



# ***Why Do Some Women Let Themselves Go***

## **Women aren't on their own list of priorities**

After taking care of everyone else, they are always putting themselves last on the list, and often have very little left to give. There are many women who aren't living—they just exist. This is a form of self-abuse. Women often wear their exhaustion as a badge of honor. The more you do for your loved ones, the more acceptable it becomes to "let yourself go." Women believe it's okay to become a "sacrificial lamb" within their own families. This is a lie that we allow ourselves to buy into, but we need to wake up! The challenge for women is that they must re-language what it means to be a wife and mother. Being a good wife and mother means that if you don't take care of yourself, in the long run you are ultimately harming *all* the *other* people you love in your life. You won't be the only one who takes the hit.

## **Fear of Competition**

Media and society frequently tell women we need to portray ourselves as "together" and be able to perform any task thrown our way. But when women look at the reality of how overwhelmed they feel in their own lives, they begin to feel like they are not good or worthy enough. Women often see other women who look like they are "doing it all"—and then when they compare themselves, they become overwhelmed and feel inadequate. It's not easy to face feelings of inadequacy so women usually end up avoiding them. But women need to know you can't show up in your own life if you are on the run. They tell themselves they are too tired and burdened to compete with others so they don't believe they have the power to change anything. Then they "drop out" of the game—they give up and let themselves go.



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## **Unresolved anger contributes to letting go**

Sometimes women "drop out" because they don't know how to send a verbal message that says, "Get off my back." They have unresolved feelings of anger or rage toward someone or about something so they "let themselves go" to express that. When women give up on themselves, they are often sending messages of anger and it could be because of something traumatic that happened in the past or because of unhappiness in a current relationship...like with a parent, husband, or child.

## **We let fear take over**

Women become paralyzed in their lives and let themselves go because of an underlying *fear*. A fear of rejection, a fear to accept how they really feel about themselves, a fear of facing the idea that they aren't enough, a fear of accepting how others may feel about them. They let the fear take over and let other people determine their own self worth. The internal barometer that gauges, guides and directs your life as an empowered woman—that makes you know you are enough and okay—is broken and needs to be fixed.

## **The "Who Am I?" Journal**

Who am I? It's a lifelong question, and getting beyond appearances and labels is the crucial first step in launching your comeback.

## **The Buddy System**

You've got to get somebody to do this with you. This can't be a friend who lives across the country, but find a friend who lives close by so you can get to them when you need them. There are two reasons why having a buddy is important. First, you need the support to do this. You need somebody to whom you can open up and



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show your emotions. Somebody who won't judge you when you cry and someone who makes you feel comfortable when you need to get a good cry out. Secondly, this person needs to hold you accountable. They should be the person who will ask you, "Did you write in your journal today?" and "Are you acting, not just waiting to be rescued?"

Your buddy should not be your husband or a male companion because many of us have been taught that our support needs to come from a man and this is not true. Your affirmation needs are much deeper and your needs must be filled by yourself. A female buddy will help you stay on this path. Remember, people in your life may not like it when you start to change the script of who you are. That's because they have become accustomed to you being disposable all the time. You won't be able to fix yourself if you are surrounded by the people who help break you. You need to minimize the access they have while you are recovering. So, your buddy will walk with you on this journey.

### **Find a Role Model**

Not everyone will know someone in their life who can be a great role model. You shouldn't feel pressured to force someone to fit this role for you. Not everyone can find a role model and that's okay. Just keep focusing on yourself and the other ideas.

Be careful not to confuse your role model with your buddy. The difference between a role model and a buddy is that your role model is somebody who's already gotten to where it is you want to go. So you want to find someone who has found joy, who has learned how to love themselves and accept themselves. Someone who in the past has been resentful and angry, but now has taken concrete steps to turn his or her life around and has seen positive results from their effort to do so. The importance of your role model is for them to be your teacher. They will serve as your guide to help dig you out of your emotional hole. This person can be a man or a woman, but make sure that this person is someone who has already made the journey you are about to



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take. You want to start by interviewing your role model—ask them questions like "How did you change yourself?" And then begin by taking these small steps to start practicing some of those behaviors in *your* life.

### **Create a "What I Enjoy" List**

As simple as this may sound, it is very important for you to make one. This list should include everything that brings you pleasure and passion in life. If you aren't sure what brings you joy right now, think back to what used to bring you joy? This may require some exploration, but what did you do when you were a little kid that brought a smile on your face? Did you used to go horseback riding? Walk outside in a garden? Whatever it may be, write it down. This list doesn't mean that you have to do them every day. It's just to make you aware that there are things in the world that do make you feel alive. If you are able to do something you enjoy at least once a week, do it and help yourself feel alive in that moment. You have to behave the way you want to feel *before* you feel the way you are behaving! It's about opening yourself up to a new experience, or something that you stopped doing. Try to rediscover what it feels like to look or feel differently from the "not enoughness" you have been putting into your head for a long time now. When you start doing this you will launch yourself back into aliveness!

### **Seek *HELP***

*Some of you may have some deeper, darker emotional issues that have caused you to let yourself go. If this is the case, you need to seek out some one-on-one therapy or a support group of people who have suffered similar circumstances. There are many affordable resources you can begin to utilize if you are serious about taking your power back. There are many local, free support groups for people dealing with issues like drug or alcohol dependency, incest or other sexual abuse, the betrayal of a spouse, or when you've lost your passion in life.*