



# Success & Sanity

Model. Author. CEO at Kathy Ireland Worldwide (KIWW). These are just a few of the titles that Kathy Ireland holds, but the titles she takes pride in and focuses on most are wife and mom. She speaks to [www.metime.com](http://www.metime.com) about balancing a successful career and motherhood while still making time for herself and her faith.

By Amy Spainhower

Kathy Ireland speaks exclusively to metime.com about her thoughts and inspiration for her new book: *“Real Life Solutions for Busy Moms. Your guide to success and sanity”*

**Me Time: You’re married with 3 beautiful children. How does a busy mom of three, like yourself, take a little me time to relax and unwind?**

**KI:** “You know, it’s hard. It really is. That’s why what you do is so helpful and I have to say it’s a lot easier to teach and give advice than it is to take it and so many things I’ve learned the hard way.

For me I don’t have a lot of time to take for myself. I talk about this in the book, too. I look at our kids’ schedules and when they’re busy and have things going on when they’re in school it’s so much easier. But when they’re around I go through the guilt thing.

I enjoy being with them, it’s fun. So I try to incorporate things that we can do together. It’s fun discovering new things. To help me unwind I love to go surfing... any kind of stress just goes away. It’s beautiful and I love being out in the ocean with dolphins swimming by. Our son is surfing now so that’s something we can do together and that’s fun. Our daughters are a little bit younger but they’re interested.

A hike, a bike ride, those are great things for me to unwind, just kind of get moving and get outside...for me it’s quiet time.”

Me time is also “reading scripture,” explains Ireland. “It really helps me get a perspective on my life, on my day. It’s just - it gives me guidance on how to get through moment to moment.”

**Me Time: Are there any hobbies that you try to squeeze into your busy day?**

**KI:** “That’s the blessing about my work. First, I believe all moms work whether they get paid or not. I don’t think there’s anything more difficult or important than raising kids.

And I think it’s sad in our society that because there isn’t a paycheck attached, that the career and being a mom often doesn’t get the proper emphasis or appreciation. Even though I changed my mind about what I wanted to be when I grew up... One thing, I always knew was I wanted to be a



mom. So to work in a business where our whole mission is finding solutions for families, especially busy moms-to-be and service to moms, it’s such a blessing.

I encourage women, everyone - that you’re really smart if you figure out what you love to do. Then it doesn’t feel like a chore. I even share this with our children in regards to the chores they do to earn allowance.

You can give them a whole list of things to do to earn allowance but if they can figure out what they love to do and... how it would benefit the family, why should we pay you for that? It’s great. It’s going to make your life a lot happier because you have to do the chores anyway so you might as well find ones that you love.

For example, our 10-year-old says, “Well, you know, what can I do? I love playing handball.” It’s like, “Well, you know, your little sister looks up to you. She admires you. She wants to do everything that you’re doing. Sometimes I need help. You could teach her how to play handball and be her handball coach and that would benefit our family.”

So much of my hobbies are around the business - it’s the design work, the creative part. I love that and our kids are involved. It’s really fun because it’s becoming like a family business. Our son, Erik, who’s 15, just got his first job for the company filming and producing a little video.

Our daughter Lily, who’s 10, she does a lot of design work. She’s very creative. She’ll see a pair of shoes, she’ll translate it [the design] into quilts and pillows and it’s so interesting - her perspective and what she’ll see in the pattern of a flower.



And then our 6-year-old daughter, Chloe, I wouldn't be surprised if she just took over as Chairman of the Board of the company. She's very strong and has so many ideas and she's very results oriented. So a lot of my hobbies involve the creative aspects of our work."

**Me Time: How do you feel after a little me time?**

KI: "Oh, I feel energized. I feel inspired. It's kind of like a muscle. The more you do those things the more you want to and that's when innovation starts coming in."

**Me Time: Being the author of the new book, *Real Life Solutions for Busy Moms: Your Guide to Success and Sanity*, what advice would you give to busy women or moms that struggle carving out time for themselves and their schedules?**

KI: "Well, I understand, and what I say to women is one of the first things a flight attendant tells us when we get on the airplane... It's put your own oxygen mask on first then you can help those around you."

So often as women we feel guilty if we take just a little time for ourselves and we say our families are our priority. We oftentimes we forget we're a member of that family, too. And if we're just driving ourselves into the ground, making ourselves sick and not taking care of ourselves... how are we going to live up to our responsibilities? And who's going to take care of our kids better than we are?"

**Me Time: You've experienced a successful modeling career, you've authored some great books, you own and operate a great business, KIWW, and you're involved in a number of fabulous projects and organizations. Which one are you most passionate about? Why?**

KI: "There are a couple of the boards that I serve on, they involve kids and they involve education."

And then another is the Alliance for Christian Education and our pilot project is a new high school. It's called Providence Hall High School. It is so exciting. It's in its second year. There have been so many challenges, so many obstacles, but working with a board who believes in it and perseveres... now that we're in our second year seeing the results, seeing these young lives being transformed. The inaugural class just graduated a couple of months ago and every student is going on to the college or university of their choice.

There were so many in academia who said, "Don't even bother with the accreditation process because it will take a few years." In less than 24 months we got the highest level of accreditation through WASC, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The vast majority of students are receiving tuition assistance and one of the visions of the board is that no student would ever be turned away based on economics. It's a Christian high school and it serves kids of all faiths; it serves kids with no faith at all.

It's giving kids an opportunity for an extraordinary education and got kids going who are determined to break negative cycles and be the first in their family to attend higher education. It's just exciting to really experience the results, and to see happy teenagers is very cool."

**Me Time: You are an advocate for a healthy lifestyle. In your book you speak about models and the fact that what you see on the magazine cover is not necessarily reality. Often times photos are digitally edited. What advice do you have for young girls or women that aspire to be as blemish free or as thin as a fashion model magazine cover?**

KI: "Well, I give that advice to young girls, to women, and also to men and the advice is - **don't**. Just don't. It's not reality and, you know, you go to a movie, you go see Star Wars and we don't expect that we're going to live that way. We see Little Mermaid; we know we're not going to be living under the water."

We see these images that are oftentimes just retouched and it's art. It takes a whole team to put one image together. It takes a lot of time and a lot of people. You must find magazines that appeal to your values and if you can enjoy them for what they are and appreciate the fashion and understand that it's fantasy."

You should not try to attain an unattainable look. There is so much focus on exteriors and I don't think it's a healthy place to focus our energy to look the way someone else thinks we ought to look or for us to even put that on ourselves.

We've got to be healthy and I think that's a great motivator to be healthy, take care of ourselves and be really grateful. Each one of us is a work of art and we should be grateful for that. And I - also really think it's important for people to understand that beautiful people come in all shapes and sizes and ages and colors.

**Me Time: Many women put their children's needs and their families' needs first and you mentioned they need to realize that they are a part of that family and they need to take care of themselves. But still many struggle to maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle for themselves and they tend not to make it a priority.**

**KI:** "First of all I understand because I'm going through it, too. It's a daily challenge and there's not always days for me to exercise like I need to. There's some simple things we can do - drink more water and move more. Our lives can become sedentary. We're chauffeuring our kids around or at our laptops doing work.

Just walk more. I used to always get excited if I'd get what I'd consider a good parking spot like really close to where I was going so I wouldn't have to walk very far. Now I consider a good parking spot one that's several blocks away because then I have to walk and it gives me more exercise time.

It's taking the stairs instead of the elevator. It's just squeezing in a little bit here, a little bit there and getting the kids involved, too. Teach them healthy lifestyles and make it fun."

**Me Time: What would you recommend for health screenings that all women should consider and not overlook?**

**KI:** "This is assuming that we're doing all the other stuff, the mammograms, all the girl stuff that we have to do. So assuming we're doing the basics, I would say the c-reactive protein, because a lot of times doctors overlook that one. And that's an important one to get checked. And then another one which you may have to negotiate with our insurance companies is a colonoscopy screening.

Typically we don't get it until we're 50, but most doctors do this right after they turn 40. I'm 46 and I just had my first one and it's not a day in the park... But you know what? You get a nap. How often do we get a nap in the middle of the day?"

It's just important that we take care of our health and not let that go by the wayside and it's easy to neglect it."

**Me Time: If you could change one thing about your life or learn a new thing to improve your life what would it be?**

**KI:** "There's so many things to improve. We don't have time to get into all of that... I'm learning humbling lessons every single day. I'd like to feel as patient as some people perceive me to be. I just think that's a wonderful gift, a wonderful quality. I'd like to really work on being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. You know, words can be really hurtful. Once they're out, they're out. And really working on communication skills, but, patience is a big one."

**Me Time: What advice have you given to your children about taking time to relax and unwind? Have you encouraged a routine for them to take time out for themselves?**

**KI:** "Our kids are really good about seeking balance in their lives. They're not overscheduled. Oftentimes kids are overscheduled. Our kids - they choose not to be. They enjoy down time where they can lay on the grass and watch the clouds go by, be spontaneous and play in the sprinklers or whatever it is.

They're all different and unique. Our youngest does have a high activity level and need. She desires to be more busy and I do need to work hard at finding physical outlets for her and for that energy.

They're learning about their gifts and being exposed to as many things as possible. Just letting them learn in a variety of ways or participating in activities, whether it's art or music or sports... and doesn't have to cost a lot of money. It's so exciting when they discover their passions. So, we do encourage our kids to just try new things and they might discover a hidden gift or talent that they weren't even aware of."

**Me Time: You're involved in so many great things. Are there any projects that you want to share that you're working on or anything you're involved in today that we should be on the lookout for?**

**KI:** I'm very involved with the Alliance for Christian Education - people can go to the Web site, the allianceforchristianeducation.com and learn more. That's exciting.

We're leaving tomorrow for a mission trip to Honduras. Our family is really looking forward to it. That was the one thing everybody wanted to do this year.

We're working on, jewelry, which I love, being mentored by Elizabeth Taylor; oh my goodness, she's amazing. And I just have so much respect for that woman. I mean, not only has she done so much to change the world, when nobody wanted to even talk about HIV/AIDS, this woman, she got

death threats, people hung up on her, and business associates pleaded with her to just leave this alone. And she just saw that as noise and she turned it down and she forged forward, established AMFAR, the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation. She truly is the Joan of Arc of our age. And I just love that, her courage. That's inspiring to me.

Other areas of our work are skin care. I was in Israel last year and these products are made from minerals from the Dead Sea and they're the best I've used. I began researching skin care 25 years ago and I just wasn't satisfied. I was always searching for the best products. So that's been really exciting when something works, when it really clicks, especially when it has taken a long time.

And fresh flowers - we have a new partner, fabulousflorals.com, and the great thing is the flowers are gorgeous. They're from Carpinteria, California but they also ship in flowers from all over the world. And they arrive fresh overnight. You don't get a vase with them and you save a lot of money by not doing that because we all have things we can use around the house. And there's videos online with myself and our brand ambassadors, Nicholas Walker of JduJ and Chef Andre of A Café. We show families how you can put the flowers together, make gorgeous bouquets and so it's fun.

As for our home furnishings, we just got some great new partners in furniture, KI Home from Vaughn furniture. Really working with some really great people and that's exciting."

**Me Time: Would you like to share something with our audience that few people know about you?**

KI: "Let's see, that few people know about me. Well, people who know me know that I'm extremely clumsy. That's why you never saw me on the runway when I used to model. Extremely clumsy."

I'm very competitive - I think in a healthy way. You don't win when you cheat. You have to have integrity, otherwise it means nothing. But I grew up loving sports and even though I wasn't that good at them because of the clumsiness, but I still loved them."

**Me Time: What sports did you play?**

KI: "I didn't play anything competitive. I always had jobs after school. But I loved baseball, basketball, soccer, dodge ball, hide and go seek, I'd get into it."

## Lightning Round of Questions

**Most memorable moment as a mom?** "It happened three times when each of our kids told me that they loved me for the first time. That just blew me away - the best."

**Your most memorable career moment?** "It just happened. Being named the number one female business owner in America by Div500. I don't take that for myself. It's our team. I work with an amazing team. They're family to me. Most of us have been together for 20 years. While others were investing in fancy clothes and cars, I was investing in a team, art director, creative director, marketing expert... It would be impossible for me to get this done without our team."

**If you had an opportunity to have dinner with three people, past or present, who would you select?** "Jesus Christ would be at the top of my list. My granny who died in '81. I was 18 and I just have so many more questions to ask her now about the interesting life that she had. And Golda Meir is a fascinating woman. I'd enjoy just learning from her."

**Favorite choice for an indulgent snack?** "Anything chocolate with lots of sugar in it."

**What's your favorite vacation destination - ski lodge or a sandy beach?** "Sandy beach."

**Movie premier or Broadway play?** "Broadway play because it would be a little more mellow and not so fancy. I'd take the kids and it'd be fun."

**Two women that inspire you that you admire and look up to?** "My mom and Elizabeth Taylor."

To learn more about Kathy Ireland, her business, causes, or to learn where to purchase her new book, **Real Life Solutions for Busy Moms: Your Guide to Success and Sanity**, please visit [www.kathyireland.com](http://www.kathyireland.com)

