

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

A village, meaning a community that we hope to share our joys, our responsibilities, our struggles and our lives. Communities where we know one another and can ask for help with ease; where we watch over one another. However, the village may be difficult to find at a time we need it the most.

In the absence of the village...

We put too much pressure on ourselves to make up for what an entire group of people once supported. And while we attempt to meet these unrealistic expectations, we do so at a time of life when we are tired, without clarity and feel a sense of isolation.

Without the village...

We convince ourselves that we must make up for lost interaction and learning opportunities that once existed within our own neighborhoods.

Our sense of well-being suffers...

It is an unfair expectation that we should feel confident, joyful and courageous at a time when our needs are going unmet. The absence of this village reflects in our image of ourselves and it is difficult to name. Without naming the lack of support, we begin to believe we are inadequate and must do more.

When we name the absent village...

We can reset our expectations and be clear that we are not the problem. When we feel a lack of support and community it is only natural that we feel a sense of loss, lack of confidence, low mood and loneliness.

Transitioning from isolation to action means we must grieve the loss of our village and move towards the wish to create the community that best supports us.

- **Honor your needs.** Many mothers enter this transition with unmet needs while they are expected to focus on caring for others. Speak your needs out loud. Even if it comes out with uncertainty. Your needs are important. The chance of getting your needs met increases when you speak about them.
- **Practice connecting.** Connection and relationships are necessary for our health and happiness. It takes courage and effort to begin new relationships and continue to foster current connections.
- **Acknowledge your strengths.** Use your strengths to connect with others. Finding people with common interests and experiences can help us feel full and engaged in our lives.
- **Set your limits.** Mothers are frequently encouraged to care for others and do more than their part. Remember to set your limits and leave room to care for yourself.
- **Practice Self Compassion.** Make space to care for yourself and make sense of your experiences. It will help you clarify your needs.

