

Debunking the Super Mom Myth - 6 Strategies for Redefining Success & Balancing Motherhood | Episode 14

Hey there, I'm so happy you're joining me today. Today's topic, the supermom, or rather, the myth of the supermom. We're going to explore where this idea came from, why it's so appealing, and how it impacts us. Most importantly, I would say, we'll look at ways to start breaking free from these unrealistic expectations.

So let's get started. What is a supermom really? Well, it's a concept of a mother and how she should flawlessly balance every single aspect of her life. That includes her career, her family, and her personal well being.

And of course, you know, all of these have subsections to them. Like, family includes her children. It also includes her relationship with her partner. This idea of successfully mothering has become deeply ingrained in our society, but Was it always this way?

Where did this ideal come from? And why do we feel so compelled to strive for it? To understand the origins and evolution of the supermom ideal, will draw on historical perspectives. One book that I have mentioned before and is particularly helpful in this endeavor is *The Mommy Myth* by Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels. This book provides a fascinating, in my opinion, look at how the media and social expectations have shaped our views of motherhood over the decades. I'm going to be writing the title in the show notes in case you want to check it out.

I remember it was last summer when I first read it and I was like, It opened up my eyes, not only in regards to motherhood and these irrational ideals that are placed on women, but about the whole feminist movement and how the media used it against us to stifle the progress we were making. This is a really interesting book, and it really made me change my mind about a lot of things because I had from an uninformed place, or a place where I only had parts and bits of information, decided that maybe the feminist movement isn't isn't Doing us any favors.

Maybe the feminist movement is to blame for the fact that women have to now work as hard as men but then they also have to return home and be the primary caretakers and be the ones that are also doing the home chores and they're arranging the parties and they're arranging the groceries and All of that stuff, but through this book, I came to realize that there was a very strategic approach by the media that orchestrated this entire thing that created this ideal career woman, but also kept on pushing the perfect mother, so that we all felt compelled to be both if we were going to prove that we could go into what was then men's spaces.

We would prove that we deserve to be there only if we could do what we were already doing and take that on successfully as well. And so, uh, We blame the feminist movement for this, but what's really happened is that it was the feminist movement was spun to look as if this is what it was advocating.

Anyway, now this may not be the best summer read. I historically read books that aren't the type to necessarily help you chill out. I mean, this book had me huffing and puffing at all the injustice and the manipulation tactics it discussed. But who cares? That's my jam. And now you know a little weird thing about me. So there you go. So let's begin now to look into the historical context of the supermom.

To truly grasp the supermom myth, we need to go back to the post World War II era. During the war, so this is like 1939 to 1945, women took on roles that were traditionally held by men. They entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, and this was of course necessary so that they would support the war effort. When the war ended, there was a societal push to return back to normal, which basically meant that people operating in patriarchal terms expected women to just step back into their domestic roles.

I mean, You're not needed anymore in the workforce. The men are back. Let's go back to how we were. However, the seeds of change had been planted and the idea of modern life. Of the modern women began to evolve.

The media of the 1950s. So that's like around five years post war made sure to push this agenda.

How you may ask. Well, it played a crucial role in shaping the image of the ideal mother television shows advertisements magazines all of this. It showcased women as perfect homemakers who managed their households with ease and grace. By idealizing this image of the perfect mother, what the big guys did through the use of mass media, was to try to slow down the rapid social change.

It served as a way to reinforce traditional gender roles. Moving on to the 1960s then, the image of the perfect mother became even more entrenched. There were shows on TV like Leave it to Beaver and The Donna Reed Show, which depicted mothers who were always impeccably dressed, cheerful, and devoted entirely to their families. These portrayals set a high bar for real life mothers who were expected to emulate these fictional characters. And, you know, none of this is said explicitly that this is the expectation. But that's exactly what the message is, and we hear it loud and clear.

It's the same that we discuss in our times with social media when we talk about the Insta perfect mom and the Pinterest mom, the media's portrayal was very powerful because it provided a very clear model. Unrealistic, but clear demonstrating what a mother should be. And what is appreciated in a woman, because that's all we saw on TV.

This model left little room for the complexities and challenges of real motherhood, simply because they were never mentioned or showcased, creating this sense of inadequacy among women who couldn't meet these unrealistic standards.

But now let's skip over to the 1960s, which brought about significant changes as women entered the workforce, once again, but this time, not because

It was necessitated due to men being away, but because of the movement for equality. That is where the notion of the career mom emerged, adding a new layer of expectations. We were now expected to excel professionally while still maintaining our roles as primary caregivers.

The phrase having it all, originated then. It became a mantra, but it also added immense pressure. Media icons like the characters in *Working Girl* and *Baby Boom* participate, Portrayed women who juggled demanding careers and had perfect home lives.

And this further embedded the supermom myth. The successful career woman had to act like a man, which meant devoting many hours at work, being ambitious, acting as though She had no children. This successful mother, on the other hand, had to be ever present and fully fulfilled by motherhood.

And there was the unspoken expectation that we would be, that we could be, Both. Ever read the quote, the world expects women to work like they don't have children, and raise children like they don't work? Well, that's when it all started. And so because this was unachievable, it created two camps of women, with the media subtly at times, and not so subtly at others, blaming feminism as the culprit for what came to be called the mommy wars. Who was the better mom? The one who stayed at home and was there to protect her children from all the tragedies that the media outlets purposely were airing all day to guilt trip moms who were not constantly in the home?

Or was it the working mom? Was she better because not only did she provide a better income and future for her children, but she exemplified the importance of being a hard worker and independent. And so she further paved the way for gender equality.

Clearly, since it wasn't okay to be either or we fought one another. And we tried, we really, really tried hard to become that combination of caring mom and thriving career woman at the same time. Hello Supermom! And now, rearing in the 2000s, the internet and social media transformed how we consumed and shared information.

Platforms like Facebook and Instagram became showcases for curated glimpses into people's lives, often highlighting the most important. Just polished and perfect moments. The supermom ideal has now been broadcast on a global scale, creating a constant comparison culture, seeing other mothers, not just celebrities now on magazines and interviews.

But this has opened up to our acquaintances, our friends, our high school adversaries.

Seeing all of them along with. The celebrities that we want to emulate because we admire them so much, seemingly managing everything effortlessly, has exacerbated our feelings of inadequacy and the pressure to conform to this impossible standard.

And so now that we understand how we got here, it's time we take a closer look at what it means to be a supermom.

The term describes a mother who appears to manage Every aspect of life flawlessly. She excels at her job, she maintains a priesting home, she prepares a nutritious meal, she attends all her children's activities, and somehow, she still finds time for self care and personal hobbies, and, oh, of course, she's the perfect wife, too.

So, she's adored by her husband, who cannot get enough of her, she's definitely putting in the work in her relationship as well. This woman is seen as tireless, Endlessly patient and perfectly balanced, she is the epitome of efficiency and capability. Oh, how I would have loved to be that, wouldn't you? And that's how we all fall into this trap, because just by thinking like this, just by looking at this image and seeing it as

this amazing thing, we make it a possibility in our minds. We think that it's an actual goal. And so, It becomes our mission to become this tireless and willingly self sacrificial being handling everything without complaint, always putting our family's needs above our own. This image is not just appealing because it is drilled in our brains since we were young.

No, it's also very seductive because it embodies the ultimate control and capability. The super mom is not just a mother, she's a superhero in disguise, able to manage the unmanageable with grace and poise and with a smile. It is no wonder then that in my work with couples, the issue of control comes up a lot.

Moms become overwhelmed by this need to be on top of everything, not being able to let go. While their partners start feeling like they're always being told what to do, told off for not doing it in a very specific way. And eventually, they end up feeling worthless. But at the same time, that's what's expected of the woman. She's supposed to be in complete control in order to achieve doing it all, right? But as I just alluded to, in our effort to be a supermom, we often are met with very negative consequences. On a personal level, this relentless pursuit of the ideal can result in chronic stress, burnout, and a significant toll on our mental health.

We find ourselves constantly exhausted, feeling like we're never doing enough. The pressure to meet these high standards can lead to feelings of guilt, like we've discussed in several

episodes, inadequacy, and a diminished sense of self worth. And let me just say this, we learn to be silent about all of this.

We cannot admit that we're struggling, because all of us, whether consciously or subconsciously, are pretending to be super moms. To some extent.

When I say subconsciously, I mean that even in our effort to simply hide that we're not losing our S, in our effort to just not Publicize the hardship and even misery that we feel at times, we are also part of the problem.

We too promote the silencing and in turn we encourage the image of the perfect mom, which overwhelms the media.

And of course I'm not saying that we should be on our social media just complaining about motherhood either. My gosh, it's sad that I have to make such a disclaimer, but I do. Because I've read somewhere, this um, Complaint, I guess, I don't know what I would call it, that our generation of mothers hates motherhood.

And I was stunned by the oversimplification of this whole matter. It's a very sad attempt to maintain the ideal of the supermom. From all the accounts that I follow, in which I see mothers speaking honestly, not one of them has ever given me the impression that she hates motherhood, let alone her children. It baffles me that we equate talking about our frustrations with regretting our choice. One is not the other.

It could be. There is a world where a woman may regret becoming a mom, and that is also valid. Does that mean that she's a bad mom and she hates her kids? Highly unlikely. I won't say never, but highly unlikely. The supermom myth sets a standard that is, by its very nature, unattainable for most of us because, well, we are asked to excel in every aspect of our lives simultaneously.

We push ourselves beyond reasonable limits. We get chronic stress trying to be everything to everyone without taking a moment to breathe and acknowledge our own needs. And then we wonder why we are irritable, fatigued, hopeless, yelling, and feeling trapped in an endless cycle of tasks and responsibilities.

The carefully curated version of reality that we are exposed to, like it or not, fosters this culture of comparison.

We only post when our homes are immaculate, when our children are well behaved, when we have achieved some great, meaning measurable, professional achievement. And I used to do that too. I still do it to an extent, but what happens then is that we compare our behind the scenes struggles with these highlight reels of others, which can lead to feeling inadequate and

like a failure, even when we know logically that we are just getting the best moments. Because, like I said, we too tend to post our best moments as well. And that's not just for vanity's sake and to prove something.

A lot of times I hear mothers say that we are just not in the habit of sharing misery. We don't want to share the sad moments. We don't want to share the frustrations.

We want to show up when we are happy and share the joy and share the love. And that's something that they do in their encounters as well with other people. They tend to meet up with someone when they're feeling better, when they have something more light to share. But then what happens, whether we do this in social media or in real life, is that we end up feeling isolation and loneliness, making it even harder for us to express and cope with the daily challenges of motherhood.

And if we don't put an end to this, if we don't realize it soon enough, and we continue, On this pursuit of the supermom ideal, our self esteem and self worth keep on suffering as well. Many women share this negative self talk and a critical inner voice that leads them to believe that they're not good enough and that they're failing their families.

As we internalize this sense of failure, we reinforce the idea of That a mother's value, our value, is tied to the ability to perform and achieve in all areas of life in some kind of measurable way, in ways that others too can see and congratulate us on in ways that we can say, I've done a, b, c, d, the result is X, Y, Z.

This performance based self worth means that any perceived failure, whether it is a missed work deadline, a child's tantrum, or a messy home can feel like a personal failing.

And so then it makes sense that We have to let ourselves go, that we have to become martyrs, neglecting our own needs, interests, and values. Something's got to give, right? We have to drop one of the balls. The expectation to always prioritize others can lead to self neglect, where we put our personal goals and desires on hold.

This self sacrifice is often seen as a virtue, but it can result in a loss of identity and a sense of unfulfillment. Plus then, let's be realistic, we are also accused of letting ourselves go. So on the one hand, we're supposed to sacrifice. And on the other hand, we're also supposed to somehow still, at least outwardly, look like we're doing well and haven't let ourselves go.

The problem is that there's also the inward thing. So even if we keep the external looking all jolly and beautiful, most of us We'll let go of our interests and our hobbies, which, however, are essential parts of who we are. These activities provide us joy and relaxation and a sense of accomplishment that is outside of our roles, outside of proving anything, outside of being a caregiver and a professional.

But when we're trying to be a super mom, there is no room for that. We might be efficient, but we are also building resentment and frustration that eventually slow us down over time. When we don't give ourselves time for our personal passions and interests, we can really just lose ourselves, where we no longer recognize who we are outside of these caregiving roles.

Basically, the supermom myth clashes with values such as balance, connecting with ourselves and our needs, as well as personal growth. I know a lot of you guys who are listening to this are very interested in self improvement. Well, trying to be a supermom clashes with that. Think about it this way.

If you are working till the afternoon or evening, it's then time to go home to be with the kids. Any moment that you're not working, you feel the urge to be with the kids, to be as present as possible. Consider throwing a hobby in the mix. For many of us, me included, this feels like an indulgence.

So for me, I love taking long walks and ending up by the beach, something that I'm so grateful to have access to. But I don't. There is so much work to do, and then there is being with my son, and so, taking this walk is something that is always the last thing on my mind.

But whenever I do do it, when I have gone on that walk, despite all the work that I have, despite the never ending to do list that is always on my mind, and I feel like if I go on a walk, then nothing gets checked off, when I have gone, I have found myself being more productive, even though I had less time.

I have found myself being more present with my son, despite missing time with him. So this is an example of the struggle that we face as we try to reconcile our personal values with the unrealistic standards that are imposed by this supermom myth.

And another negative effect, of course, as I started saying before, is the impact that this all has on our marriage or our partnership. Because obviously, if we start looking at ourselves with contempt and shame and guilt, and we start to feel incompetent, what we do is we strive and we strive and we strive and we try to control and juggle.

How is this all going to change how we relate to our partner? If the way that we relate to ourselves changes, the way that we relate to others changes. Changes as well whether we are ready to admit it or not. So if I am harsh on myself at this point in time, if I've become very controlling because I think that things need to be done a very specific way, it's almost a given that I will be just as harsh on you partner.

Your contributions are not going to be enough. You're not following my manual. You don't get just how important this is. You don't have the supermom myth looming over you. You are not up to task. You are not enough.

And you can see clearly in this scenario how this is, at least in part, a projection.

Because there may truly be a gap in the support that this woman needs and what she receives, yes. But there are other cases where the support is there, at least to an extent, but it is scorned. And so the willingness to be there and continue to be supportive as the dwindles and then she gets more disappointed and gets less help and the vicious cycle goes on and on until someone recognizes the pattern and does something about it.

So do you see what this relentless push on ourselves through self whipping, self sabotaging, and self denying do to us and then in extension, what it does to our connection with our partner, it begins to make dents, right? This very pressure to be a super mom, in fact, causes us to be very far from the perfection that we seek. Our patience is low, our energy is depleted. And so any meaningful connection, whether that is with our partner or our children, it is lost. We think we are doing great, but the empty feeling at the end of the day that urges us to do more, to do better the next day, shows this lack of connection that we think we need to fill with more homemade toys, more activities, and more projects.

It's a never ending cycle that feeds into our self punishment by denying ourselves the time that we need to recuperate, to take care of ourselves and give time to ourselves. And here is where this all gets even trickier.

Being a supermom is clearly impossible when we consider that it requires of us to reach perfection both as people, as women, and as mothers, which often very much clash with one another. Being a respectable person in our capitalist society requires one to be very ambitious, driven, multifaceted.

These traits are highly valued in the professional world.

Success is typically measured by career achievements, financial stability, social status. Being accomplished means that you pursue education, you develop your skills, you build your career by dedicating yourself to climbing the ranks. Ambition and drive are seen as key components of personal and professional growth.

this is all often at the expense of personal time and sometimes even our well being. For centuries, it's also at the expense of family and parenthood too, right? if you are picturing a man in your head, you are right, because this is what was expected of men, and so this is now what is expected of women who have entered the workforce, is constantly moving forward, seeking the next milestone, rarely pausing to rest.

This mentality is deeply ingrained in many cultures where hard work and perseverance are celebrated as virtues that lead to success. Oh, and get this, a successful person in our society is also multi layered. Complexity is admired as it shows depth and a well rounded character.

People who excel in multiple areas of life are often seen as more successful and fulfilled, embodying the ideal of the modern accomplished individual.

So, You're applauded if you have hobbies. You're supposed to be doing some kind of organized sport or be at the gym. You're supposed to do all the things, on the other hand, the ideal of the perfect mom is often defined by her complete and unwavering focus on her children. She's not interested or drawn to much else because, as the perfect mother, her sole care in the world is raising her children, which admittedly is a full time job, or rather multiple full time jobs. Traditional views of motherhood carry on to this day, dictating that a good mother is one who is entirely devoted and nurturing and caring for her family.

The perfect mom is present at every school event, she helps with homework, she prepares home cooked meals, and she ensures her children's emotional and physical well being. Her life revolves around her family and her success is measured by her children's happiness and achievements. Do you see what's going on here?

This ideal creates a stark contradiction for mothers who are also striving to be respectable individuals in the professional world or in the outside world, in the world outside of parenthood. The societal narrative suggests that to be a good mother, we must sacrifice personal ambitions and dedicate all energy to the family.

However, this expectation is incompatible with the demands of being ambitious and driven. The perfect mom is not seen as someone who spends long hours at work or pursues personal interests that do not directly benefit her children. Being pulled in opposite directions means that Supermom is a woman that finds a way to excel in both domains without compromising. But is that even possible, now that I've laid it out for you? What is expected? Is that even possible? The result is a constant sense of inadequacy, since meeting the demands of one role often means falling short on the other.

This internal clash leads to a profound conflict of identity for many of us. The modern feminist movement has fought for women's rights to pursue careers and achieve independence, challenging the traditional notion that a woman's place is in the home.

it's Given us this opportunity, but it hasn't said that Staying at home is a bad thing. It's just that we now have the choice if we want to. As a result, many of us aspire to build meaningful careers and make significant contributions to society, viewing these achievements as essential parts of our identity.

Still, though, the enduring ideal of the perfect mother requires us to embody a different set of values centered around self sacrifice and domesticity.

Attempting to balance these conflicting expectations often results in what feels like an impossible juggling act. We find ourselves constantly switching between roles, trying to fully be

present at work and at home, but feeling like we're never fully succeeding in either of these capacities. This very quickly begins to become exhausting and, frankly, demoralizing.

The mental load of managing numerous responsibilities at the same time can lead to cognitive overload, where the constant need to plan and organize execute the tasks becomes overwhelming. The emotional toll of this balancing act is also very significant if you put together All the ways in which trying to be a supermom backfires. We become so concerned not to be seen as unambitious and not dedicated at work,

but then also we would drown in sorrow if we found that someone considers us as a neglectful mom. As much as we may want to say we are above this all, this external judgment can be a powerful force influencing decisions and adding to the stress of trying to embody the supermom myth.

So what do we do about this when it is so deeply ingrained in us through the generations and through our own upbringing? Is it a lost cause?

No, but, I won't lie, overcoming the supermom expectation requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both the internal and the external pressures. It does require dedication, but this time, it's not. It's dedication to yourself and to the goal of connection and not some kind of measurable Instagram worthy goal.

It's about redefining success, setting realistic goals, and nurturing all aspects of our identity.

This is something that we do together in a non judgmental place where we gather and we start to break down all of these expectations, but also in their place, we build compassion and grace and kindness and the balance that makes sense to each one of us individually.

If you're interested in that program, you can find more information in the show notes. But I don't want to leave you hanging. Why don't we start to do this together today?

I'm going to give you six strategies that can help you begin your journey to dismantling the supermom myth and that promote a more sustainable and fulfilling approach to motherhood because we deserve to be happy and we deserve to not be running on fumes.

One powerful method to addressing the internal conflicts that are created by the supermom expectation is the internal family systems approach.

This is also referred to as IFS. IFS is a therapeutic approach that helps individuals understand and harmonize the different parts of who they are. According to IFS, we actually all have multiple sub personalities, or parts, each with its own perspectives and memories and roles. Some of the parts we are struggling with could be that critical inner voice, while another part could be the nurturing caretaker, and another is the ambitious achiever.

Each of them holds its own goal that it considers most impactful for the benefit of the self. Each has its own set of emotions and motivation, and is there to protect you.

By using IFS, we can identify and work with these parts to understand our motivations and needs. For example, the part that strives to be a supermom might be driven by a need for validation, fear of failure. Knowing this, we can develop a compassionate relationship with this part, acknowledging the tough role that it has to play in order to maintain that we are loved and therefore survive because this part was most likely born somewhere in childhood where if we lost the love, we would not survive. And so it became paramount that we do not fail at any cost.

Do you see how this self sabotaging part could actually have been working to protect you? You may now be looking at it and seeing like, Oh my God, can it just stop pushing me to be a super mom? Can it just stop pointing out all the ways in which I failed? Can it stop creating this void and this sense that I'm inadequate and need to do more again and more and more and more?

You may be looking at it as if it is defective, as if it is a dictator. And it is ruining your life. But its intention is good. It's there to protect you. It has come to know that failing to be better or the best could get you thrown out of the tribe. In our times, the tribe means our family.

And when you're a child, this is very critical. As an adult, you may be like, Oh, okay. Why is that the most significant thing that I fear? Why do I put that higher than taking care of myself? Well, that was taking care of yourself when you were a child. You were making sure that as a dependent individual, as someone who needed your parents in order to survive, you would maintain the relationship with them.

You would maintain their love. When you see that, you can be more compassionate without letting this part dominate your self perception. Eventually, the goal is to integrate these conflicting parts, because there are the other parts of you that want something different. There is that part of you that is very, very tired and wants to rest.

So when these conflicting parts start, conversing with one another because they're no longer fighting one another because they see the good intention in one another. This can lead to a more balanced and harmonious internal state. You can read up more on IFS and try to establish this internal dialogue.

Identify the different parts of yourself that are contributing to feelings of pressure and inadequacy. Identify the other parts that are frustrated and tired, and angry. Give each part a voice, listen to their concerns, reassure them with compassion. Over time, this practice can help you understand and manage the internal dynamics that fuel the supermom myth.

This, of course, is much more easily accomplished with the help of a professional trained in IFS.

But I hope that this gives you a sufficient introduction so that you can start to tinker, in a sense, with this approach. Next, another essential step in overcoming the supermom expectation is redefining what success means on a personal level.

Society often equates success with external achievements, but this narrow definition can be limiting and detrimental. Instead, consider success in terms of fulfillment, well being, and alignment with your personal values. Start by identifying your core values and what truly matters to you.

This might include nurturing relationships. Personal growth, community involvement, or creative expression. Once you have a clear sense of your values, set goals that reflect these priorities rather than meeting societal standards. For example, instead of aiming to be the perfect mother and career woman, focus on being a present and engaged parent while pursuing meaningful work.

The difference might be subtle. Trying to be perfect is not the value. I value giving time to my family. I value being there. I value contributing and giving love and receiving love. That is different from endlessly trying to do things so that I can prove myself and I can prove to myself, first and foremost, that I am doing well, that I am perfect at this. There is a difference.

Redefining success involves celebrating small victories and acknowledging progress rather than perfection. So, recognize and appreciate your efforts even if they don't result in immediate and tangible achievements- something that you can show for it. This shift in perspective can alleviate the pressure and promote more of a sustainable approach to balancing various aspects of life. A third suggestion is mindful parenting, which is a practice that emphasizes presence and awareness in interactions with your children.

It encourages focusing on the present moment, on being there, rather than striving for perfection. Mindfulness and parenting can help us connect more deeply with our children and reduce the stress associated with trying to meet idealistic standards. It gets us out of our heads, it's counting all the things we've done and all the things we need to do, either as a parent or that we could be doing in the home or at work.

And it brings us fully to the present, just doing what it is that we're doing now.

This might mean putting away our electronic devices and focusing entirely on our child's needs and experiences at the time. Engaging in activities that foster connection, like reading together, playing games, or simply talking about their day. Mindfulness also involves being attuned to our own emotions and reactions.

So while you're doing this, pay attention to how you feel in various parenting situations and practice self compassion. If you're tired, if you feel like you desperately want to get out instead of feeling like, Oh my God, I'm such a bad mother that I feel this way. Just allow that to be there.

Give yourself grace. It's not easy. And it's not going to happen that from the first time that you try mindfulness techniques and as you are working on being less driven by the ideal of a supermom that it's going to happen immediately if you find yourself getting frustrated and overwhelmed. Take a moment to breathe deeply and reset. It's okay to have imperfect moments and being present and connected is more important than well being perfect.

What can also help is building a strong support network? That is so crucial. Surrounding yourself with a community of like minded individuals can provide emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging. You get to see the impact of the support in my eight week program,

where you and I and other moms like us get together to walk the path towards self awareness, self forgiveness, self parenting, learning to parent ourselves, and self compassion, so that we feel connected and loved. But other than this program, this network can include family. Friends, other parents, and professional resources such as therapists or support groups.

Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Delegating tasks and sharing responsibilities can lighten your load and allow you to focus on what matters most. Whether it's arranging a babysitting swap with a friend or hiring for household chores, finding ways to share the burden can make a significant difference in managing stress and avoiding burnout.

That also includes allowing your partner to do certain things, even if they're not done as you want them to be done. Another one of the most powerful ways to counteract the supermom myth, is embracing the imperfection. I mean, You had to be expecting this.

It's important here that we shift our mindset from the constant self criticism to one of self compassion to wonder every once in a while if not always at some point, hopefully always, What would I say to a friend to acknowledge that every one of us makes mistakes and that these moments are opportunities for growth and learning to know that we are good enough and to teach our children the value of resilience and problem solving by modeling these behaviors ourselves. Finally, connecting with yourself is essential for maintaining your mental and your physical health. Yet it's often neglected. Prioritizing ourselves means making time for activities that rejuvenate us and energize us, whether that's exercise or hobbies or socializing or simply taking a break.

If this seems too much, I have created a 31 day self connect calendar with even more benefits. Bite sized suggestions, mantras, and quotes that will motivate you to do one small, very, very small thing daily to reestablish your relationship with yourself, the love for yourself. Whether you try something like this by using this free tool that I provide by going to MarkellaCaplani.com/slash-self-connect-calendar. Or, you try this on your own, the point is to establish some form of routine and to try to identify activities that make you feel happy and relaxed.

Schedule regular time for these activities, treating them as non negotiable appointments. Even small pockets of time dedicated to yourself can have a significant impact on your well being.

Just lighting your beautifully scented candle. What, is that like, Three seconds can make a big difference in your day.

It's not about the quantity of time that you spend, but the quality, the actual going out of your way for even four or five seconds to do something that you love. You will enjoy.

To be better equipped to meet the needs of your family and handle the demands of daily life, you need to fill your cup, too.

And yes, I see you. I see you nodding your head and doubting, doubting yourself, feeling like you're not. If I give time to myself, could I just then take off with it and then just become selfish?

Could I just drop the ball altogether because now I taste how sweet it can be? I am here to tell you that I hear you. And if this is a concern, then your inner critic has a very big hold on you. Like mine did. And it's way louder than the other parts, and it easily takes over. But if you allow your other parts to also come forward, even if for just a minute, they will tell you that you are worthy even when you're not productive.

They will remind you that you cannot possibly be that person that you fear, that selfish person. that you think you might all of a sudden become.

So these are six things that you can start doing to break the chains of the expectations placed upon you.

And of course there's also this bonus tip, and that is the journaling exercise that we incorporate weekly, so that this episode and any episode that you listen to does not just remain in the theoretical realm, but becomes something that we practice so that we get closer to releasing ourselves. of guilt, of shame, of expectation, of the weight and the overwhelm.

For this exercise, we'll focus on reflecting on the supermom myth and how it impacts our lives. This can help us understand our internalized expectations and begin to shift toward a more realistic and compassionate standard.

So, here are some journaling prompts.

One, when is it that I notice feeling the pressure to be a supermom more intensely? Reflect on the specific situations or moments when you feel the most pressure to live up to the supermom ideal. This could be at work, during social interactions, or when engaging with your children. Identifying these triggers can help you understand the sources of your stress and the expectations you place on yourself.

Second, how do these expectations align or conflict with my personal values and needs? consider whether the Supermom expectations align with your own values and needs, like we said before. For example, if you value quality time with your family, but find yourself sacrificing

this time To meet external expectations, there may be a misalignment there. Reflecting on this can help you identify areas where you might need to set boundaries or adjust your priorities.

Third, what parts of myself have I neglected in striving to meet these expectations? Think about the aspects of your identity or interests that you have put on hold while trying to be a supermom. It could include hobbies, friendships, or self-connecting activities. Acknowledging these neglected parts can help you recognize the importance of nurturing all aspects of your identity.

4. How can I begin to redefine success in a way that honors my multifaceted identity reflect on what success looks like for you personally Beyond what society says this might involve setting goals that prioritize balance and well-being rather than perfection Consider how you can celebrate small victories in progress, even if they don't align with being the supermom

And lastly, what support systems can I build or strengthen to help manage my responsibilities? Think about the support networks you have in place and how you can strengthen them. This could include reaching out to friends or family for help, joining parenting groups, or seeking professional support. Building a strong support system can provide the practical and emotional assistance needed to navigate the challenges of motherhood.

Take some time this week to explore these prompts in your journal. Reflecting on these questions can provide valuable insights into your experiences and help you challenge the unrealistic expectations of being a supermom.

And let me note here, journaling is a personal and private practice, so be honest with yourself and use this as an opportunity for self-discovery and growth. By taking time to journal and reflect on these prompts, you are beginning to understand and dismantle the supermom expectation, the myth, paving the way for a more balanced and fulfilling approach to motherhood, so that you feel not only accomplished, but you feel At peace, you feel happy.

The point is to get to a point where we redefine success in our own terms, prioritizing self-connection and self-integration and building strong support networks and relationships.

As we wrap up, I encourage you to take the time to reflect on your own experiences, your own expectations. Consider the journaling prompts we just discussed. Use them as a tool to gain better insights into the supermom myth and how it affects you personally. Embrace your imperfections, be kind to yourself and build compassion and forgiveness. Thank you for joining me today on this journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

If you found today's discussion helpful, I invite you to share it with others who might benefit from it.

Connect with me on Instagram @markella.kaplani so that we can continue the conversation and stay tuned for more.

Oh, and if you're still here, don't miss out on the chance to grab yourself a free mom coaching session where we can talk about your relationship with yourself, with your partner, or with your children.

What's in it for me?

Well, our call will be recorded as a podcast episode- so you are gifting me with a beautiful podcast episode that most importantly allows other moms to feel seen and heard through your story, and also to get a sense of how we can really put the steps that I provide at the end of each episode to use to practice on a real situation. Obviously, our conversation can and will remain anonymous if you so wish.

If you're intrigued, send me an email at info@MarkelliKaplan.com with the subject line podcast guesting.

Until yourself, and remember that you are enough just as you are. See you next time!