

10 Reasons It's Healthy for Parents to Spend Time Away from Their Kids

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I've been a mom for seven years and I love it. I also love being alone. Yet as every parent knows, carving out time to savor one's individual identity, whether for a day or a week, is challenging.



There are logistics and more logistics. But it's not impossible. And I believe alone time is essential for the overall health of both parents and kids. Here are 10 reasons:

1. It's refreshing to hear people say your name.

With kids, it's "Mommy" this and "Dada" that. There are so many needs. When you hear people use your given name, it helps you remember that you're an individual, too.

2. Space is invigorating.

When was the last time you did something for yourself? Whatever you wanted, when you wanted? If you try this, even for a few hours or one day, you'll begin to relax into your own body, triggering a sense of well-being.

3. You can think your own thoughts.

There are days when parenthood means answering a stream of questions about everything from the location of the Mac 'n Cheese in the pantry to why your shirt is shiny. Your own thoughts, even if you simply want to sing along to the radio, get drowned out. It's liberating to be in your own head.

4. You see things through your own eyes.

It's natural, as parents, to see most everything through the eyes of your kids. But it's a beautiful reminder to get lost in moments all your own, whether you're staring at a painting, gazing at a lake or wandering a city street.

5. Your “wild” is part of who you are.

Being a parent is an important role in life. And so is honoring your “wild” — your true self, that fire that burns in your core. Giving yourself time to stoke your own fire, whether painting, writing, running your own business, climbing, sewing, hiking or singing, is essential to being whole.

6. It's important to show kids your identity.

From the time they're born, kids observe everything. It's good for them to know that their parents are individuals, too, with their very own wants, needs and passions. This is the beginning of teaching kids about the concept of identity.

7. Your kids benefit, too.

It's easy to fall into the trap of acting like a control freak, insisting that no one can care for your kids as well as you can. But this is simply an excuse. It's good for kids to spend time with your partner or another trusted caregiver, even if they do things differently. So what if the pigtails are crooked? Or the kids eat pizza every day while you go to a cabin for the weekend? Your kids gain a lot from a fresh perspective.

8. Your kids will leave you someday.

The point of parenthood is to raise children who will live independently in the world. Which means they'll eventually move out. So you need to be able to function as an individual when they go.

9. It makes you a better parent.

After honoring yourself for a while, you'll be able to breathe more deeply and

you'll feel a sense of peace. When you return to parenting, you're re-energized, ready to jump back into everything domesticity entails.

10. The reunion makes you feel thankful.

Depending on how much time you've spent away from your kids and your personality type, you might not miss your kids at all, or you might miss them a ton. Either way, the reunion is grand. You look at each other anew and focus on all the things you love about each other.