



## How to Reinvent Yourself Without Losing Yourself

After years of raising children (which may have involved moves, job changes, dealing with in-laws and school systems), it can be hard to imagine that you have much to offer anyone else. Yet, your practiced diplomacy and savvy are admirable qualities to a young, self-conscious mom.

Or, perhaps you never married and instead cut your professional teeth on mergers and acquisitions, learning as you went about building a successful and fulfilling career as a single woman. Despite not having led a life you think others would want to emulate, your passion and determination are shining examples to a fresh business school graduate.

Even if you were very involved in volunteering or non-profit work or possibly volunteering at your kids school, you may be undervaluing your life experience that someone else would find both inspiring and comforting.

Here are a few tips to help you make the most of the experience and knowledge you have gained over your life:

**1. Take a class, read books and follow topics of interest online.** You need to be conversant in the new ideas and ways of mothering, running a business, even communicating with friends and family. This will boost your confidence and relevance. Join Facebook and Instagram and challenge yourself to find elements of it that you can easily use and appreciate.

**2. Collect opportunities to volunteer.** Many of people use volunteering as a way to show capability in such areas as leadership, marketing, event management, accounting, and program development. If you approach volunteering as a way to give back and perhaps even mentor others, you won't be easily thwarted or disappointed.

**3. Develop relationships.** Build relationships with those who may need what you have to give- if not now, sometime in the future. These can be friends of friends, past colleagues, parents of your kids' friends....the list goes on. A relationship is a two-way street.

**4. Create and follow an action plan.** Figure out the gaps between your current state of activity or busyness and your desired level, then put a plan in place to fill the gaps. This might include furthering your education, working with a coach, or joining an organization. At the very least your plan should include reaching out to formerly strong connections, building new relationships through shared experiences, and joining interest groups offline and online.

**5. Finally, begin now to lead the life you want.** Don't wait until you have sold the house and moved to something smaller, or until you get in shape so then you can join the walking group. Start where you are and watch what you have grow as you tend it. You can redefine how you see yourself and how the world sees you. Once you identify your unique strengths and fit them to a goal, you'll be surprised how empowering it feels. That confidence will help you lead yourself where you want to go next.