Balancing Work, Family and Fun

Research shows that people are increasingly struggling to maintain a healthy work-life balance. This is especially true for those who are juggling work and family commitments, whether these include caring for children or the elderly. While we might not always be able to take time for ourselves as we balance out our own needs with those of our family and our jobs, we need to learn to live in or 'enjoy the moment' and ensure we include fun in the balancing equation.

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Tips And Tools

Finding ways to better balance your life with more fun and relaxation will help make you a more effective employee, parent, caregiver and friend. Here are some tips to help you get started:

Fun

- Never underestimate the importance of fun. Fun helps reduce stress, increases our life satisfaction and can bring us closer to our families.
- Try to really focus on your family when you are with them, instead of being distracted by thoughts of work.
- Having fun can actually generate the energy we need to take on life's challenges.
- When we have fun, we are more relaxed, feel better about ourselves and are mentally prepared to give back to our family and work.

Play

- When we re-learn our "play skills", we tap into the creative part of our personality. This capacity to express ourselves can help in all parts of our lives.
- Play can include anything we do for enjoyment, including solitary activities, those that involve family or friends, or a combination of both.
- Think about ways you can play: reading, watching movies, playing games or sports or keeping up with hobbies.
- Come up with new ways to play. Explore new interests or develop new skills.
- The more we play, the easier it becomes to make fun out of many things that might ordinarily seem boring.

Finding Ways To Have Family Fun

- When we make time for family fun, it helps to make up for the times when we are rushed and perhaps a little impatient.
- Think of it as having a 'bank of good times'. When problematic issues arise, you have a store of fun times to balance difficulties against.
- Family fun doesn't have to take a lot of time.
- One mother became tired of hearing her child answer "nothing" to her daily "what did you do today?" question and asked her children to tell her a story instead. Children often look forward to telling stories - it gives them the opportunity to weave fantasy with facts about their day. Children's stories are often funny and can get the whole family laughing.

A short family fun period like this can help parents shake off their business day and begin to focus on their family.