



My Number One Priority As A New Mom



P A R E N T H S / C E Q U E - C A R E

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When I was eight years old my parents divorced.

My mom who had spent the last 17 years being a stay at home mom to seven children had to start working three jobs just to make ends meet. As time passed I remember her health deteriorating because she was putting all of her focus on her children's well-being, and none on herself.

At the time I couldn't fully understand what my mother was going through or how hard she was struggling. My mom was dealing with heartbreak from her divorce, money issues and exhaustion from lack of sleep. I remember being so scared to lose her during those years because she refused to do anything that was beneficial for her.

After a few years, my mother turned a corner. She started exercising again, spent more time with friends and began doing more things that fulfilled her outside of my siblings and I.

I remember feeling the shift in her, and how much joy it brought into our home. When mom felt more alive, my siblings and I did too.

Now as a new mom I think back on this often. Every time that I second guess leaving my daughter with my husband to take a walk or a yoga class. Every time I need to do anything for me, I think “I would have wanted my mother to do this.”

It’s my belief that we need to remind ourselves that just as much as we love our children, they love us and want us to feel good. Just as we want them to feel safe, happy and nurtured, they want us to feel fulfilled, happy and cared for.

I’ve had a difficult time with self-care since the moment I became pregnant, and it’s taken me a long time to decide to make it my number one priority.

If you’re thinking right now “Anna, my situation is tough, I don’t have support or time” I totally get it. But what I really want to drive home here is that self-care is anything that makes you feel more connected to you. It’s one minute, one instant, or one second to take a breath or a simple pause. The more you start weaving in these moments, the more it will become a daily practice. It’s not always easy, but the more I practiced including this time for me, the more I realized how much it made me a better mother, partner and friend.

Below are three simple reminders that help me to incorporate more self-care into my life. I hope they inspire you to do the same.

Self-care

1. **It’s not selfish, it’s selfless.** For a long time I associated self-care with selfishness. I believed that taking time for myself to do things that made me feel good wasn’t benefiting others. But in reality, that’s exactly what it was doing. When I feel good about myself, I treat others better. When I feel strong, I can be strong for others. And when I feel loved, I want to give love. I’ve found that taking time to nourish myself brings joy to me and those around me.
2. **It’s not about time, it’s about value.** Recently I asked a good friend who happens to also be a new mom, “What does self-care mean to you?”, and she softly answered, “a breath.” This made me think about how self-care doesn’t have to be complex, planned out or long. As I touched on above self-care can be a simple moment, even a single *breath*. This helped me to realize that self-care is anything that makes me feel more connected and alive. Find what that means for you and incorporate it into your daily lives when you can.
3. **It doesn’t have to be a solo act.** When I became a mom I realized that just as there are tremendous benefits to taking time for myself, there are also benefits to spending time with others. Now I do my best to organize nights out with girlfriends, plan dates with my husband or gather other moms and their babies together for a playdate. By surrounding myself with people I trust and feel supported by, I flourish in ways I probably couldn’t alone.

Don’t forget to love yourself and to start incorporating self-care practices into your life so that you can feel more fulfilled and connected.

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