

Balance Is Key

Balance is that peaceful feeling we have when the important things in our lives are given the right amount of time and attention. Everything suffers when we don't keep a good balance. *Balance* is key to managing work and home, and it keeps us content. It also sets a great example for our kids. But balance doesn't just happen on its own. We **MUST** be purposeful about it.

Defining Priorities

To get balance, we must first set our priorities. Clear priorities allow us to balance work and family and to focus 100 percent on whichever priority is needed. Examples of priorities include:

- Quality family time with my kids
- Being on time to school and work every day
- Preparing kids for school every day
- Keeping my home cleaned and maintained
- Going to church
- Making a little time each week for me

Keeping Balance

Once you have figured out your priorities, it is time to commit to keeping them in balance. Your priorities can only be kept a priority if you say "No" to those things that will bust your boundaries.

Boundary Busters

- Family or friends who expect you to drop everything for them
- Overly dependent boyfriends or friends who want you to carry them through life
- A boss who expects you to work extra hours not previously agreed upon
- Anyone who tries to make you feel guilty for saying "no"

Vital to your well-balanced life is saying “no” to those who don’t respect what is most important to you. Say “no” by:

- Letting your boss know that you’re dedicated to doing your job well, but you also need to have your work hours clearly defined.
- Helping your children learn their *place* in the family by giving them age-appropriate *responsibilities* and by teaching them how important their role is.
- Turning off electronics for just 30 minutes a day and TALKING as a family. This can make a huge difference in your family’s closeness and in your children’s ability to make friends.¹
- Relationships can be the *biggest* boundary buster in anyone’s life. Guilt, manipulation, and aggression have no place in a healthy relationship. If someone is using those tactics to get you to act in a certain way, then walk away.

Motivation

- There is a constant temptation to avoid the difficult in order to do the distracting. Choose to do what is most important over these distractions.
- Make a plan and then spend your time on your top priorities.
- Schedule in the extras but be realistic.

Conclusion

Remember, things won’t always go perfectly. But our priorities become more clear when we do the hard work of defining them. Remember to prioritize the important things, and then protect them with strong boundaries and thoughtful planning. Do this, and you will create a good balance between work and home and teach your children the value of family and commitments.

Resources include:

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4. U.S. Department of Labor Blog. 12 Stats About Working Women. Found at <https://blog.dol.gov/2017/03/01/12-stats-about-working-women>, accessed 9/18/2018.
5. Tartakovsky, M., M.S. 10 Way to Build and Preserve Better Boundaries. Psych Central. April 4, 2018. Found at <https://psychcentral.com/lib/10-way-to-build-and-preserve-better-boundaries/>, accessed 9/19/2018.
6. Yeagar M. How to Set Boundaries at Work. U.S. News & World Report. July 17, 2014. Found at <https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2014/07/17/how-to-set-boundaries-at-work-so-you-can-have-a-life>, accessed 9/19/2018.
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8. Vanderkam, L. Women with big jobs and big families: Balancing really isn’t that hard. Fortune. June 6, 2015. Found at <http://fortune.com/2015/06/06/women-with-big-jobs-and-big-families-balancing-really-isnt-that-hard/>, accessed 9/19/2018.
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10. Mullin, Nicki – Teacher. Interview.
11. Eller, K. Health benefits of a clean home. Advocate Health Care. June 6, 2016. Found at <http://www.ahchealthnews.com/2016/06/06/staying-fit-cleaning-house/>, accessed 9/19/2018.