

**KEEPING BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE:
WORK / FAMILY / PERSONAL**

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- I. The Challenge of Balancing Multiple Life Roles
 - A. Work World
 - B. Family World
 - C. Personal World
 - D. Other Non-Work Worlds

- II. Stress and Multiple Roles
 - A. Role Overload (Too many roles, too many demands)
 - B. Role Conflict (Role demands conflict or are incompatible)
 - C. What the research says:
 - 1. Occupying multiple roles does not automatically lead to role conflict
 - 2. Success in one role can enhance success and satisfaction in others
 - 3. Majority of men and women are in work force
 - 4. Majority of parents with children (under age 18) are employed
 - 5. Some 25% of US workforce have eldercare responsibilities; numbers increasing
 - 6. Men and women work an average of 37-45 hours a week, and an additional 15-45 hours a week on child care, household chores, errands, etc.
 - 7. Work / family conflict has greater impact on stress levels than conflict within family or within workplace
 - 8. Women are more likely to let home stress affect work
 - 9. Men are more likely to let work stress affect home life
 - D. Work/family/personal can create imbalance:
 - 1. Role conflict between work and family
 - 2. Time pressures
 - 3. Fatigue, physical stress
 - 4. Scheduling problems/ coordination
 - 5. Family or relationship conflict
 - 6. Emotional strain
 - 7. Affects both men and women, though on the average the preponderant burden of child care, eldercare and household chores falls more on women.
 - E. “Spillover” between work and home and its effect on your emotional well-being
 - 1. Extent we permit spillover between the two worlds influences our satisfaction and dissatisfaction with work, family, and ourselves.
 - 2. Living up to your parents’ expectations and your own expectations of self.
 - 3. Identify the feelings related to your tension as you go between work and home
 - 5. How do you let go, or not let go of feelings and tensions so they do not spillover.
 - 4 minutes of exercise in the morning
 - Breathe
 - Look up as you walk to car and smile
 - Mindfulness
 - F. Balancing demands/choices/stress so we feel satisfaction/gratification

1. Rewards of work (gratification, contribution, use of skills, meaning, pay, status, social supports...)
2. Rewards of family (gratification, contribution, meaning, social support, love, belonging, generativity...)
3. Other rewards: education, social support, relationships.
4. Modern dilemmas: We want to do it all / have it all, and cannot do it all
 - Living up to ideal self expectations
 - Norms / expectations / timing of family decisions (Where to live, standards for household, meals, being a good parent, intimacy...)
 - Identity
 - Little time for extended family and friends
 - Shortage of personal time for relaxation, hobbies, unwinding...being

III. Worksheet: “*Work / Life Balance Diagram*”

IV. Strategies for Creating Balance

- A. Recognize that being in balance is a continual process AND you cannot balance everything.
- B. Identify where you are out of balance related to home, work, personal, other areas.
- C. What is making you feel out of balance? Expectations of yourself, family, co-workers, boss
 1. What are the “shoulds” you tell yourself every day about yourself and others.
 2. Change the “shoulds” that create stress and that you cannot control.
- D. As you develop strategies for managing the balance, remember to:
 1. Identify your values and what is important to you personally, at home, and at work
 2. Be mindful of what gives you gratification and renewal personally, at home and at work
 3. Plan to do one small thing every day that gives you renewal and/or gratification
 4. Set goals and determine priorities personally, at home and at work
 5. Analyze how you are spending your time. Does how you spend your time reflect your values and also include what gives you gratification / satisfaction?
- E. Practical strategies: (based on what you define as priorities and values)
 1. What can you realistically change or let go?
 2. What resources are available to help you?
 - Calendars, organizers, planners, lists,
 - Babysitters, child care exchange, car pools,
 - Neighborhood networks,
 - Household services – lawn mowing, cleaning, etc.
 3. How can you change your perceptions of your role/tasks and the stressors?
 4. How can you change or let go of your home and work routines and how you organize them so you can accomplish your goals in a balanced manner? (Consider: schedules, activities, home/work routine tasks or special projects, physical space, energy levels, health, nutrition, sleep, etc.)
 5. Use breaks to re-energize body, mind and spirit
 6. Plan ahead and anticipate needs and energy levels
 7. Personal skills necessary to maintain balance
 - Assertiveness - saying no and yes, and when to do so

- Staying attuned to your tension areas in your body and your feelings
 - Being able to name your feelings and acknowledge them
 - Identify needs so you can determine your priorities based on your needs
 - Being able to ask for help - Remember you don't have to do it all
 - Use available resources – formal and informal
8. Manage your time to meet priorities and reflect your values
- Organize and prioritize tasks:
 - Important and urgent
 - Important but not urgent
 - Routine but necessary
 - Busy work
 - Time wasters
 - Identify efficiencies (e.g.: organize errands; shop when lines are short; use lists; group tasks; delegate; decide if something is really important.)

F. Healthy Habits Foster Stress Resilience

1. Nutrition – always eat breakfast and do not skip meals
2. Exercise – 30 minutes not all together, minimum of 3x a week
3. Sleep – minimum of 6 hours (closer to 8 is better, say the health experts)
4. Relaxation – being mindful in the moment
5. Meditation and spiritual activities – a process of renewal and letting go
6. Social and emotional support networks – particularly important for women
7. Self-talk; turn negative self-talk into positive self talk

G. You, Your Expectations and Your Attitudes

1. Identify one self expectation or attitude that you need to change to help you create balance at work/home/personal life. State your new expectation or attitude.
2. When you feel out of balance, describe the first thing you will do to restore balance. Write a statement to remind yourself of this strategy.

V. “Take Away”: Worksheet: “*My Work / Life Balance Strategies*”