



Monday, April 13, 2009

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WORKING MOTHERS OF THE YEAR - LAURELLE JOHNSON

Sense of humor and strict rules equal a successful working mother.



By: Ilisa Cohen & Jennifer Owens

Creative President, Innerwealth Communications; Los Angeles, CA
Children: Emily, 16; Gabby, 13 ♦ **Husband:** Ross Johnson

Why We Love Her

Being a successful working mother leaves no room for a damsel-in-distress complex, says Laurelle. This leadership mentality led her to launch her own business as a public-speaking coach. Passionate about helping female entrepreneurs value and understand their self-worth, Laurelle's clients have raised more than \$1.5 million in funding for their women-owned businesses. But Laurelle's preaching is also practiced in her home. Even as her daughters, Emily and Gabby, clean their own rooms, do laundry and cook dinner once a month, there's zero tolerance for complaining, and communication is fostered by a strict rule—email and phones off by 6:00 p.m. her other secret to success: having a sense of humor really helps.

Q: What's your best advice for a new mom returning to work?

A: Get help! You cannot do it all. Get help with your house; get help with the baby and above all get sleep. Also, minimize the guilt. It will undermine everything you are doing when away from your child and affect your relationship with your spouse and negatively affect your ability to work.

Q: What's your best tip for keeping your home life running smoothly?

A: Delegate. I can't do it all. As a family, we all decide together who is doing what, and then I stay out of it. That means not coming up afterwards and doing it my way. It means not complaining if the job was done ineptly. My husband does the dinner dishes every night at 10 pm on the dot — never any earlier, no matter what I may say. So I don't say anything any more.

Q: What does balance mean to you?

A: Balance mean threshing out the necessary from the un-necessary. For business I ask myself how this task on the list will help me produce revenue. If it won't, then it is never done! It is so easy to get "busy" and never make a dime. But as I like to be rewarded for my hard work by making money, I ask myself this question every day as I look over the list of things to do. Balance also means that I know when to pull back to schedule sleep time or time to read the paper without interruption. I schedule alone time in the house and focus on art projects, creative time and gardening. (You can check out my facebook on the progress of my garden and compost piles.) I get my best ideas while doing something creative.

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