

home-moms I meet in the course of my sessions are searching for personal creative fulfillment. To put it bluntly women are searching for a future not defined by *should*, but rather by *could* or *would*.

### **You go, girl!**

The good girl syndrome is hard to give up as it is ingrained in our psyche. “Now go ahead and be a good little girl, won’t you?” Most of us have heard this from our mothers (who were also encouraged to be good little girls) and from our fathers who expected it from their wives and their daughters. Every girl grows up basking or wishing to bask in the sunlight of her father. If a father doesn’t tell a daughter that she is special, doesn’t encourage her, or make her feel better when she fails, she will have low self-esteem unless her mother can compensate for the loss. That is why so many women strive to find their passion outside themselves.

There is a mighty struggle that occurs in the heart of every woman. She feels stressed by the disparity between what she wants to do and what she feels she has to do. In Victorian times they called this vague unhappiness, the *vapors*. Freud called it *hysteria*.

### **Creativity begins at home**

At some point in every woman’s life she must set out on a creative journey of self-fulfillment. It can begin by opening all your senses to what stimulates you. Creative energy is all around you. Take mental note of it and assimilate it. The inspiration will dissipate and vanish unless you implement it.

Beth was always interested in both art and computers, but she forgot about it while she was raising her family. Even with her two children attending high school full time, she was feeling more tired than ever. During one of my stress-management sessions a member of the support group diagnosed Beth’s prob-

lem, “You feel so tired because you are bored. What do you really enjoy doing?” Beth didn’t know. I advised her to give it some thought and to be on the lookout. A few days later flipping through a neighborhood flyer, Beth noticed an adult education course schedule. The course in Computer Graphics attracted her attention and the time frame was perfect. She loved both the subject and the teacher and the following semester took a more advanced class. She began experimenting on her computer and learning new programs. Beth is off to a good start in her new career—designing brochures and logos for businesses, invitations and tee shirts. Although Beth no longer attends my stress-management group, she let us know that she is no longer tired!

When you are in the process of developing your creativity, part of it will be ego driven. By taking guidance and exchanging ideas with similar creative minds, you will be receptive to more signs. Also, you will be able to release all that self-imposed pressure by easing up on yourself. Giving up single-minded control will help unblock and release your inspiration.

When you are ready to implement your ideas, carve out a specific time and space at home. Let your friends and family know that although you are physically at home, you are really working! This will take some time to convey to others and for them to absorb. Your friends will ring your doorbell or call to socialize and the school will ask you to serve pizza at lunch because “you are a stay-at-home-mom.” You will have to work hard to establish your work/home boundaries. Keep your phone machine on to screen phone calls, and don’t forget to pull down the blinds, so the nosy neighbors and friends don’t peek in and say, “Oh, you’re home!”

One of the greatest benefits of tapping into your creative energy is that it will cheer you up and make you feel more alive. When you feel an empty ache in your heart, or feel alienated from other people because of illness or loss, creativity will counteract the destructive forces by filling you with joy and purpose.