



To Heck With Superwoman

You may feel pressure to do everything at work and at home, but you'll be much happier if you delegate.

By: [Aliza Sherman](#) | 11/26/2007

I can't do it all. There. I said it. Hard as it is to admit, I'm not Superwoman. I'm just a lifelong overachiever who finally hit a wall after having a baby. These days, I must pick my projects with care because I simply can't work the way I used to when single and childless.

So which women develop "Superwoman syndrome"?

"A high achiever by nature, she may have experienced having much responsibility from a young age," explains Dr. Gabriela Cora, president of The Executive Health & Wealth Institute and author of a self-published book, *Leading Under Pressure: Strategies to Maximize Peak Performance & Productivity While Maximizing Health & Wellbeing*. "There may have been high expectations about her ability to perform and succeed. Oftentimes, she feeds on people praising her abilities to be the superwoman, usually thanking and complaining--as a victim--of her overextended schedule at the same time."

Sound familiar? It does to me, and it took childbirth to rewire me.

Jodi Harouche, 36, had a similar experience after her second child was born just 15 months after her first. "With just one child, I was able to have him in the office with me [with] a babysitter in tow and get things accomplished," says Harouche. "When my second son was born, I was faced with a huge dilemma."

Harouche's New York City-based retail training production company, Multimedia Plus, was growing steadily, and office space was at capacity with new hires. "I physically didn't have the room to bring either child into the office with me," she says. This forced me to make some hard calls, and I spent a lot of time out of the office, [which] was highly frustrating for our employees."

Harouche, who co-owns the company with her husband, realized her absences impacted productivity. She and her husband then tried alternating taking care of their children as they grew their business. "After a few months, we realized that this was even worse, and I was physically and mentally drained from running around like a chicken without a head," says Harouche. "I realized this couldn't go on. Everything and everyone was going to be impacted by my superwoman attitude."

The couple finally invested in a full-time nanny to care for their boys, and Harouche resumed regular office hours.

"I'd worked so hard to get where we were ... I didn't want to lose it," she says. "Giving up the business meant not being an active contributor to our family income. [I've been] working since I was 14 years old. It was scary to think I might have to make such a radical decision that would influence what I'd worked years to build."

Twentysomething Ifeanyi Chijindu, CEO of beauty products company Goddess CAT, says she had to overcome the Superwoman syndrome. The oldest of five children, Chijindu attributes her intense work ethic to her Nigerian culture.

"It influenced me to grow up as an academically competitive kid," Chijindu says. "I'm used to going out and getting what I want out of life one way or another, and I'm used to being independent. Nothing was ever handed to me on a silver platter."

To relieve some of the pressure, Chijindu built a "dream team" at her company. "I wasn't upset that I couldn't do it all. That's just reality," says Chijindu. "No one can master every single thing. However, I'm great at finding people who can give their all for exactly what I need them to do."

To overcome Superwoman syndrome, Cora says, "Know thyself. If you feel like you're doing it all, feel guilty if you're not in constant activity mode and feel like a victim of the circumstances, allow yourself to change."

She also recommends what she calls the "four pillars of biological health": exercise, nutrition, sleep and relaxation.

And learn how to delegate without guilt.

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