

Working mums

Q:

I've just had a baby and my husband and I are financially secure enough for me to stay at home, but I'm concerned that I will be missing out on career opportunities and miss the boat to younger women when I return to the force. Please help!

A:

Congratulations on becoming a new mum. How lovely to be able to have the financial peace of

mind to not have to rush back to work.

The first thing I would do is to make a pact with yourself to be present with your child and enjoy the experience. The cliches are true. The time goes too fast and you never get it back. I also understand although this time at home with your baby is precious, it is easy to feel cut off from your former life and a life you enjoyed and worked hard to create.

If you are planning to go back to your career when you get your child off to school then there are a few steps you can take to remain part of the world, whilst not being entirely in it.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR INDUSTRY NETWORK

By remaining in touch with your industry network you are staying in touch with the energy of the sector. You will know what changes are happening, what the general vibe of your sector is and what will affect you when you go back to work.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FRIENDLY WORK COLLEAGUES

Make sure you try to have lunch and coffee occasionally with your friendly work colleagues. This will keep you connected to the culture of your previous organisation or sector.

KEEP CONNECTED TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL WORK COLLEAGUES

This keeps you in touch with your sector at the highest level. It reminds them that although you may have had a baby you are still serious about your career and your contribution to the world at a service level. Even if you don't go back to the previous place you worked having connections in the industry allows you to keep yourself in the loop.

SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR SECTOR MAGAZINES

Reading up on the latest news and industry gossip can keep you more in the loop than you know. Often when you are on the mouse wheel at work you do not always have the time to read up. Staying informed keeps you connected to your career.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

Motherhood can be overwhelming and it is not about you anymore. It is all about your baby. It is easy to become lost in motherhood, so make sure you remember who you are, what you are good at and what you like to do outside of motherhood. In my book, 'Spiritual Business', I ask the readers to write a list of 50 Things You Love. By writing this list you have a strong understanding of who you are and what you immediately connect to.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH TECHNOLOGY

Remain web and email savvy. If your sector requires a particular skill set then ensure you are up to date with these skills. Perhaps do refresher courses before you return to work or do some extra training which can be a rehearsal for your childcare routine.

LOOK AFTER YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH.

I know this sounds preachy but it is so important. If you are thinking about going back to work at some stage you want to do it feeling great, physically and mentally.

BE PREPARED.

Make sure you have childcare plans ready for when you are thinking of going back to work. Childcare is hard to come by in certain areas of Australia, so knowing your child has a place that you may or may not use, gives you peace of mind.

LET GO OF THE FEAR

Let go of what other younger women in the force do or do not have. What is attractive about having a mature woman in an organisation is being able to rely on them. Experience far outweighs youth. Having gotten the travel bug out of your system and having real responsibilities like children and a mortgage means you will most likely stay in the workforce and this is attractive to your current or prospective employer.

GET COACHED FOR THE BIG RETURN

Having a coach on your side to help you get your head and heart back into the workforce and it's a wonderful way to feel supported in this transition.

If you can't afford a coach then ask a friend to look over your CV or even ask you a few pretend interview or industry questions. Chances are that your coach or friends will help you see your positive traits that you may skip over or not recognise.

BE IN THE NOW

Finally, enjoy your time with your child. When you return to work you will do it with a bigger perspective, more maturity and a deep empathy from motherhood. This is more powerful than you realise. ✨

Kate Forster is the author of *Spiritual Business – Creating a Business from the Heart.*

