

For Your Information

COUPLE CONFLICT

The best time to talk with your partner about serious issues is not when he or she has just arrived home after a long day at work or is preoccupied with concerns of his or her own. Gauge your partners receptivity to talking before you begin a difficult conversation. If the timing is off, ask your partner if you can set aside a specific time to speak within the next few days. A conversation is likely to go much better when both parties are ready to have it.



ALCOHOL USE AND SLEEP

Use alcohol in moderation only and not before bedtime. Do not use alcohol to induce sleep. A nightcap can lull you to sleep, but alcohol typically produces light, unsettled sleep. Additionally, using alcohol to fall asleep could lead to dependency.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

1. Make a list, prioritize it and check things off as you get them done.
2. Review your list from time to time. Is everything on that list necessary?
3. Ask yourself, "what's the best use of my time right now." Then do it.



IMPROVING YOUR LIFE

Tips to Improve Work and Family Balance

Finding the right balance between work and family is a difficult and ongoing challenge for all working parents. If you're struggling with the demands of work and family, the following ideas and suggestions may help:



The most important thing to know

Work and family don't "balance" automatically. Achieving balance is an on-going process that takes careful listening and communication, planning, joint-decision making and effort. Understanding this can reduce frustration and help you take the actions necessary to create and maintain the right work-family balance for you.

First things first

First and foremost, clarify your values and use them as your guide for planning and making choices regarding work and family demands. Ask yourself these questions:

- ◆ What is most important in your life?
- ◆ What gives your life meaning?
- ◆ What do you want to be and to accomplish in your life?

Clarity on these issues is critical because the answers to these questions affect everything else in your life – especially the decisions you make regarding work and family and the way you spend your time.

Establish priorities

There is not enough time to spend doing things that aren't important to you or your family. Identify your various roles and attach a level of priority to each. Make sure you are putting your time and energy into only those things that are truly most important to you.

Make a plan

Discuss work and family balance with your partner on an on-going basis. Develop a plan that integrates your individual and mutual goals with the responsibilities and issues of work and family. Start from a macro perspective that includes your values and goals and work toward a micro view that describes in detail the roles and responsibilities for each family member.

Discuss expectations

Unspoken expectations and assumptions about how things "should" be done are often the cause of work, family and relationship conflict and stress. When our partner or others do not meet our expectations, often we feel hurt or anger. To avoid upset and improve work-life balance, discuss with your partner what you want and expect of each other. In particular, discuss your expectations and attitudes about the following: housework, house maintenance, meal preparation and meal times, child care, elder care, parenting roles and parent involvement, the nature and amount of couple and family time, time devoted to work and career, money or financial issues.

Tips to improve...

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Involve the whole family

Make sure your family knows that their needs take a high priority despite the demands of your job. Talk about the difficulties of meeting work and family responsibilities and let other family members try to help find solutions. Children can also be given tasks that will help the family accomplish what needs to be done. This sharing of tasks not only teaches children responsibility but also gives them a sense of belonging.

Share responsibilities

Divide parenting and household tasks appropriately among family members. Be sure that everyone in your family understands that household tasks are a responsibility for all family members to tackle. Organize the division of labor with your partner so that you each cover those tasks that are the easiest and most enjoyable for you to accomplish. Make a list of "don't-want-to-do" items that are aversive, a waste of your time, or sap your energy. Delegate these tasks or consider paying for some services to be done.

Bolster productivity at work

Organize your work life to maximize your productivity and minimize workplace distractions or unproductive work habits. If you're putting in long hours at work are you making your time count? Working long hours causes stress that often finds relief naturally through workplace distractions or procrastination. Learn to better manage your time at work and avoid procrastination. Not only can you create more time for family, but you'll find that you're less stressed and performing better at work.

Keep clear boundaries

Whether you are at work or home, do your best to stay fully invested in that place during that time. If you are at home with your family, set aside thoughts of work, turn off your cell phone and give your full attention to your family. Spend some time each day with your partner and each child. Even if it is only for a few minutes, talk, read or participate in an activity together. Everyone, including you, will feel refreshed and loved in such a positive environment.

Recognize the benefits of balance

Balancing the demands of work and family will have positive pay-offs for your children, your relationships with your spouse/partner and children, and everyone's future happiness. Recognizing this can help you keep in mind the critical need for balance in your life.

PARENTING

Raising a Resilient Child



Resilient people have the ability to deal more effectively with stress and pressure, cope with everyday challenges and bounce back from disappointments, adversity or trauma. Many parenting experts believe that resiliency is the most important quality you can instill in your child. How can you foster resiliency in your child? While there are many factors, parenting experts recommend the following:

What parents can do to help

- 1. Show unconditional love.** Love is the most powerful, protective factor that parents can give their child. Studies about resiliency have found that kids who overcame a very difficult childhood all had at least one adult in their life who loved and believed in them. Kids feel loved when they know their parents enjoy being with them. Schedule one-on-one time with your child daily and give them your undivided attention. This feeling of specialness is integral to their self-esteem.
- 2. Be empathetic.** Empathy is feeling from someone else's perspective and a critical component of all satisfying relationships. By parenting with empathy, you not only foster the healthy, emotional development of your child, but also help your child develop empathy for others. Listen to your child and acknowledge his/her feelings. When your child responds with fear, anger, disappointment or sadness, help them identify the emotions they are feeling. Let them know you understand their feelings. By acknowledging your child's feelings you help your child accept his/her own feelings, which in turn allows your child to resolve them.
- 3. Treat mistakes as learning experiences.** Show your child that it's okay to make mistakes, that they are expected, and that mistakes can be a part of the learning process. When a mistake is made, instead of chastising your child or telling him/her what they did wrong, engage your child in a discussion concerning what they think went wrong and how they think they could avoid a similar mistake from happening in the future. By doing so in a positive and encouraging way, your child will learn that making a mistake doesn't automatically mean that they have failed and that they can use mistakes as a way of learning to find better ways to be successful.
- 4. Focus on strengths.** Self-worth and resiliency come from experiencing success in areas of life others deem important. Every child possesses areas of strength and it is important for you as the parent to identify and reinforce these, rather than focus on weaknesses. Help your child discover their strengths and build confidence by helping him/her set and work toward reasonable goals. Moving toward a goal and receiving praise along the way will help your child focus on what they can accomplish rather than on failures. Each time your child achieves a goal or successfully solves a problem on their own, it gives them the confidence and skill to persevere the next time they face a challenge.

Employee Assistance Program Services

PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

Your Employee Assistance Program is a prepaid and confidential program designed to help employees and their dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. ESPYR offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your EAP Counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

For assistance, please visit our website at: www.espyr.com or call **(800) 869-0276**.