

Sane & Satisfied



A GUIDE FOR MOMS

BY FLOW BELINSKY

Welcome to Sane & Satisfied

Hey Mama! Congratulations on taking the time for this journey.

I'm Flow, your guide, here to share some wisdom I've gained through navigating my own hardships around sanity and satisfaction in motherhood. I know from experience that motherhood is NOT easy, and sometimes it can be crazy making. This life-long job is an enormous balancing act that is always changing and dynamic. It's easy to lose yourself in it, or lose your wits. But with the right help, mindset and tools, you truly can have an enjoyable and balanced experience as a mom at every stage.



Before we begin, I want to acknowledge that there are a lot of cultural and societal aspects at play that make it extra challenging for modern day moms to maintain a sense of sanity and find satisfaction in their lives.

There are too many things to do and not enough hands or social services to truly spread the task-load of parenting. We are missing the village lifestyle that truly makes child rearing sustainable, and so moms suffer. Plus all the mom guilt! Oy! It comes from outside influences and makes it hard to deeply enjoy life as a mother.

But, while it's a complex problem to fix society, it is simpler to integrate practices and philosophies into your own life to make it more nourishing. So, even though this guide won't fix all the problems you face as a mother, it will help you face them with more grace, grounded awareness and natural joy, and to find the time and space to nourish for yourself through it all.

It's so easy to spread yourself thin as a mom— caring for others and putting their needs ahead of your own. Sometimes this is necessary for the good of the family, but too much for too long will create an unhealthy mom.

I believe you deserve a life that honors your needs too, Mama. You are worthy of being supported and having the time and space to truly enjoy your life.

The concepts that we cover in this guide: **Authenticity, Deep Self-Care, Creative Expression and Self-Compassion**— are vital for avoiding burnout, uplifting depression, releasing anxiety, loosening the hold of addiction and creating a sense of balance and fulfillment in everyday life.

As a mother and caretaker of others, it does take work to make space in the busy family schedule for your own self and interests. But, to really be healthy and happy as a mom, you have to carve out time to do the things that help you feel more like the woman you truly are inside.

Though this guide will help you have that, it is not a one stop fix. These are tools that will help you to navigate the ever changing reality of motherhood, and get back to yourself when you get lost in the maze of care-taking. But, by doing this stuff once, you won't be sane and satisfied forever.

It takes consistent dedication to your own wellbeing, prioritizing your own happiness and constantly course correcting when you have gotten off track. However, if you keep these teachings in your pocket and use them when you need them, if you make regular time for your own self-cultivation and care, you will feel better more of the time. And when you do what it takes to have that, everyone benefits, especially your family.

**In my philosophy, a good mom is a happy mom,
and a happy mom is connected to herself in
real and powerful ways.**

So make a commitment to yourself right now to follow through with these simple exercises in each chapter. It might be challenging to make the time for yourself at first, but by the end of this guide, I know it will be well worth it as you experience the benefits.



Chapter 1:

Authenticity

Authenticity is both telling it like it is without pretending and also being real with yourself about what you are feeling, needing and desiring.

It is vital for moms to truly get honest about what they feel and need so that real health and healing can occur within themselves and the broader culture.

When you are authentic with your feelings, wants and needs, everything runs better. You will feel more vitality, more energy, more creativity, more happiness and more like who you truly are.

So many moms hide, suppress and deny what they really want and what they are truly feeling. It might seem like there is not enough time for you to really process your emotions, or your needs are secondary to those of your family.

It might feel like your truth is not welcome in your social circles, or that other moms will judge you for feeling how you do. It might be that you have pushed aside your own feelings and needs for so long, you don't even realize you HAVE feelings, needs and desires that are being suppressed.

There are many layers and ways to be more honest and authentic in your life. We are conditioned to hide so much in our culture and in our role as mothers. But, once you commit to deeper authenticity and honesty in your life, you will find less private hardship and dissatisfaction and more connection, support and self-acceptance.

Some of the ways to experience more authenticity include— sharing your emotions with other people, journaling about your feelings to get more clarity for yourself, working with a therapist, actually being honest when someone asks how you are, sharing with the world through social media, blogs or podcasts about the realities of motherhood, and much more.

I have so many suggestions and inspirations around authenticity that make life better and contribute to a healthier society. We go much deeper into this in the Mom Centered Learning Lab and Professional Training. If you are a Mom who helps moms in your work or wants to, [learn more about that here](#). But for this guide here we are going to focus on the aspect of authenticity that is about your true desires.

So many mothers settle for less than they truly wish for. They feel like they can't have what they really want, that they shouldn't want it, that there's no time, money or space, or like they are bad moms for wanting whatever they want. So, they suppress these desires and live with less than their dream life. Yet— this leads to resentment, depression, anxiety, minor and major addictions, suppressed rage, grief, sadness and more.

I'm here to tell you— life doesn't have to be like that. I deeply, firmly, truly believe that you can create a life you love, even in motherhood. But, you have to get real with yourself about what you really want before you can take the steps to having it. And, even if all your desires don't come true (which they probably won't, at least in the short term,) just the act of getting honest with what you actually want is so healing and freeing.



Exercise #1:

Authenticity Practice

**So, what are you settling for
and what do you really want?**

It could be seemingly small things, like saying you are fine with the vanilla ice cream your husband always buys when really you want chocolate, or saying it's fine that you are stuck with the baby every night, when really you want a babysitter once a week so you can go out with your friends.

Or maybe it's bigger things, like continuing to live in the city when your soul is crying out for you to move to the country, or working a job you hate because you feel obligated to the money, while stifling your entrepreneurial ideas.

Whether big or small, these things add up to tons of resentment, regret, dissatisfaction, and can even contribute to depression, anxiety and addiction. When we continue to settle for less or different than what we actually want, we are really hurting ourselves and our loved ones.

It's time to get fully authentic about your true needs, desires, callings and dreams.

In the exercise below, you'll have a chance to get real with what is currently happening in your life, and take the plunge into expressing what it is you authentically want.

The only way to live a truly sane and satisfying life is to create a life you actually love living.

What are you doing that isn't good for you, your heart, your soul, your true longings, and what do you really want instead?

Don't worry, you don't have to take action on any of these things if they are too scary, impractical or seemingly impossible. But just the act of getting honest with yourself in this way will open up a lot of energy, vitality, clarity and lead to choices that help you feel more fulfilled and healthy.



Action Steps:

- Grab a notebook and pen. Carve out at least 10 minutes of undisturbed time for yourself.
- Now, as many times as you can, you are going to write out the following prompt and answer it as honestly as you are able to.

“What I settle for is... (your answer)... but what I REALLY want is... (your answer)...”

- That's it. Complete this prompt as many times as you can in the time you have. When you are done, read it over and really let it sink in.

How much have you settled for? Can any of that be changed to what you really want? What would you need to do in order to make it happen?

- How does it feel to be that honest with yourself? How does it feel to recognize all the ways you are settling and not having what you really want? What does it bring up inside of you? What does it make you want to do? Write all of that down in your journal too.
- Now take three really, really deep breaths and relax as much as you can.

Congratulations! It is not easy to be authentic with your true desires, especially as a mom.

We are taught by society to push our own needs and desires aside and sacrifice our wellbeing for our families. But, perhaps it is possible that putting your own needs and desires in the forefront will actually make you a better mom and help create a healthier family because of your own greater sanity and fulfillment.

Look at what you have written and reflect on where it might lead to change. Even a small change can lead to a greater sense of satisfaction.

Whether or not you take action to bring what you truly want into reality, just having this clarity will open up a lot more room for you to create a life that is more enjoyable, nourishing and in alignment with your authentic truth and desires.



Chapter 2:

Deep Self-Care

Deep self-care goes so far beyond spa days. It is about soul searching, nourishment, healing and boundaries. Deep self-care is about knowing what you need and giving it to yourself regularly.

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Deep self-care means integrating practices and time into your busy daily life to give yourself ways to truly feel and recharge— beyond alcohol, Netflix, Instagram, marijuana, eating junk food or whatever you do sometimes to try to get a little break in the motherhood maze.

Deep self-care includes things like meditation, movement, yoga, hiking, exercise, receiving energy healing, journaling, baths, being in nature, going to therapy, reading and implementing helpful books or courses, integrating mindfulness and self-compassion into your life, taking a day or a weekend off to be by yourself somewhere... whatever helps truly fill your cup.

This means being sacredly selfish by taking time off from care-taking to really take care of yourself, and letting go of the guilt around that. Truly integrated deep self-care for a mother is the most important ingredient to a healthy mom and family.

I also want to address the sneaky guilt that can creep in and make you feel like a bad mom for taking time to care for yourself instead of your family. This is a culturally ingrained idea, and one that is actually not helpful for the sanity of moms and the health of families.

Taking good, deep care of yourself IS helping your family.

When you are well-resourced, refreshed, revitalized, more relaxed and happy, you are a better mom. So, let's flip the script and solidify the truth that taking care of yourself IS caring and helpful for your family.

Exercise #2: Deep Self-Care Scheduling and Practice

Even though our culture is often not set up to support moms to have the time off they truly need for deep self-care, I encourage you to spend some time thinking about and creating solutions to meet your needs for time-off for you.

Who in your network can help with the kids? Maybe you can ask the dad to be with them a little bit more, or grandma, grandpa, an aunt or uncle. Perhaps another mom is willing to trade care-taking hours so you can switch off having time off. Maybe a childless woman you know would love some time with your kids, and you just need to ask. Maybe there is a way to put money towards a sitter, or share a sitter with another family sometimes so you can all pay less and have more time off. Get creative!

**There ARE solutions, if you are willing
to put in the time to find them.**

You also can get creative at utilizing the natural gaps within mothering to care for yourself. Nap times, night time, or even early morning if you can get in the habit of rising before your young ones, are great times to practice your deep self care. If your children are in school, you have a lot more time during the day, so put some of it to use to really nurture yourself.

Once you find the time and space for deep self-care, it's time to put some practices into action. I really recommend creating regular time for yourself each day or each week in this way. By that I mean actually put it in your calendar consistently and follow through. Don't just wait until you are completely burnt out.

Make it a regular part of your life, even when you are feeling good, and you will find more balance and sanity on a daily basis.

It is helpful to think of it in terms of what small things you can do each day to keep you calm and sane, and what longer or bigger things you can do each week or each month that create a big reserve of wellbeing that you can then thrive from.

Action Steps:

- Get out a notebook and pen. Carve out 10 minutes of quiet time for yourself.
- Make a list of all the ways you like to care for yourself deeply.

These things can be as small as 3 minutes of quiet breathing or as large as a trip away. Really put everything in there, no matter how extravagant or seemingly unattainable, or small and seemingly insignificant. It all matters and counts. Make your list, Mama.

- Then, do one of the things on your list today.

Seriously.

And after that, get out your calendar and schedule some deep self-care into your days or weeks. Where can you find some time off for you, and what will you do? Schedule it in, find a way and follow through.

Now you have a list that you can rotate through or implement throughout your days, weeks and months. Refer back to this list whenever you need some reminding or inspiration on how to care for yourself in your busy life.

It takes effort and planning to fit in the deep self-care you need as a mother. It also takes involving other people to help with the kids while you do it. It might seem like a lot of effort, but, it is so important, rewarding and well worth the time to get there.

Let go of any guilt and truly let yourself receive some of the nurturing you so freely give to others.

You are worth it. You need it. You deserve it, and your family will benefit from it too.



Chapter 3:

Creative Expression

Creative energy is the vital force that surges through you and brings color and passion to life. It is primal, inherent and natural to all beings.

**As a mother, you used your
creative energy in an awe-inspiring
way— to bring your kids into the world.**

But, chances are, a lot of your creative life-force is still going into raising them, and not enough is going into making, creating and expressing things that are interesting and enlightening to you as an individual. The beautiful thing is, you can have both. And, the more you nurture your own passionate expression, the better mom and partner you can be because you will feel filled up and more alive.

The practice of cultivating creative energy enhances physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. As a caretaker, you need time to be with your own mind, heart and creative process, too. There is incredible satisfaction that comes from making or doing something that is all your own, and waking up that juicy creative aliveness that is naturally within you. Plus, the act of creating actually stimulates dopamine production in the brain, which lowers stress, increases happiness and decreases depression and anxiety.

There are all kinds of ways to cultivate and express your creativity. I go deeper into this in my book, *Mental Health for Moms*, but in this guide we will touch on some of the ways to generate that healthy creative life-force and bring it forward into the act of creating.

You may not think you are a creative person, but I believe every person is in their own unique way, and moms are the ultimate creators who bring life into the world, so I know you have it in you.

Exercise #3: Making Space for Creative Expression

Creative expression has no limits or boundaries. There are so many ways to be creative. Your creative acts and practices can be impermanent, like singing, dancing or making music or permanent such as drawings or paintings. They can be big like creating a business based on your passion, publishing a book or creating an art installation, or small, like drawing the flowers outside, making candles or creating something that is never shown to anyone else.

Then there is also the act of using creative expression as a means to heal, like I did by writing my first book, *Postpartum: A Story of Unraveling and Becoming*.

You can use any art form as a way to process emotions, tell your stories, get the inside out. Creative expression can be deeply healing, cathartic and transformational.

Whether you use creativity as a means to heal, a form of exercise, a way to make money or something just for fun, it is important to make and do something for yourself with your creative energy to sustain sanity and satisfaction in motherhood.

So, today we are going to focus on bringing more creative expression into your life, whether you are a creative newbie or a veteran.

Action Steps:

- Grab your journal and carve out 10 minutes of focused time for yourself.

Write about what creative expression means to you. What is your relationship with creativity? Do you feel connected to it, or not? Was there a time in your life that you felt more creative? What does creativity bring to your life? Or, what do you notice you may be missing by not having creative expression in your life?

- Then, make a list of all the ways you like, have liked or want to try to express yourself creatively.
- Some examples are: poetry, movement, painting, collaging, knitting, song writing, gardening, baking, jewelry making, creating a blog or podcast, etc.
- Once you have your list written out, find a time in your schedule that you can play with creativity and put it in your calendar.
- Follow through with your scheduled creative activity. Find a time the next day or week, and schedule in more time for you in this way.

Journal about how all this makes you feel.

Do your best to schedule in regular time each week for you to express yourself creatively and keep it up.

There you go!

You are now well on your way to a deeply authentic, self-caring, creative life.

I want to acknowledge you for coming this far with me, for sticking to this guide, and for giving yourself the time, space and care you need to truly thrive as a mom.

Chapter 4:

Self-Compassion

**Self-Compassion is being kind to yourself
in your own head and actions.**

One of the most common mental health challenges with moms is being hard on themselves. There is an insidious perfectionism that is prevalent in our culture, and even more so for mothers.

When you are hard on yourself, everything else is harder too. While it's good to have standards that you want to live by, it is even more important to be forgiving of yourself when you don't live up to them, gentle with yourself in daily life and realistic with your goals.

It is so transformational to turn your attention to things that you are doing well, acknowledge yourself for what you do accomplish and overall just be nice to yourself in your own mind.

When I started practicing self-compassion, everything got a lot easier. I no longer beat myself up about little things, I no longer felt like a bad mom and a terrible person, I no longer dwelled on my perceived shortcomings and character flaws. I stopped feeling guilty for everything I wasn't doing and started feeling proud of everything that I was.

The truth is, you will always fall short of being a perfect mom or perfect human. All of us will.

There is no such thing. So the more you can let go of what you think you should do and how you think you should be, and let yourself be ok with how you actually are, the less stress and more sanity you will feel.

If you are ready to let go of the guilt and shame of being not enough or never good enough, if you are ready to let go of the judgement and comparison of yourself and other moms and everyone around you, it starts with practicing compassion for yourself.

I say practice because it really is a skill that must be learned and put into effect, and one that grows with time. It's not enough to just decide to be compassionate with yourself and then you are magically cured. It takes retraining your brain, thought by thought, day by day. It takes willpower to notice when you are being hard on yourself, when you are judging yourself or someone else, when you are feeling inadequate or like a failure, and reframe what is happening in your own head.

The more you do this, the more you will feel healthier, less stressed, more balanced and happier each day.

Exercise #4:

Self-Compassion Practice

There are a lot of ways to cultivate self-compassion. I recommend looking up mindfulness meditation, of which this is a basic principle. There are multiple books, teachings and practices that can help you really cultivate self-compassion in your life. But for this journey we are on here together, we will start with something simple yet effective.



Action Steps:

- Find 15 minutes where you can focus and be in a quiet space.
- Grab your journal, a pen and a comfortable seat.
- First, just place your hands over your heart. Close your eyes. Focus on your breathing and your own heart beating. Stay there for at least one minute, or more.
- Then, you are going to make 3 lists.
- The first list is everything that you love about yourself. Dig deep, be generous.
- The second list is everything that you accomplished today, including small things like brushing your teeth, making breakfast for the kids or packing them a nourishing school lunch.
- The third list is everything you are grateful that your body and mind can do.
- When you are done, study your list and take deep breaths. Really take this time to let in your own self-appreciation.
- Keep this list somewhere handy. Look at it often. Add to it whenever you feel inspired.

Chapter 5:

Integration

**Wow, congrats. You made it through this entire guide.
Take a deep breath. How does it feel?**

This final chapter is all about Integration, which actually is the most important step! It's one thing to learn something, and a whole other level to actually let the information into your life and reality. And, the way to actually have sustainable balance and sanity in your motherhood journey is to take this information and put it into practice, again and again.

So, it's time to look back on what you learned and experienced on this journey and find the key things you want to continue to implement in your life. The four practices covered in this guide will help you on your way to more sanity and balance. However, for most of you, there is more work, more tools and more information needed to really make that happen for the long haul, which is why I wrote *Mental Health for Moms*. If this guide was helpful and you want more, check out *Mental Health for Moms* and continue on the path toward a more nourishing, fulfilling and enjoyable experience of motherhood.

Exercise #5:

Integration Journaling

Below are some journaling prompts that will help you to really ground what you learned and experienced in this guide and harvest what will continue to help you on your journey of toward sanity and satisfaction in motherhood.

So, take the time to really answer these questions with your heart and soul, and it will pay off.

Also, don't forget to continue to schedule in time for your deep self-care and creative expression! These will go a long way in sustaining and enhancing your mental health and sense of well-being through every stage of motherhood.



Action Steps:

- Get your journal or notebook out, carve out about 15 minutes for yourself, and answer the following questions:

1. In what ways can I be more authentic in my life?
2. When I don't take really good care of myself, how does it affect me?
3. When I don't take really good care of myself, what is the impact on my family?
4. When I express my creative energy, I feel...
5. If I really let myself be authentic, did regular deep self-care, expressed my creative energy and was kind to myself, my life would change in these ways...

- Now read your answers and take deep breaths. Feel what arises for you. Be with those feelings for a few moments. Write down anything else that comes to you in this space.

- After you are done with that get your calendar out.

- Go through the next month. Schedule in at least two times per week where you can integrate deep self-care or creative expression. Write down what you will do and for how long. Arrange who will take care of your kids during that time if you need to.

I really encourage you to keep this up!
You will find that when you get more authentic in your life,
when you take real care of yourself, when you make time
to express and cultivate your unique creativity and when
you practice self-compassion regularly, your life will
become more fulfilling, less stressful, more exciting, and
you will feel more calm, centered,
present and like your true self.

When that happens, everyone wins. Your family will benefit from a happier, healthier mom. Your partner or friends will benefit from your renewed vibrancy and energy. And most importantly, you will feel really good and enjoy your life more..

I am so grateful to be connected with you, and that you took this time to really nurture yourself, Mama.

If you want to know more about my story and how I got on this mission of helping other mothers live more fulfilling and balanced experiences of motherhood, read my book, [**Postpartum: A Story of Unraveling and Becoming**](#). It's a raw and real memoir about my first year of motherhood and the challenges I healed through. It was in those challenges that led me to the tools in this guide and the philosophies and practices the [**Mom Centered Wellbeing Certified Practitioner Training**](#). It is often through hardship that we find the greatest gifts. So, through my deep challenges, I am honored to be able to offer you these teachings for your own benefit as well as for the benefit of your clients if you are a mom that helps other moms through healing, facilitation, counseling, coaching or as a doula.

**Well Mama, we have come to the end of
our time together for now.**

I hope this experience brought you some inspiration you can carry forth into the rest of your life. [Check out my book and the training if you are interested!](#) And feel free to send me an email and let me know how it is going for you!
I'd love to hear about it.

Best Wishes on your Journey,
Flow Belinsky

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