



Creating a Support System

If you don't already have one, creating a support system may take some time, but it's well worth the effort. Accepting support is as important as asking for it. Support will sometimes come in the form of baby-sitting, sometimes in having a shoulder to cry on. Sometimes support will be a friend to take a walk with. In business, it's called networking. You meet people, exchange information and call upon colleagues to help you complete projects. Creating and using a personal support system is much the same as networking.

Make Good Use of Family

- **SIBLINGS**—Do they live close by? If they have children, perhaps you can trade baby-sitting duty. Family get-togethers are an excellent way to keep current in each other's lives and exchange information.
- **PARENTS**—Are your parents or your partner's parents up to helping out? Grandparents, as a rule, love to be involved in their grandchildren's lives. Besides being great baby-sitters, they can share stories from their lives with your children and pass on family traditions.
- **EXTENDED FAMILY**—is a very important, but often forgotten, branch of the modern family. How about cousins or in-laws? Make a

coffee date with your favorite sister-in-law or the cousin you played with as a child.

In the Community

- Join a gym, and seek out an exercise partner. Many women have similar issues in their lives and would love to share information.
- Your telephone directory may list local mothers' clubs. These clubs offer regular meetings and discuss topics that affect your life as a mother and woman.
- Check your local community center for listings of new-mothers' support groups or baby groups.
- Many communities have an organized newcomers' club or

welcome wagon. Even if you've lived in an area for a while, you can still make use of the information.

- Churches often offer community help, from support groups to retreats. Ask the minister or church secretary for suggestions and watch the bulletin board.

Look at the Obvious

- Ask your partner for help and suggestions.
- Call a friend and go out for coffee.
- Check local parenting publications, often available for free at supermarket stands. They offer articles just for families and often have a classified section that lists support groups and activities.