



## Yay, me!

We know a simple "Good job" is the best reward for kids' accomplishments. Well, moms need praise, too—and we don't hear it often enough. Go ahead, take matters into your own hands:

**Send yourself a card.** At many greeting-card websites, you can have a free e-card mailed out at a specific time or date. Schedule a self-congratulatory note to be sent to your e-mail account after a tough meeting or day you know will be jam-packed. (For three we love, go to [Parenting.com/cardforyou](http://Parenting.com/cardforyou).)

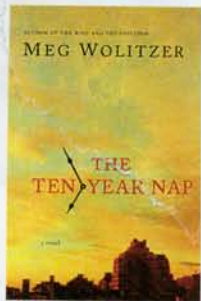
**Make a list of what you accomplished today—**even little stuff like "Finally returned coat to the store" or "Didn't eat kids' leftovers at dinner."

**Save your fan mail.** When someone writes something nice about you—whether a birthday card, a note from the kids, or even a flattering comment on a work report—put it in a pretty box or journal to pull out and read later. You can even jot down verbal compliments you've gotten—we won't tell.

### MOM TIP!

After work, I take fifteen minutes to sit and eat a treat by myself. Then I'm calmer and happier when I pick up my kids.

—Sarah Levi, New York City



### Ladies' choice

The four friends at the center of *The Ten-Year Nap* are grappling with their decision to leave their careers to raise kids. Even if you don't have that luxury, you'll savor Meg Wolitzer's sharp insights into the complex-

ities of marriage, fulfillment, and what it means to be a mom (and a woman) today. (\$25, Riverhead Books)

### Quick mood boosters

Use 'em to de-stress throughout the day; from Kathleen Hall, Ph.D., founder of The Stress Institute in Atlanta:

- **Snack smart.** Foods rich in vitamin B<sub>6</sub>—such as bananas, peppers, and sunflower seeds—calm you by stimulating serotonin production (without the crash that comes from simple carbs like cookies).
- **Let the music play.** It's another serotonin trigger, so listen to your iPod, CDs, or radio while doing errands or in the car.
- **LOL.** When you laugh, you instantly release mood-boosting endorphins.
- **Get into the wild.** Slip outside for a short stroll or some deep breathing—it lowers blood pressure and heart rate.