

Continental

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Time for *Time Off*

In 1998, worn out by her own ambition, **Mary Lou Quinlan** took an unprecedented five weeks off from her position as CEO of the New York ad agency N.W. Ayer and Partners to allow herself breathing room. The experience gave her a new outlook on her career and life, and inspired a book, *Time Off for Good Behavior: How Hardworking Women Can Take a Break and Change Their Lives*, which hits bookstores this month.

After regrouping, Quinlan returned to the office and presented the idea for her own marketing consultancy to her boss, Roy Bostock. He offered her the chance to build the company,

which she called Just Ask A Woman, as a division of the MacManus Group, N.W. Ayer's parent company.

Quinlan first shared her time-off story in an article in *More* magazine that included excerpts from the journal she had kept during her break. Over the ensuing five years, Quinlan continued to tell her time off story, and the feedback she received inspired her to write the book. Thirty-seven of the women Quinlan heard from made their way into the book. "Most of them are gleefully proud to tell their stories because they're proud about what they did," explains Quinlan, who is back at work as an advocate for women in the consumer industry.

Quinlan hopes more women will learn from her experience. "Regardless of age or life stage," she says, "*Time Off for Good Behavior* is a permission slip for taking some well deserved time off that can change the rest of your life." — *Laura Jean Dargus*

