

# Realize when job is making you unhappy

From *Time Off for Good Behavior: How Hardworking Women Can Take a Break and Change Their Lives*, excerpt from Chapter 5.

## "Moment of Truth"

No matter how much you try to control your circumstances life happens. You may get an unwelcome wake-up call. A big birthday arrives or a small lump appears. A sick child needs special attention or a loved one dies. Your company is taken over. You run out of steam. For many good girls, the A-ha moment comes as the shock that makes them face their addiction to overwork. And not soon enough.

Women have asked me, "When was the moment when you knew you had to quit?" I suppose we are all watching

for that giant billboard that announces, "Career pothole ahead!" or "Look out, drop off into abyss of exhaustion... NEXT!"

But sometimes the waves of overwork just inch up, washing over us before we even know we're drowning.

One woman shared with me the most painful description of a life out of control: "I was screaming inside." Imagine the stressful effects on a woman who's smiling while screaming inside. Good girls don't give up easily. After all those years of being the "go to" women, they are not about to be labeled as quitters.

I think back to my own early report cards and that A in perseverance. Sticking it out, no matter what — that's what I was known for. Even when my ad agency hit some

really low lows, I never considered leaving. Why? I refused to abandon my team. I didn't want to be perceived as a wimp who couldn't take the heat. I didn't want to disappoint my family. I didn't want to lose.

At some point in every hard-working woman's life, we face a moment of truth when we look at our life and our work and ask, "Is this what I was meant to do?"

Moments of truth arrive without an appointment. Some of these good girls were fired, with no time to plan. Others got seriously ill or the death of a friend or family member awakened them to their own mortality. All of a sudden, the "important meetings" and "critical deadlines" pale by comparison.

## Author tells how to take a break

**QUINLAN** from E1

really see your life clearly and start to ask yourself questions: This is the life I'm living, is this the life I want?"

Quinlan will make three appearances to talk about how she created a new job in consulting and how it may have saved her life.

Quinlan shares a story about how a taxicab crash could have killed her, but all she could think about was a missed appointment. As she lay in the hospital with broken ribs, her husband shook his head as she ranted about how she needed to get up and out to meet with a client and tackle the rest of the day's hefty to-do list.

"I had lost sense of what was really important in my life," Quinlan said.

She said she began regaining control of her life and loves after her five-week break.

## IF YOU GO

### Mary Lou Quinlan Luncheon

**WHERE:** Herberger Room, Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, 6902 E. Greenway Parkway, Phoenix.

**WHEN:** 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Sunday.

**ADMISSION:** \$45; includes three-course luncheon and book.

**DETAILS:** (480) 624-1030.

### Workshop, book signing

**WHAT:** Topic is "How hardworking women can take a break and change their lives."

**WHERE:** Jewel McFarland Lewis Fresh Start Women's Resource Center, 1130 E. McDowell Road, Phoenix.

**WHEN:** 4-6 p.m. Monday.

**ADMISSION:** \$5.

**DETAILS:** (602) 261-7123.

### Talk, book signing

**WHERE:** Changing Hands Bookstore, 6428 S. McClintock Drive, Tempe.

**WHEN:** 7-9 p.m. Monday.

**ADMISSION:** Free.

**DETAILS:** (480) 730-0205 or [www.changinghands.com](http://www.changinghands.com)

Reach the reporter at (602) 444-4863.