



**Eliminating
Mommy Burn-Out**

Mia Redrick

Finding Definitions eBook

“Eliminating Mommy Burn-Out: Time Optimizing and Stress Reducing Strategies For Every Mom”

“Mommy Burn-Out” is not a new thing. Mothers have always been the most over-worked and under-appreciated people on earth. Most of the time we mom’s don’t mind this. The rewards of caring for a family are often silent, but they resonate deeply in our being. A satisfied sleeping baby, a child happily handing you the flower she picked, your son or daughter’s smiling face as they ride off teetering on their bicycle for the first time - not many things in life are as rewarding as these. But just as deep as these satisfying moments can be the difficulties that arise when Mom gets too stressed out and overwhelmed to take care of anyone.

Most of us moms live in fear of those times, because we are keenly aware of the impact they have on the ones we love. We really don’t want to fall apart, but we are very good at fooling ourselves into thinking we are “fine” until the last straw breaks our patience and everybody wonders what happened to Mom.

The myth of “Super-Mom”

The sooner you forget about the myth of the “Do-It-All Mom,” the happier you and your family will be. As moms of the new millennium, we have more opportunities and choices available to us than ever before. Women are achieving success in field after field of professional life. More of us than ever are college graduates and many of us have advanced degrees. So what do we do with all of this? If you’ve chosen to leave your job to be at home raising your children, how do you reconcile your somewhat boring lifestyle with the ambitious goals and pursuits you had earlier in life? Unfortunately, because of all the options and choices we have, many of us wind up adding on and adding on, in an effort to make sure we’re at least trying to “do it all.”



Do yourself a favor right now and decide to ignore the anxiety you feel over trying to live up to a standard. If you’re at home with your children, or if your children are young, remember that these days will come to an end. Little by little, your time will free up and you’ll have lots of opportunities to get back into the “fast lane.”

Eliminating the clutter

Before you can become the master of your busy daily schedule, you must first uncluttered your thinking. Think of your mind as a messy desk, with lots of stuff that needs to be thrown out. See that piece of paper that says, "I wish I looked like a movie star and could fit into a size 2 dress?" Crumple that one up and throw it away. See the one that says, "It was so sweet reading with my daughter last night"? Pick that one up and put it in your "IN" basket. In other words, begin to separate the treasure from the trash. Once you know where your time really belongs, you'll be able to plan more successfully.

Make your time your own

As you think about how your time is spent, can you see areas where someone else is in charge? Someone, that is, who shouldn't be in charge. As the Mom of the house, you know better than anyone what are the unique needs and challenges of your family. Don't let yourself be rocked by the opinions of those who don't understand so well. Maybe your child's teacher is pressuring you to work with your child on reading, but you know in your gut your child is just not ready to read. Whenever you try to help him learn he is unhappy and restless. Every child learns at a different rate. If it's not working, don't be afraid to take an item out of your schedule altogether. This should particularly apply to the things you realize you are doing simply to impress others. Are you working overtime on your child's Halloween costume because your neighbor always makes something elaborate for her child? Competing and comparing yourself with others can result in a major time and energy drain. Look into your day and ask yourself if you are spending time on things that are based on others' expectations - not your own. Take a minute here to list a few things you could cut out.

Are you feeling a little relieved? Emptying out the clutter is a very therapeutic exercise! Use this practice often to unburden yourself and narrow your focus to the things and people that really deserve your time and energy.

A Plan with a Purpose

Before beginning to work on your daily schedule, take some time to put things into perspective. Do you know your priorities? Have you ever ranked your daily activities in their order of importance? Most of us don't really know where our time has gone at the end of the day, let alone whether we spent it according to our priorities. As a Mom, you will always have things competing for your attention. But if you know your priorities, you can always come back to what really matters.

Try this exercise. List the things you have done today in the order that you did them. You don't need to remember everything, just make a general sketch so you can see where most of your time went. Pay particular attention to how you spent your discretionary time - the time that was up to you. This is the area you can really target for constructive change. Fill in the chart on the next page with the things that took up most of your time.

Today's Date: _____
What I did (a.m.): _____
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
What I did (p.m.): _____
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

The next and most important part of this exercise is to assign priority levels to the things you did. Which things do you consider to have the highest priority? An example might be cooking a healthy meal for you and your

family, because the benefits of healthy eating cannot be underestimated. Put your activities into three categories of importance: A = High Priority, B = Moderate Priority, C = Low Priority. Put an A, B or C next to each item on your list.

Making it Work

Long-lasting change doesn't come overnight. Don't expect to make a total overhaul in the way you spend your time right away. We are all creatures of habit. Our minds and bodies are programmed to do certain things at certain times. It is said that it takes twice as long to break a habit as it does to make one. But don't give up! Keep your thinking clear and focus on the things that really matter. Reinforcing small changes in your behavior with rewards will help you make progress in a positive direction.

Working with a schedule

Have you ever taken the time to map your week? Do you often come to the end of a day wishing there were a 25th hour? Once you get into the habit of planning your week, you may be surprised to see how much extra time you can gain just by thinking ahead. Instead of leaving everything up to chance, why not set specific times to do the things you know will benefit you the most. Of course, you'll need to be flexible to allow for the unexpected, but when those situations are over, you can go back to your schedule to get yourself back on track.

Consider making appointments. With your husband. With your children. With yourself! By phone, by instant messaging, or best of all - in person! Think of these times as investments in your most valuable possessions. The time you successfully schedule is time you've won away from wasteful pursuits. Do you have letters or thank-you notes you want to write? Schedule it! You'll find yourself getting many things done that you've been postponing. The results can be invigorating! You might even start looking forward to a regular time of planning for the week to come.

On the following pages, you'll find weekly schedule charts with half-hour intervals for each day from 7 a.m. until midnight. Use these in the way that makes the most sense for your life. Here are some general guidelines to follow: First, with a pencil, lightly black out the times you have no control over. If you work, shade in your working hours. If you drive or carpool according to a schedule, black out these times. Also, shade in any appointments you have scheduled for yourself or your children. Next, pick a bedtime. You know when this is! Getting adequate sleep can be the Number One problem for busy Moms. Going without good sleep over a long period of time can cause chronic health problems. If you have bad sleep

habits now, don't try to make a major change in your bedtime right away - that will take time. But do try to allow yourself at least eight hours of sleep. (Yes, that's right - eight hours!) Your body needs this time to restore itself so you can give your best energy to the coming day. Lightly black out the hours you will be sleeping.

Speaking of bedtimes, how are your children's' bedtimes? A set bedtime (at least during the week) is very important for your child. If this is a change for you, you may have a struggle at first. You'll have to say "no" to all sorts of reasons why your child can't go to bed on time. But in the long run, you'll be glad you did it. You'll be able to finish your day with some valuable quiet time.

Use a different colored pencil to shade in the time each day when your child will be in bed. Use this time to work on personal projects or get ready for the coming day. Whatever it is, make it something relaxing, so you'll be able to get your much-needed sleep!

Your "Flex-Time"



Now you should have a clear picture of your flexible time. This is the time that is yours to work with - to make choices about. Of course, every Mom has many duties to fit into her flexible time, so this is where your priorities will come in. Block out enough time to cover your essential duties, like shopping, cooking, cleaning and laundry. If you have a regular exercise routine (hope you do!), block out the time you need for this. Remember this schedule doesn't have to be set in stone. As you work with it, you'll find out how much time you really need to schedule for each task. The real goal here is to see how much "left-over time" there is after you've blocked out everything else.

What's Left?

If you're like most people, you are now surprised at how much empty time you see left in your schedule! Unless you have a very demanding professional life, there should be some empty space. Free time! What a concept! Visualize some refreshing ways to fill some of it this next week. Have coffee or lunch with an old friend. Plant some bright flowers next to your mailbox. Do a little organizing in your child's room to make your

morning routine smoother. Whatever it is, make it something therapeutic - something that allows you to refresh and recharge. This is the real strategic key to beating the dreaded "Mommy Burn-Out."

So if the truth is that we DO have the time, why is it that we always feel like we're rushing around, gasping for breath at the end of the day, with so many things left undone? The answers to this question are complicated and somewhat different for each of us, but there are some common pitfalls we can avoid - and techniques we can use to help us recover our precious lost time.

Five ways to reclaim your time

Here are some "Power Tips" to help put you in control of the clock and the calendar:

- **Start by "stopping."** The first thing in the morning, before the tide of the day takes over, stop for a few minutes. Clear your mind. Steady your compass. Take a few deep breaths. Think of something you're thankful for. Begin the day with a big smile on your face.
- **Make a list.** Keep a pad of paper and a pen next to your bedside. Often we think of things when we're drifting off to sleep. If you don't record them, your thoughts will escape. This can really help you to streamline your daily plan.
- **Get off the treadmill.** Do you ever find yourself going back and forth, back and forth? Through the house? Through the mall? Across town? You go downstairs, then back upstairs, and then remember something you left downstairs? Or worse, you go to the grocery store, back home, and then realize you forgot to buy something important? The culprit here is poor planning. Slow down and make your plan of action. Put things in order to eliminate wasted steps.
- **Give it away.** Are you doing everything yourself? Do you think, "If I don't do it, it won't get done"? Chances are that's not true! See if you can spot your "volunteers." If your children are old enough, let them help you. You'll be doing yourself and them a big favor. Children learn best by doing.
- **Forget "perfect."** Relax. Let things get a little messy from time to time. Learn to tolerate a little chaos. That's what life with children is all about! You have better ways to spend your time than putting things away over and over again!

Weekly Planning Schedule

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Weekly Planning Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Weekly Planning Schedule

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The Second “Burn-Out Battlefield” Dealing with Stress

Mom’s Stress Rx



Everyone is concerned about stress these days. Medical research has proven its negative impact on our health. Studies have shown that we perform best when our stress level is low. At low stress levels, our sense of well-being is at its best and our brain chemistry is healthy. Our serotonin and endorphin levels are high, and our bodies operate smoothly and efficiently. At high stress levels, the opposite takes place. Our brain chemistry reacts to the load of stress we feel, making us feel nervous and panicky. In turn, our bodies suffer from the withdrawal of well-being hormones, and become tense and tired. We know how hard stress is on us, but as busy Moms, how do we successfully avoid it?

Practically speaking, we cannot escape stress. A certain amount of it is even healthy. Life is challenging. How can we grow without challenge? Our lives are enriched by the battles we’ve fought and won. But that doesn’t mean we have to be a champion in every area. We need to differentiate between positive stress and negative stress. Between the kind that motivates us and moves us toward our goals, and the kind that drains us and wears us out with no positive result.

Pick your battles

Are you fighting battles you can’t win? Are you struggling with people or matters that won’t change, no matter how hard you try to change them? If so, you’re experiencing unnecessary stress. Is there someone you are trying to please who never gives you positive feedback? We often set ourselves up for frustrations because we fool ourselves into thinking, “This time it will be different.” If you have a situation like this, realize that you are wasting precious energy trying to change the unchangeable. Give up on it before it conquers you! This is a kind of victory for you, because you’ll be winning back your best self to give to those who appreciate it the most.

Do you have a situation like this in your life? One that robs you unfairly of your energy and adds unnecessary stress? Take a minute to reflect and write down anything you realize.

Know your limits

Most of us are not heroes in the true sense of the word, but there seems to be something in the “mommy programming” that gives us the impulse to do heroic things. This can be a good thing. A helpless infant needs the care and protection of a mother who would put her life on the line for the safety of her child. But when our “hero-instincts” are wrongly applied, we are in danger of our going beyond our healthy limits.

How able are you to say “No”? When you’re asked to be the Team Mom for a third soccer team, can you politely refuse? It’s normal and healthy to want to be involved in our children’s’ activities, but over-commitment can really backfire. When your small child needs attention and you’re busy making phone calls for the PTSA, what gets the priority? Don’t feel as though being unable to do everything makes you a bad Mom. The truth is you’re a better Mom when you’re a more available, less stressed-out Mom.

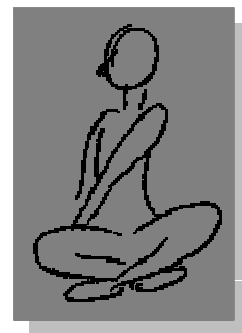


Your child won’t remember how many times you were his “Team Mom”, or how many cookies you baked for the fundraiser. But he will remember it if Mommy gets stressed-out because she’s taken on too much. Learn to “no” to over-commitment so you can say “yes” to what really matters!

Six Practical Ways to Shake the Stress

Here are some simple exercises to incorporate into your daily life to immunize your being against stress:

Blow it off. Since breathing comes naturally, deep breathing may not seem like an exercise. But when we are under stress, our breathing becomes shallow. Deep breathing is a great way to shake the stress. Stand up straight and take a deep breath. Feel the air as it expands your lungs and your chest. Breathe in to the count of four and hold it for two counts. Then exhale slowly to the count of four. Take two to four deep breaths several times a day and your stressors may be “gone with the wind!”



Get up and stretch. Stretch your arms high above your head. Visualize the stress flooding from your back, legs, your shoulders, and pour out of your fingertips and toes. If you know some simple yoga stretches, use these to help you “stretch away the stress.”

Take a short walk. A brisk ten or fifteen minute walk each day is not only physically beneficial but transfers your focus from your problems to the scenery along your way. For variety, change your route from time to time.

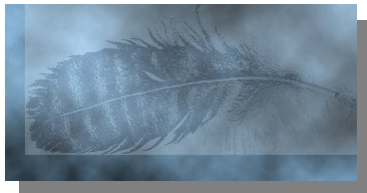
Progressive relaxation is especially beneficial when stress keeps you from getting a good night's sleep. Start at your toes and "tell" them to relax. When you feel them relaxing move to your feet, ankles, calf muscles, knees, thighs and so on up your torso to your shoulders and finally to the top of your head or down through your arms to your fingertips (if you make it that far before you're asleep!)

Dance. Join an aerobics class, a tai chi class or just turn on the tunes and dance with your kids. Dancing has a double advantage in that along with exercise, music is a great stress reducer. Exercise in any form is your best defense against stress build-up. Make it a priority to work some kind of vigorous exercise into your daily schedule.

Aromatherapy. Are you aware that smells can be relaxing? Breathing in the aroma of a scented candle or scented oils can help you discharge tension. Lavender and chamomile are some well-known relaxing scents. Why not pick up some lavender-scented bubble bath and take a long soak at the end of a stressful day?

Your Stress Notes:

Use the chart on the next page to look into your life. Ask yourself these questions: When do I feel stressed-out? What causes it? What should I say "no" to? What should I say "yes" to? What can I do to discharge the stress?



Make this an ongoing conversation. Enlist the help of your family and friends. Open to their suggestions. Sometimes others see things more clearly than we do. Don't be too proud to ask for help! The people closest to you are your biggest allies. If you have this conversation with your children, it will benefit them as well. Children are not immune to stress! If they follow your example to think proactively about dealing with stress, they'll be on their way to living healthier, more productive lives!

Take a look at this past week and ask yourself these questions.
See if you can pinpoint your specific stress areas.

1) When did I feel stressed-out? _____

2) What caused the stress? _____

3) Is there something I can change? _____

4) Where am I over-committed? _____

5) What can I do for stress relief? _____

Strengthen Your Support Network

Now that you've taken a serious look at the issue of Mommy Burn-Out, you should be refreshed and empowered to take the upper hand in the way you manage time and deal with stress. Make sure you build your own personal support network to fortify your success. Share what you've learned with other moms and build a network of people who understand. Share your challenges and goals with each other and keep each other posted on your progress.

Take advantage of the resources right around you that might help you get a good breather from time to time. Are there relatives or neighbors you could enlist to baby-sit so that you can get out for a date with hubbie, a doctor's visit or some time alone?

Set one goal for expanding and strengthening your support network here:

About Mia Redrick



“My mother said to me when I had my son that being a mother is what you do – not who you are. “ – Mia Redrick

Mia Redrick is the President and Founder of Finding Definitions, LLC. Finding Definitions, LLC, helps busy moms balance the rigors of parenting while providing the essential tools for a mother’s self-care.

The company offers popular individual/ group coaching services, teleclasses and seminars on topics relevant for a mother’s own personal growth on her journey throughout motherhood. Mia is the author of *Time for Mom-me*, *5 Essential Self-Care Strategies for a Mother’s Self-Care*. Her

book is the mother’s handbook on the best solutions for finding personal time, growth, strategies and personal connections.

Redrick is a sought-after speaker by women’s, businesses and parenting groups around the country, and hundreds of women have attended her workshops.

Redrick writes a parenting column for *Family Digest*, a monthly magazine with circulation of 3 million and contributes parental traveling tips to the *Home Away Traveler International Newsletter*, which reaches 95,000 homeowners around the world.

She has been published in the magazines, *Parenting and Attractions*, and was interviewed for Sky Radio’s “Conversation for the Expert Segment,” which airs in more than 29, 000 North Western American Airlines Flights.

Redrick started professional life as a trainer for Citicorp Corporation. She served an international internship coordinator for the University of Maryland, Baltimore County before becoming a professional sales representative for Premier School Agenda (a Franklin Covey Company) in 1995. Redrick taught thousands of educators the skills for time management and life organization.

Redrick graduated from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. She is a member of the International Coach Federation, Sergeant of Arms in Toastmasters International and has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *CNN.com*, *The PG Gazette* and seen in *Parenting Magazine*.

Mia and her husband Patrick of 12 years have three children and live with a dog named Basil and Cat named Tycoona. Mia is an author, columnist for *Family Digest Magazine*, certified personal coach and strategist. She speaks throughout the country on topics of concern to women who are mothers. She makes her home in Maryland.

Be sure to check out all the useful resources here at www.findingdefinitions.com

Finding Definitions is an educational service provided by Mia Redrick - The Mom Coach Strategist.
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The Next Step for you

Don't forget to sign up for my "Time for Mom" newsletter to learn and laugh about the latest strategies and solutions for moms. Each month we offer FREE gifts, great information to help your navigation through mothering easier.

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Finding Definitions is the premiere resource for all things moms. There are plenty of other resources available to you as well so just click on the store to unlock unlimited possibilities.

Thank you for making time for you.

Live Fully,
Mia

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