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People

Buzz Book

TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR



After 23 years in advertising—four as the CEO of NW Ayer—Mary Lou Quinlan, 51, was too tired to go on. A five-week sabbatical recharged her and inspired her new book, subtitled *How Hardworking Women Can Take a Break and Change Their Lives*.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME FOR A BREAK?

You feel it. I used to wish I could just break a leg and be laid up for a while so they would leave me alone.

WHY NOT JUST TAKE A VACATION? A sabbatical means exploring life and pursuing what matters to you. For me it was my “someday list”: dance classes. Skating.

CAN WORKING MOMS DO IT? A shorter time, away from both work and kids, is doable for moms. Take a week for yourself.

WHAT IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD IT? If you live hand-to-mouth I wouldn't suggest this. But it's [often] about ego: Who would I be without my job?

ARE COMPANIES RECEPTIVE? A great employee who leaves is a great

loss. Companies told me they wish women would give them a chance to maybe say yes [to a sabbatical].

DID YOUR LIFE CHANGE AFTERWARD?

I started my own consulting company. I'm still very busy, but I have a career *and* a life now.