

# Famous Five self-care tips for business mums like us

By Kate Silcock



*'I wouldn't change being a mum with my own business for the world. But I may change the world's view on it...'*

'Mum guilt' is a phrase used so flippantly lately that, at times, the true essence of the phrase can be overlooked and forgotten: to feel mum guilt is to feel selfish; it's to feel

uncertainty and it's to feel a failure. You are none of these things.

A common misconception when you are your own boss is the freedom, or ironically, what can sometimes feel, is the lack of. Yes, we can be more flexible and yes, it can be a great positive; however, there can be more pressure on those in this position. You have to be so strict with yourself and prioritise consistently. You're deemed to be available if you work from home or if you work for yourself more so than if you were employed 9-5.

Even the best of friends and family can, at times, seem 'put out' if you can't make plans or aren't available – 'but you work for yourself, surely you can meet for a quick coffee?'. And the fact is that, yes, physically we could leave what we are doing and be sitting opposite you in a physical sense; however, I guarantee you that our head, focus and thoughts would remain at home or our workspace office trying to get stuff done.

There will always be doubters, people who believe you to be silly for leaving your 9-5 'secure' job and people who don't want to look too deeply into what you're doing and acknowledge your passion or bravery, in fear that it highlights the opposite in them. But that's okay – you don't need them too. Just remain focused on you and your path.

Setting up your own business takes time, effort, perseverance and a whole lot of skill, dedication and sass. But you have this. You have it all and more. You will achieve it all, but you have to look after yourself too. We are working mums trying to make a living, a better life and a future for our family and for that we deserve credit, praise and a large glass of gin – not guilt, not impatience, not doubt.

I'm still in the very early stages of starting my business and, at times, feel so overwhelmed with ideas, plans and passion that I forget to breathe. I'm a mum of two little girls aged one and three, as well as being a teacher. For me, the day-to-day running and juggling while wearing many different hats can often leave me feeling a little burnt out.

We live in a society where we are expected to be able to do it all, and then some; it's crucial for our sanity and well-being that we take time out for ourselves – time to switch off and just be in the present.

Self-care is immensely important in order to live a healthy, well-balanced life and we deserve our time to indulge in what makes us feel happy and calm.

The following 'Famous Five' self-care tips that I try to live by aren't anything extravagant or expensive, they are, however, vital in order for me to be as effective in all of the roles that I'm currently balancing.

## 1. Soothe and Switch off

Really try to take (at least) one full day off per weekend, or mid-week, and by day off, I mean from work, as we as mums know that there is no such thing as a mum day off. You have successfully finished a week of working and it is essential that you completely switch off and have some time to do the things you love without thinking about how busy you are going to be the next week. Before you know it, it will be Monday again and you're back on that wheel.

## 2. Ask. For. Help

If you're lucky enough to have a support network around you, use it. Don't feel weak, guilty or that you're a burden for reaching out, it's not a sign of weakness and you're raising a family, running a business and doing your best and that is commendably exhausting. If you don't feel you have a support network that you can lean on, try to reduce your workload for the interim just to allow you to catch your breath.

## 3. Slow and steady

There are so many opportunities to be had, so much we want to do, need to do and we are desperate to achieve what we set out to. But, at times you can be caught up in the whirlwind of societal pressures and be sucked into the comparison cycle of doom. Don't set your own targets by those of others. Be inspired by others, but don't allow yourself to be consumed by what other seem to be achieving – focus on you and your own path. Set yourself achievable daily and weekly targets that you know can be achieved. If you don't feel you can get to them that week, move it to the next. That's okay.

## 4. Go outside

Do at least one thing a day that makes you happy. It doesn't need to be a big thing. Have a bath, practise mindfulness, read a chapter of your book, go for a walk. Anything, that takes you away from any stress and helps you refocus your energy and rebalance yourself. The present is what's important and for mums in business, at times, we can be caught up a little too much in the future.

## 5. Be kind to your mind

If you do find that even with the best intentions you just couldn't get things done, don't waste time beating yourself up: stop and breathe – you are only one person and you also have a life and responsibilities outside of your work and that's important too.

To all the mums in business: may you run it, may you love it, may you live it and, remember, that you own the business, it doesn't own you.

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