

The Top 10 Tips **For Balancing Work/Family Life**

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There is no single formula for attaining a balanced life. It is a personal decision how one combines their career, spouse/significant other, children, friends and self into an integrated whole. The key is to develop creative solutions as you approach the challenges of balancing the responsibilities and joys of your multiple roles. Some of the same skills and strategies you use at work such as planning, organizing, communicating, setting limits and delegating can be used effectively on the home-front for achieving a satisfying, fulfilling and well-balanced life both personally and professionally.

1. BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK.

Ask for help and allow yourself to be helped and contributed to. Get your children involved--work together as a team. Recruit friends, family, neighbors, bosses, work colleagues, etc. and ask for their support. Create back-up and emergency plans; always have a contingency.

2. LET GO OF GUILT.

Guilt is one of the greatest wastes of emotional energy. It causes you to become immobilized in the present because you are dwelling on the past. Guilt can be very debilitating. By introducing logic to help counter-balance the guilt you can stay better on course.

3. ESTABLISH LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES.

Boundaries are an imaginary line of protection that you draw around yourself. They are about protecting you from other people's actions. Determine for yourself what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior from other people. Boundaries and limits define how you take charge of your time and space and get in touch with your feelings. They express the extent of your responsibilities and power and show others what you are willing to do or accept. Without limits it's difficult to say "no".

4. DETERMINE YOUR OWN STANDARDS.

Get rid of the notion of being a perfectionist. Wean yourself off it by making compromises--figure out where the best places to make the compromises are without short-changing yourself, your spouse, your children, your boss, etc. Live by your own standards rather than someone else's. Standards are about YOU and refer to the behavior and actions you are willing to hold yourself to.

5. CREATE TIME FOR YOURSELF.

Being a good parent, partner and professional means being good to yourself first. Use your mind to make some affirmations for yourself. Find ways to relax, relieve tension and minimize stress. Taking some time off for yourself will not only benefit you, but it will benefit your family tremendously!

6. GET ORGANIZED.

Set priorities, work smarter not harder, delegate (and really let go!). Create lists and save them for re-use. Keep a main calendar centrally located to post everyone's activities.

7. BE FLEXIBLE.

Forgive yourself when things don't get done. Understand that with children things change at a moment's notice. Be ready and willing to assume responsibility for any of the tasks that need to get done at any time. Never get too comfortable, because as soon as you seem to get things under control, they change! Also, realize that in order to achieve success many women have had to give up their original goals and substitute new ones with different but equal challenges. Negotiate for what you need.

8. ENJOY QUALITY FAMILY TIME.

Spend quality/focused time with your family. Give them your full attention. Develop rituals you can all look forward to. Create relationships with your spouse and children that are not incidental but rather instrumental to your success.

9. FIND RELIABLE CHILD CARE.

Leave your kids in capable hands. Find someone you feel comfortable and confident in. If you're feeling ambivalent about working or about leaving your child, etc. do not show it--your child (at any age) will pick right up on it. Feel proud when you've found someone who fits into your needs. Get involved with your child's care providers by communicating frequently and observing interactions between caregiver and your child.

10. ACHIEVE AN INTEGRATED LIFE.

Keep things in perspective. Create harmony in your life--a mixture of work, family and friends. Remember, there is no single formula for balance. It is a personal decision how one combines spouse, children and career.

About the Author:

Natalie Gahrman is a dynamic keynote speaker, workshop/seminar leader, author, trainer and a leadership coach certified through the International Coach Federation. She combines life experiences and extensive training to motivate others to achieve better results, unlock creativity and gain personal fulfillment in their work and personal life. She specializes in working with Executives, Entrepreneurs, Aspiring Leaders, Working Moms, and SuperBusy Parents seeking to have a more satisfying and fulfilling personal, professional and/or family life. She has appeared worldwide in a variety of publications, newspapers, online, radio and TV as an expert in work/life issues. For more tips, advice and resources see "Succeeding as A Super Busy Parent: 75 Practical Tips for Balancing Life, Love, Kids, and Career" (Infinity Publishing, 2002) and visit <http://www.superbusyparent.com>. To subscribe to our free weekly e-newsletter for working parents, visit <http://www.theprioritypro.com>.