Balancing Careers and Family Life

Why work/life balance can (and should) be done and how to approach achieving it
Qualifications for the talk: Family
Qualifications for the talk: 2011 Papers

Baum JR, Liao B, Cabo, C, **Duffy HS** Myofibroblasts cause heterogeneous Cx43 reduction and are unlikely to be coupled to myocytes in the healing canine infarct AJP: Heart In Press

Prestia KA, Sosunov EA, Anyukhovsky EP, Dolmatova E, Kelly CW, Brink PR, Rosen MR, **Duffy HS** Increased cell-cell coupling increases infarct size and does not decrease incidence of ventricular tachycardia. 2011 Vol 2 (online).


Van Norstrand et al, Connexin43 mutation causes heterogeneous gap junction loss and sudden infant death. Circulation In Press


**Duffy HS.** The Molecular Mechanisms of Gap Junction Remodeling Heart Rhythm Viewpoints In Press
How Do We Define Work/Life Balance?

Jim Bird, 2003

Meaningful daily achievement AND enjoyment with:

- Family
- Friends
- Self
- Work

British Medical Journal

Ensuring that work doesn’t take up more of your life than it should, OR

...more of your life than you want it to.
Am I Out of Balance?

- No time for yourself
- Unable to refuse work
- Long hours
- Too many commitments
- Reluctance to take holidays
- Lack of enjoyment and/or fun
- Frustration with results
- Regular feelings of GUILT
Why Do We Care? Is it Just to be “Happy”?

Mayo Clinic says
Lack of work/life balance in medicine and science leads to:

Fatigue
  - Dangerous/costly mistakes
  - Impaired reputation

Lost time with friends/family

Increased expectations from employer or self
  - Propagates the spiral

So how do we start?

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/work-life-balance/MY01203
Who are you? Who do you want to be?

(Work)

Identify your life goals in concrete terms
  e.g. “I want to become a full professor and run a lab while teaching medical students”

Identify the “job required” to meet that goal in terms of actually daily tasks (write grants, do experiments, write manuscripts, write and give lectures)

Identify realistic concrete deadlines. Remember, you don’t need to win the Nobel Prize during your first two years as a faculty member

Write out a time line for your goals by year. Keep it close at hand so you can go over it regularly. (for example, submit an RO1 for the June cycle and an R21 in the Oct cycle, write and submit 2 papers)
Defining You

Who are you? Who do you want to be? (Home)

Identify your life goals in concrete terms
e.g. “I want to be home each night to have dinner with my family and to go to as many sports/arts/school events as possible

Identify the “job required” to meet that goal in terms of actually daily tasks (leave work by 6 pm, arrange schedules to leave early on event days)

Identify realistic limitations (dinner has to occur after 7 pm, you won’t make every event)

Talk to your significant other, include them in the planning and be willing to share the time with the kids.

Give up “total control” of the schedule. Let others help you (like grandparents, siblings, friends etc)
A Few Definitions to Get Us Started

At Work:
Meeting: Any time you stop to speak with anyone else, even casually (in the hall, over lunch etc)
Actual Work: Clinical or bench research time
Writing: Grants, papers, protocols, charts, calendars, schedules
Transportation (w) - Commuting

At Home:
Chores: Anything that has to get done, whether you love it or hate it (cooking vs. laundry, they are both chores)
Family Time: Time you spend with your family not doing chores (meals, TV time, movies, play time)
Events: Sports, plays, recitals, dances, school nights, conferences
Transportation (h) - Chauferring
Personal Time: Gym, reading for pleasure, music, shows, hobbies
Calculating Your Personal Work/Life Balance


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/06/05/
the-worklife-balance-calc_n_105549.html

Facebook App

Excel
1. Over several days, write down how you spend every hour. e.g. Sleep 5.5 hours, morning routine 2.5 hours, commuting 0.5 hours, lab work 3 hrs, writing 2 hr, lab work 4 hrs etc etc
2. Add up all the “like behaviors” to come up with total hours spent on each thing.
3. Graph it!
First Identify How Your REALLY Spend Your Day

- Lab Work: 25%
- Meetings: 13%
- Writing: 15%
- Chores: 17%
- Sleep: 21%
- Family Time: 4.2%
- Commuting (w): 4.2%
- Commuting (h): 2.1%
Next Identify How You WANT to Spend Your Day

1. Identify things you want more of, things you want less of.
2. Change the Excel numbers to identify the number of hours you’d really like to spend on each behavior.
3. Graph it!
Time Management

Work
1. Make every hour count
2. Set daily goals
3. Prioritize daily goals
4. Check off what you accomplish
5. Items that are not done that day go on the list for first thing tomorrow

Home
1. Make every hour count
2. Set daily goals
3. Prioritize daily goals
4. Check off what you accomplish
5. Items that are not done that day go on the list for first thing tomorrow
Getting Help No one is Wonder Woman or Superman

Housekeepers-The biggest bang for the buck (and don’t be ridiculous, you don’t have to clean the house before they get there).

Nannies that drive-Get a reputable licensed company to find you a driver. This will free you from the panic at the end of the day that you’ll be late picking up the kids.

Public Transportation-Can be a great place to get email and paperwork done during the commute.

Friends/Family-It truly does take a village. Use yours. Offer to babysit when you have time so that you can get the favor returned when you are in a pinch.
Using Technology

Technology keeps you sane

**Tracking your Jobs**-Put EVERYTHING on your to do list in the Blackberry especially stuff that will happen in the distant future. Set the alarm to warn you about it a few weeks ahead.

**Keeping Appointments**-Transition when your calendar says it is time to (unless the deadline is that day)

**Work Promptly**-Put the work put in front of you in the earliest slot possible. Do it promptly. Don’t wait until the deadline.
Using Technology

Technology makes you insane

Turn off the email at home-Unless you are the head of the program, you can turn off the email when you are not at work.

Leave it at home-When on vacation, don’t take the email everywhere you go. Set up an “Away from my office” auto-response when you are on vacation.

Set time aside-To make sure that no emergencies have come in, set time at home/vacation aside to quickly check email but DO NOT RESPOND to non-emergencies. They will still be there in the morning.
Getting to NO at Work

1. Identify what you want to cut back on

2. Make a day planner to show where this activity is in your schedule and what you want to replace it with if you drop it.

3. Sit down with your chief/chair and show her/him the schedule and explain:
   What you want to cut back on
   What you would replace it with
   What positive changes this would have on your productivity
Organization at Home

1. Set realistic ideas of what has to get done. FAMILY TIME HAS TO BE PART OF THIS. Do not even open your computer or phone/device until the family time is done (kids are in bed, spent time with spouse etc)

2. If possible have a work space at home that is separated from the family space and don’t go near it until the family time is truly over (and stop looking at your watch)

3. Remember that your brain needs a break. Constantly driving your head against the work wall lessens your ability to think creatively.

4. Get some sleep

5. Need more work time? Set the alarm early and do some work before the family is awake but put it away when everyone else is stirring.
Getting to NO at Home

1. Identify ALL the things you have to get done including chores, chaperoning, errands etc.

2. Separate the duties among members of the family.

3. Once the projects are divided, stick to it. When someone asks you to do theirs because they are “busy” remember the word NO.

4. School/child/pet activities-Do all the fun stuff you can BUT when it comes to car pooling or chaperoning, do a share and to the rest say NO.
Saying NO to Guilt

In general, attitudes of the high-guilt parent were seen as more likely to produce psychological disturbance in their children.

Schill et al, 1976  J. Clin Psych

Key phrases to remember

1. My children are safe, healthy and probably don’t miss me as much as I miss them

2. After school programs expand their social skills and learning capability past the topics which are being taught in their classrooms

3. An independent child is a resilient child

4. Children grow up and leave (without guilt I might add)
Taking Care of Yourself

1. Everyone needs enough sleep
2. Exercise limits guilt and depression
3. Hobbies allow the mind to turn off
4. Fun is an important part of the human experience
5. Plan (and actually take) family vacations
It’s Not a Balance, It’s a Seesaw

But if you go up and down fast enough it looks like you are balanced
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