

5 Practical Tips for the Single Mom

A typical day in the life of a Single Mom is usually anything but Typical.

At times it can seem like a full 3-ring Circus is happening right in front of her while she juggles kids, homework, carpools, laundry, work, sibling rivalry, etc... etc... The list goes on and on each and every day. It is beyond exhausting and borderline crazy, yet she gets up every morning ready to do it all over again....

As a Single Mom Survivor I know first-hand what it takes to juggle the daily responsibilities and unexpected challenges that can turn up and throw a monkey wrench into your family plan while trying to work full time and stay sane. It can seem impossible at times, but I'm here to tell you it isn't.

Like anything else it takes patience, planning and a willingness to be very flexible to keep up with life as a Single Mom. Being women we just seem to believe that there isn't anything we can't handle even if our strong shoulders begin to soften from the pressure they carry. Most don't ever think about reaching out and asking for help but from my experience that is a huge mistake. I learned the lesson late in the game and don't want others to miss out.

Below I've listed 5 of what I think are the most Practical Tips that Single Moms should heed to help them in their Journey. 5 things I wish I would have known when I was raising my daughter.

I hope they provide some help to you because you deserve it. All Single Moms deserve help now and then. See what you think:

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1) When well-meaning friends and family offer their help to you, TAKE IT... don't think about it, don't hesitate for a second and for goodness sake, don't let your pride get in the way and feel like you have to be SuperWoman and do everything alone.....take them up on **whatever** it is they are offering to help you with. If they didn't truly care about you and want to help, they wouldn't ask. It means you have wonderful people in your life. It is a blessing and should be treated as such. I'm just saying.

2) I believe that raising a family is comparable to running a business, a family business if you will. The goal is to have a successful business, no matter what that entails. It could mean finally seeing a Family Law Attorney to review your divorce documents to make sure no laws have changed or been added that will impact your children in a negative way. If you weren't married to the father of your

children you should still meet with a Family Law Attorney to see what legal documents you should have to protect your family. You'd be surprised how many Single Moms aren't aware that their children are entitled to legal mandated support from the father. If you ask around for referrals from friends or spend some time on line researching, you can find local attorneys who offer 20 – 30 minute sessions at no charge to review your situation. There are even some attorneys who work a certain number of pro-bono (free) cases yearly to satisfy their obligation to the State Bar Association. It is well worth checking into to protect your family business.

3) Along the lines of protecting your business, you should also meet with your insurance agent to make sure that you are covering your family in the best and most affordable way possible. If you have minor children (under the age of 18 in most states), do you carry life insurance for them? What if you work part time and it isn't offered as a part of your job benefits? What if the child's father doesn't carry it either? Maybe there is an affordable option for your situation. Only your insurance agent will be able to walk you through the maze, explain it all and find the right plan for you. At best, it is worth checking into so you know what you are up against. I feel that the same applies to renter's insurance. So many of us will spend a lifetime renting, especially if we live in California, and we don't feel that the expense of renter's insurance is justifiable. Again, I say it is about protecting your family business and though you may think that you don't really have anything worth insuring, take it from me, when something happens and you lose it all, you will be kicking yourself that you didn't think it worthy of insuring. Look around at all of your stuff. It is part of your life, why not at least chat with your insurance agent about options. It can't hurt, right?

4) Make sure to give yourself some downtime, EVERY week if not every day. This is very important. It may not be hours, but whatever time you can get, take it and slow down and take a break. Life is short and laundry, dirty dishes and floors that need cleaning aren't going anywhere. They will be wait for you. The only way you are going to have the energy to handle the day to day cycle is to schedule some downtime for yourself so you can regroup, focus and breathe. It is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your kids. If done regularly, it keeps the amount of meltdowns and rants to a bare minimum!

5) And lastly, try to reach out to the other Single Moms whenever you can. It can be through your children's school, your work, your church, wherever you encounter them. You all have so much to offer each other by way of experience, support and sometimes just to listen to one another. Wouldn't it would be great to get together once a week or once a month and share stories, struggles, tears and hugs? Being among other people who understand the daily responsibility of

raising families alone can only make you stronger. You aren't being judged because you're not married, or viewed as a failure because your marriage didn't work. You are valued for the strength it takes to be both a Mom and a Dad while working full time, and trying to stay sane. As women we tend to be incredibly hard on ourselves and are of the mind that we must do everything by ourselves or we are weak. That is a load of bull! We are human first and foremost which means that we are not perfect, we do not have all of the answers and we certainly aren't expected to do everything by ourselves. So wake up, reach out and find your support system. Plan time to hang out and let your kids broaden their social skills. Create a monthly book club, barbeque, wine tasting, gripe session or a swap meet so you can clean out your closets and garages and give the stuff to other Single Moms who can really use it. Be creative and soon you will find strength and friends in numbers.

I know you work hard, you are tired and sometimes frustrated beyond belief....but the great thing is YOU ARE NOT ALONE....and don't ever have to be. It just takes some time on your part. **Remember to give yourself credit for the job you do daily of raising your children.**

Well, that's all I've got for now. I hope that there is something in my words that you can use to help your life. I seriously commend and respect you for the job you are doing living Single Mom Syndrome. I'm here to tell you that it is possible to Survive it and Thrive. I did it for 22 years and am now on the other side. It was not the way I thought my life would go, but the journey was necessary for me and I am stronger and better for it. My now 25 year old daughter is my proof that even though it was difficult, tiring and even scary at times, raising her was the best job I ever had because it was a job with Love as the foundation. You can't beat that...

Take care of yourself and be Proud of the Job you are doing....

Torie B.