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# Balancing Family and Career for Women

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For women it is a great challenge to simultaneously manage work and family responsibilities. Besides corporate demands on them to be strongly committed to their jobs, their cultural role is to shoulder all household and child-rearing responsibilities. Often these responsibilities are overwhelming and cause great stress in their day-to-day life. In addition to these stress factors, there are many obstacles to the full utilization of their talents and skills in the work place. The burdensome household duties on women have also prevented them from giving full attention to their jobs. Therefore, it is important for a working woman to determine what would be the key factors that will help her to balance life between family life and career and how she can reduce her stress in day to day life.

## **Working mother defined**

A working mother is the one who does more before the sun comes up than most people do all day. Getting the kids up, dressed and fed, finding lost items, packing lunches and getting everyone to school on time can feel like a full-time job in itself. And that's before she fights the traffic to get to work.

Women say life is a balancing act. Balance is experienced differently by everyone and can be identified by some or all of the following feelings:

- ◆ You have enough time for family and work
- ◆ Life “flows” and feels relatively effortless
- ◆ When something in your life breaks down (baby sitter gets sick, the car breaks) you have the resources to cope
- ◆ You are on the path you want to be personally and professionally for the future

Balance has some characteristics

- ◆ It is not a constant, it comes and goes as things change in life,
- ◆ It has to be worked at,
- ◆ The process of seeking balance can be stimulating and a true learning experience about what is important to you.

How do you get a balance?

There are many components to finding balance, many that you know consciously and unconsciously. Here are “top ten” components to finding balance.

1. Recognize that balancing roles as mother and business person is truly work in itself, it requires appreciation of your work (a pat on the back)
2. Take time to think about balance and how to get it this week
3. Apply your best analytical and creative thinking to problem solving
4. Remember yourself, your needs, your wants, your happiness - this is the ultimate barometer of balance
5. Have faith that there is a way - don't put barriers in front of possibilities, you can make it work
6. Flexibility is important - what works this week may be out of whack next week - stay open to new solutions
7. Know the signs of imbalance, including resentment, fatigue, overwhelm, depression, unhappy family members, dissatisfaction with work
8. Revisit your core values and live them, know what is most important to you today
9. Remove, delegate the things that interfere with the important stuff
10. Find the joy in the process

You should be also very careful to communicate with your supervisor and employees. They should know that your family comes first, and let them know in advance, whenever possible, if you have commitments with your children - a softball game, a doctor's appointment, this helps everyone know when you will be out of the office.”

The key factors to keeping your balance are time management, planning and organizing, delegating and getting help. When you split your time between work projects and family life, you can't do it all – particularly if you have a regular exercise routine and other social commitments that are important to you. Between transporting your kids to and from daycare or soccer practice and

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thinking about what to have for dinner tonight, you don't have a lot of extra time – which means every minute counts.

Here are some helpful tips on how best to balance the multiple demands of work and family:

- ◆ Don't try to be supermom. Share household responsibilities with your husband and other children who are old enough to take on chores around the house.
- ◆ Network with other working mothers in order to find the best babysitters, get help in transporting your kids to school or soccer practice by sharing responsibility with them.
- ◆ Get your house cleaned by house cleaning service at least once a week, if available
- ◆ Set aside one night a week to go out for dinner, arrange TV dinner or let your husband or children (if old enough) prepare some simple dinner.
- ◆ Seek flexibility in your work schedule. If your current job does not offer flextime, part-time hours, or telecommuting opportunities, you may want to look for an employer that offers these kinds of benefits.
- ◆ Make time for your family and your spouse.

Spending quality time with your kids is important, but so is creating time alone with your partner.

- ◆ Don't forget to treat yourself once in a while. You too deserve a break, so take a Saturday afternoon off just for yourself to do something you would like to do.

“You can have it all” is a familiar phrase to women coming of age in the 21st century. However, the difficulties of balancing work and home life, in reality, present a much more complicated picture.

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, when both husband and wife in almost every family have careers, balancing career and family life has become essential. It is indeed a very complicated and difficult task for many of us, but it is good to share one's experience with others and also learn from others. There is no one set of rules, which works for everyone. If you are successful in balancing your family life and career with whatever rules work for you, you really can have fulfillment from your career and can be successful professionally and at the same time you can be a great caring mother - raising happy, loved and thriving children – and a very loving wife if that is where your heart is.