

## Choosing How to Wisely Spend Your Energy

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How is your energy level right now? Are you feeling depleted or do you feel like you have plenty of energy? Do you live most days full speed ahead or do you have room to breathe?

Many parents live their days feeling crazy busy. While some days are certainly going to be packed full, being that busy all the time is a recipe for problems.

### Hitting The Energy Wall

Brenda was working full time teaching at a college plus raising her two young children with her husband. Her office walls were filled with various awards documenting her many achievements. She strove to be an excellent teacher, mother and wife. She was too busy to question how she was spending her time. There was just so much to do!

One day she ended up in the emergency room because of heart attack symptoms. The tests revealed she was not having a heart attack but rather a panic attack. This triggered her to take a step back and consider how she was living her life. She took the doctor's suggestion and signed up for a mindfulness class.

This class taught her how to stay present in the moment. Being fully present wasn't her normal mode of operation. Previously she spent most her time planning for the future and analyzing the past. She realized she had been feeling fear, worry, anger, annoyance, frustration and resentment most of the time. This wasn't how she wanted to live!

By learning to meditate, she experienced peace for the first time in a long time. It was the breakthrough she needed to change her life. One day she held her little son's hand and really looked at it for the first time. Where had she been all this time? How had she not noticed his sweet and precious hand? She marveled at all the little things she had missed while going a million miles an hour.

### Hitting Your Inner Pause Button

Wisdom comes in calm moments. You need quiet time alone to hear your inner voice. If you are not sure of your next best step, slow down so you can hear an answer.

Slowing down may feel foreign. Societal norms push you towards keeping busy. There is an unspoken belief that being busy and living a fast-paced life means you are important. If you are crazy busy, then you are very important.



Advertisers don't want you to pause and think, they want you to buy! Buy before it's too late and the sale is over or the product is gone. The raging river of information and constant demands on your time will not slow down unless you force it to.

Brenda interpreted her panic attack as a sign she needed to slow down and do more self-care. She realized prioritizing her self-care is not selfish. In fact, it is essential to staying healthy.

Your kids learn from watching your behavior. Are you teaching your kids to live stressed out lives? By taking time for yourself, you teach your kids how to value themselves.

### **Choosing How To Spend Your Energy**

Choosing how you spend your energy is powerful. Before making a commitment, consider how will this affect the flow of your energy for the week. Perhaps each individual commitment does not seem like much. However, when they are put together you may feel overwhelmed.

If you are feeling overextended or over-scheduled, you especially need to learn to pause before making any other commitments. You have a limited amount of energy. Choosing carefully how to spend it is essential to your wellbeing.

When you get a request for your time, consider these questions:

- Is this something you want to do or will it drain you?
- Imagine saying yes. Do you feel excited or guilty into doing it?
- Imagine saying no. Do you feel relief or regret?
- Is this activity something only you can do?

If this feels like a positive way you want to invest your energy, go for it. If you feel like this is not how you want to spend your energy, [find a way to say no](#). You might say "Thanks for asking. I'm not going to be able to do this."

You might feel guilty. Remember that burning out isn't good for you or your family. Having your own back means being willing to disappoint others rather than disappointing yourself.

Protecting your energy and spending it wisely is [practicing essential self-care](#). When you take care of yourself, you teach your kids how to take good care of themselves. This is a lesson worth teaching!

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