was in college, we talked about the “emotional bank account” in one of my psychology classes. If you are not familiar with the term, Stephen Covey created this analogy to explain that our emotional well-being is like a bank account. When we “give” we make a withdrawal in our emotional account, and if we keep giving, soon we will find ourselves in the negative numbers. What is the solution? Make some deposits! For me, that happens during my time-out, or when I participate in activities that give me life.

So for me, sometimes a time-out means that I take time to do what is fun... for me! Like going on a date with my husband, going on a bike ride, or going to my Zumba class. Spending unlimited time at a bookstore or the library also makes huge deposits on my emotional bank account.

I think you might be able to understand me, at least in some way, because you know that as moms we give so much. We give and give and give. We take little time to fill what has been emptied out. This is important, for me, for you, for all of us, because our emotional bank accounts function properly when we have plenty of deposits so that when we make withdrawals, we are not left with zero, or with a negative number because we gave more than what we had to give. It’s important for me because my children and my husband need me to be whole.

Confession: I love time-out (and my family loves my time-out too!).

I don’t think I’ll have a time-out until Monday. My eye is already twitching just thinking about it, good thing I had a Zumba class last night!

Do you have a time-out? How do you make time for yourself?

*Adapted from **Ellen Stumbo’s** blog, **Finding Beauty in Brokenness**. She is passionate about sharing the real – sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly – aspects of faith, parenting, special needs, and adoption. She has been published*

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