

May 5, 2014

Topic: Work and Life Balance

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Key Knowledge Points Developed

- The rush we place on ourselves to create this amazing life filled with everything at once is really our self-inflicted, self-imposed race to wherever. Life happens in phases, what you choose not to do now, you can do later. Stop the racing. Breathe.
- Work and life balance looks different for everyone; it is not one-size-fits-all. Talking about it, and gaining advice from colleagues and friends you trust can give you the encouragement and confidence you need to address work and life balance formally—whether at home or work.
- Saying out loud what you want/think/feel can feel so good. We don't have to process all things internally and deal with emotions alone. Admit them, say them out loud and create partners that can either assist you or hold you accountable.
- Set expectations with others and make decisions based on what you value. Don't be afraid to pursue what makes you happy and ask others to help you get there. Manage expectations and manage up.
- Calmly object. Saying "no" is like building a muscle; don't feel obligated to give reasons for why you are saying no; this may only provide fodder for questioning your decision. Don't over explain, don't over complain. When you say "no" and suggest another solution, you are still handling the problem.
- Don't feel the need to say "yes" all the time; be upfront about your time constraints.
- Just as saying "no" can be a good thing, being labeled "bossy" or "pushy" can be a good thing, too. It may get you where you need to be. Women are socialized not to speak with an authoritative tone and tend to undervalue their worth. Verbalize what you want/need in a manner that leaves no confusion about what you want/need.
- Lay out your work and life balance expectations early—for yourself, your family and your employer.
- *You can have it all, but not at one time*; sometimes being forced to take a step back can lead to several steps forward. Make choices, and put some things on the back burner. You may need to shift your needs and wants around to have the life you desire.
- Know what you value and what your goals are today; happiness is an evolving journey and these things may change as you go through life.
- If you have children, being available to them as they grow is important, and it's a small chunk of your life. If you work outside of the home, perhaps you can wait 20 years before doing extra things like volunteer work. Balance your time; don't overcommit.
- Your career does not define who you are.
- The playing field has changed for women, and women often feel they have something to prove. They don't. Do your best, and live by your values.
- Don't wait until things are perfect to move forward; let go of being a perfectionist.
- Make a difference. Part of managing people is helping them develop professionally and helping them attain their desired work and life balance; your support and guidance will be appreciated.
- Own your actions professionally and personally. You may have a team at work that depends on you; you may have children at home that depend on you. These people look up to you. Set an example you want people to follow both at work and home.
- If you are a "Type A" personality, and your work and life balance are out of whack, maybe you need to change some things. If you are in school, you don't have to get A's for everything. Decide if it is more important for you to get A's over B's, spend time with your friends, tuck your children in at night, burn the midnight oil at work, or develop your hobbies? There is no right answer.
- There is a man/woman confidence gap. If something goes wrong, women may tend to say it is their fault, whereas men may say it was because of the circumstances.
- Self-reflection is important. If you work in teams and seem to always be the "pusher" in the group, perhaps you are the one with the issue, not your teammates.
- Single woman, wife, CEO, mother, working mother, volunteer – As you change roles in your life, you need to change, too.
- You don't have to have the answer for everything; oftentimes you have to make a Sophisticated Wild Ass Guess (SWAG).
- Don't wait for people to recognize what you're doing; practice the art of graceful self-promotion.