

A FINE BALANCE

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES AND HAVING A SUPPORT MECHANISM IS THE KEY TO HAVE IT ALL

As a working mother, I am frequently asked "How do you balance work and life?" which I am certain is a question familiar to women from all corners of the world. Busy schedules often leave working women with their hands full, forcing us to make some tough decisions and trade-offs. Below are ten tips I've personally implemented throughout my career as a working mother on how to balance work and life.

BALANCE IS A MYTH...

But integration is possible. The technology available at our fingertips allows us to integrate life and work—attending an event at your child's school while answering urgent emails on the way back to the office. I know that not everyone has a job that may fit this example, but you can find your own integration.

DELEGATE

There are several activities that do not require you, and many that do. It's important to know the difference; if taking your child to an activity or an ageing parent to an appointment is important to both of you, then make the time. But maybe taking them to some other event may not be as important, try asking another parent, family member or friend to help you.



ASK FOR HELP AND PAY IT FORWARD

Ask other people to help you with non-essential tasks, but make sure you pay it forward. For example, if a non-working parent helps you out while you are stuck in a meeting and cannot make it to pick up your child, he or she may appreciate your help in return over the weekend, or another time when you are not working.

SHARE ACTIVITIES

If you love to cook, use that time to engage with your child or your partner. Enjoy time spent whipping up a fun recipe together and chat about the day's activities.

TAKE TIME FOR YOU

Whether we're a working parent or single, we all benefit

from taking the time to do things we enjoy. It can be a quick manicure or a good workout, but it will replenish you afterwards.

TALK WITH YOUR PARENTS

If they live closely, go and visit with your child and listen to their stories. If they are further away, try a video chat over Skype.

SLEEP

Many years ago, I thought sleeping was "non-essential," but now I know better: I operate at a much higher level when I have a good night's sleep.

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT YOUR WORK

No matter what your job is, you are contributing to the bottom line of your company,

and you should share your accomplishments with your family. If you value what you do and you can communicate that to your loved ones, they will support you on your professional journey.

LAUGH

I have a couple of very silly, humorous books I read on nights when I've had a bad day (yes, while I love my job, I sometimes have bad days). Those books do not require the use of my rational brain, and as soon as I get a smile or laugh from reading a page, my entire mindset changes.

HAVING IT ALL!

Yes, it is possible, but define what "having it all" means for you and how to make the right trade-offs. I asked my adult daughter if she remembers what events I missed while she was growing up and she couldn't recall one. But she did remember evenings when we discussed my work, her school activities and planning trips together from visits to the museum to international travel. Looking back, I must have known what having it all meant for me and what trade-offs to make, which leads back to my first point—integration is possible. So, determining priorities and the integration of work and life is the key.



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