

Moms need to put themselves on the to-do list

For many women, an important rite of passage for womanhood is becoming a mother. However, all too often, after the baby is born, the focus quickly shifts and routines that were once rituals are forgotten. While it's not surprising that their children and families come first, a new report of 3,000 U.S. moms reveals that although most (76 percent) agree it's just as important for mothers to take care of themselves as their families, nearly eight in 10 moms don't do enough.

One of the biggest things falling by the wayside is a sense of feeling and looking beautiful. A whopping 84 percent admit they've let their appearance slide since becoming a mom and that taking care of their appearance has become more of an wish than a reality. The majority (66 percent) say guilt is one of the barriers to

self-care.

So, can motherhood and womanhood co-exist? The "Motherhood vs Womanhood Report" was created to understand the many trade-offs women face when they become moms and the consequences for their sense of womanhood.

The study — conducted in partnership with Dr. Kathleen Gerson, New York University professor of sociology — also probed the benefits that occur when moms do put themselves back on the to-do list.

Motherhood vs Womanhood

The report reveals that about one-third of moms believe that being a mother and being a woman actually conflict. Furthermore, one in four can't remember the last time they did something that made them feel like a woman;

42 percent report it was more than a month ago. The report also found that:

- Although 67 percent of moms would rather get their pre-baby body back than their pre-baby sex life, exercise opportunities are tough to come by;
- 66 percent admit they sometimes don't have enough time to take a shower or bath;
- Some 80 percent have gone weeks or months without a haircut (even though they felt they needed one); and
- Over half (53 percent) say that they've forgotten to brush their teeth in the morning. "I'm not surprised that there's a conflict felt between being a woman and being a mother," says Gerson. "Mothers remain key caregivers who are relied upon heavily by the whole family. But moms also need to look out for themselves, which means doing things that help them keep an identity of their own apart from the role of mom."

The Benefits Abound

When moms do take care of themselves, an overwhelming 93 percent say it makes them feel good. Moms who take care of themselves report they feel happier, more attractive and more self-confident. Furthermore, taking care of themselves made 60 percent feel more feminine and just over half feel like they are setting a good example for their children.

What else makes moms feel good? According to the study, eight in 10 married moms admitted nothing made them feel prettier than a compliment from their husband.

Say Yes to Beautiful

Motherhood and womanhood can co-exist. Moms need to be encouraged to take care of themselves and get their beauty back. Moms are reminded that beauty has a place amongst the dirty dishes and piles of laundry. They need to look in the mirror, think about their beauty and put themselves back on the to-do list.

She always has things to do

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reminder cards," she said.

"I never had to worry about not having anything to do. It's always busy," she said.

Her private life is just about as busy as her professional life. An avid hunter, she served for many years as the executive secretary for the Kansas State Rifle Association. She is director of the organization's foundation. She lives on 40 acres of land south of Norton and drew up plans for an addition to her house that was completed

in 1998. "Everything is just the way I like it," she said.

She likes going to auctions and is always looking for additions to her antique Alladin lamp and kitchen clock collections. She also collects Robin Hood Ammunition that was manufactured in 1916. In fact, she is planning to write a book about it.

Ms. Hobbs' son, Mark, lives in Seneca. She has three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

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Pictured from left, Kara Miller and Makayla Schulze

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