

5 Easy Ways To Summon The Sparkle When The Embers Start To Fade

BY CHRISTY WILLIAMS

That time of summer...

Not when I start to get anxious for the start of school. Not when the soaring temperatures begin to wilt my front-porch flowers, and my hair. And not when the constant picking up of my kids' wet towels, electronic devices, and crumbs starts to wear on me.

All those things are happening, but they all pale in comparison to the bigger problem. The same one I face every summer, and have yet to find a way to overcome.

It's that time of summer when I feel like my magic starts to fade.

I am scrambling to, not only keep my head above water with managing all the bodies in my house, but even to remember the sparkly frickin' unicorn that lives inside this being called Mom.

This is a role I cherish. My whole life, I knew I would be a mom. I love kids so much that I always thought I would have at least four children. I never even thought much about getting married – never was the girl who planned her wedding in my head. But I did actually plan on having my first baby on my own when I was 30 years old. Motherhood was a given.

But every summer, when I feel this way, it hurts me. A lot. I love these little people. And they are growing so fast that my

head is spinning from it. But every summer, this phenomenon happens.

I am not Christy anymore. I am Mom. And suddenly, that is all I am.

And I feel like every bit of the sparkle and magic I have rediscovered in myself over the past year slowly disappears again between the end of May and mid-August.

It dissipates in between the swim meets, dance recitals, baseball games, carpooling to babysitting jobs, coordinating playdates, and learning of sleepovers that have been arranged without my knowledge.

Every year, I know it's coming. And every year, I try and come up with a plan.

A few years ago, it entailed a babysitter who could take kids to the pool while I worked. But when your kids are on summer swim team and practice early every morning, they don't want to go back to the pool a few hours later for more swimming.

Last summer, it was less of a babysitter and more of a transporter I hired. Someone who could take them to the amusement park, the library, the water park, etc. But finding a college student to safely transport children where they need to go eats up quite a bit of the summer entertainment budget, not to mention my income.

This year, I wrote a Manifesto. For moms who just want to matter. Who want their families to know that even though they are around all the time for the whole summer, their priorities do not instantly become our priorities. I set forth some guidelines for the summer. Hoping to avoid this feeling.

And I have failed epically. Again.

So, what I want – what I need – to figure out, is how to hang onto that magic.

How do I remember the sparkly woman inside the suburban mom?

How do I hang onto the talented woman who writes articles and blog posts and a column for an online magazine that she loves?

How do I keep her from disappearing when the reality of having kids home for the summer means more cleaning than I ever remember doing? More carpooling (and coordinating of carpooling) than a Cruise Director does on his ship? And more plunging of toilets than I care to think about?

I am not wishing these moments away. (Okay, maybe I am wishing the toilet-plunging away.) I just don't want to lose myself in the process.

Two or three years ago, I remember looking at my husband and telling him (probably with tears in my eyes) that there was not a single bit of me left at the end of that summer. It was all kids and house and him and yard and puppy... and not a tiny little fraction of me. And as much as I know he wanted to understand, he just couldn't. It's not possible.

Because his daily life never changed with any of our seasons. Not when we had babies, not when I struggled to find some semblance of balance with work and family, and not during summers. Not when the vast majority of the planning, coordinating, shuttling, carpooling, scheduling, and decision-making fall to me.

Oh, the decision-making. If I never have to make another decision for anyone in my family, it will be too soon.

Even when trying to figure out school carpooling options for

my kids...who need to be at two different schools eight miles apart at the exact same time beginning in three weeks, I am met with non-committal shrugs and grunts. It is all left to me to work out.

And it all makes me feel un-magical. Un-sparkly. Un-me.

So how do we stoke the fires of our magic when we feel the smoldering embers starting to fade?

Here are five things that work for me... and that I apparently need to post on my bathroom mirror and read every morning for the rest of my life:

1. **Write.** Or create something if you don't write. Just put those creative skills to use. And if you instantly start insisting that you are not creative, I will argue with you and tell you that you are. Everyone is creative. Everyone might not be able to draw, but that's not what I'm talking about. Some people like to write, some like to paint, some like to build things using carpentry or make things like jewelry, and some like to cook or bake. But they are all creative expressions. We all have something creative that we enjoy doing. And getting those creative juices flowing again will help us connect to that magical part of ourselves.
2. **Get out of the house.** Seriously. This one is big for me. When there are a lot of humans in my house, I sometimes need to go elsewhere. To remember what it's like to be more than Mom for an hour or two. Even if you can't meet a friend, go treat yourself to a cup of coffee, take yourself to a movie or the library, or even out to lunch. Just enough of a break to have a change of scenery. A different perspective can change our whole outlook. At least for that day.

3. **Move.** This one is always a struggle for me when the kids are home. I don't take myself out for a walk or a quick workout, because I already have to get up at 6:00am to take a kid to swim practice. Why on earth would I ever want to wake up earlier than that?! I'll tell you why: sanity. We need to maintain some level of stable mental health. And if you're anything like me, it's even better if it can be outside where we can get some fresh air and be in Nature. Nature is good. And healing.
4. **Take a solo mini-vacation.** This is another one that is big for me, and one I haven't done as much as I need. Which is probably why I'm feeling as depleted as I am right now. Take a solo adventure. Just for a night, or more if you can swing it. If it's possible to get away, all of the above ideas can be combined into a restorative retreat that recharges mind, body, soul...and magic.
5. **Remember to take care of yourself in each small moment.** There were moments this summer when I knew it was time to sit down and write. And there were other times when I didn't even have an hour to myself, and just needed to soothe my soul with an episode of Gilmore Girls. Check in with yourself and see what you need in that moment. And then honor your needs.

I know the magic and sparkles are still in there and they will come back. I'm not worried about that.

Sometimes I start to wonder if I am expecting too much to want them in my life all day, every day – at least in my suburban world.

But then I remember how hopeful and lovely it feels to have magic like that in my life, and resolve to summon that damn sparkle however I can.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom](#) .

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storm. They have lightning in
their souls. Thunder in their
hearts. And chaos in their bones.

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