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Newsletter

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COVID-19 and the “new normal”, a term we have all grown accustomed to, but what does it actually mean?

Longer working hours, fulfilling more than one role (mother, employee, teacher, spouse, daughter) and a very fine juggling act between all of these. Those of us who are parents, especially of younger children, currently feel a tinge of guilt every time we don't do an activity with our children or every time we do and are then guilty that we are not focused on work all day. So, where then does the balance come in?

Moving from work-life balance to work-life integration, a space where both are now completely interlinked as we bring our entire workspace into our homes, is difficult. The key to maintaining sanity during this time is structure and boundaries. We hope that our articles below help you in some way to achieve this.



Note from the
Counselor

The Balance Plan

Lockdown has brought with it a whole reality that we do not have the blueprint for. Every day we find ourselves juggling our responsibilities and priorities and all of these compete for our valuable attention.

Our lives may become off-centre when we do not take charge of our schedules and priorities. This leads to exhaustion, stress, and frustration. We need to act today to bring a greater sense of balance and purpose to all the areas of our lives

So, how do you bring your life back into balance?

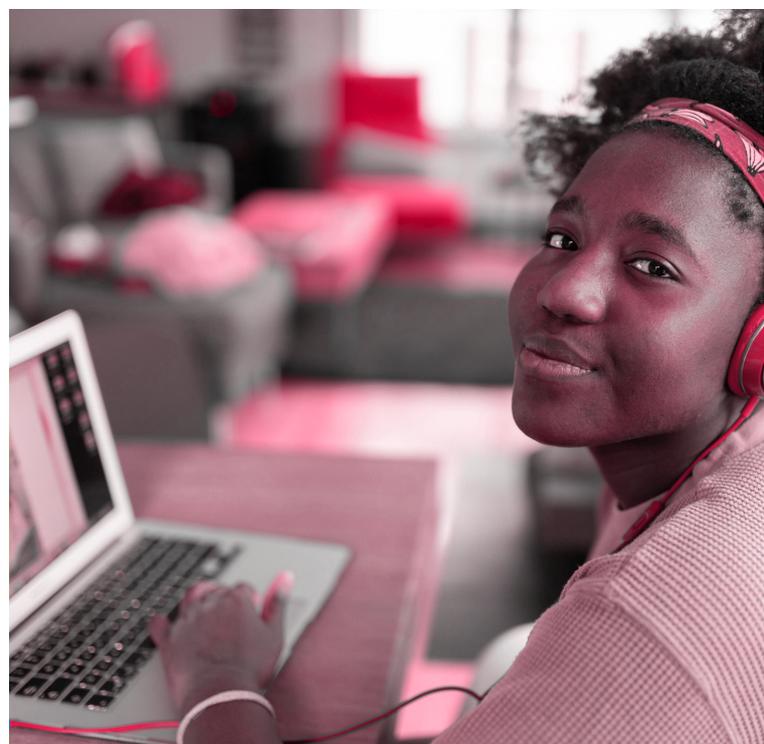
Follow These Six Tips to Bring More Balance into Your Life

1. Acknowledge and accept that you cannot do everything all the time

You only have so many resources: time, energy, money, etc. While it is understandable to want to accomplish much and please a number of people, you are only one person and cannot always manage to do it all. All you can do is all you can do. And, all you can do is enough! Let go of the need for perfection, and of solving all problems for all people. So, stop; take a deep breath and regroup.

2. Manage yourself, not time.

There is really no such thing as "time management." But we can manage our activities. Everyone has the exact same amount of time: 24 hours in one day. Managing yourself reflects a sense of responsibility in what you do in a day, and in a lifetime. It is being proactive and realizing the power of choice and knowing what you do have control over.



3. Identify the A's, B's, and C's

Identify "A" people in your life. These people build you up. They believe in you. They support you. You know someone is in the A category if you feel better about you after being with them. They add to your life, and they add to you.

"B" people are neutral. You feel about the same after being with this person than you did before.

The people on your "C" list really need to be released or phased out. These people only drain you and add to stress to your life.

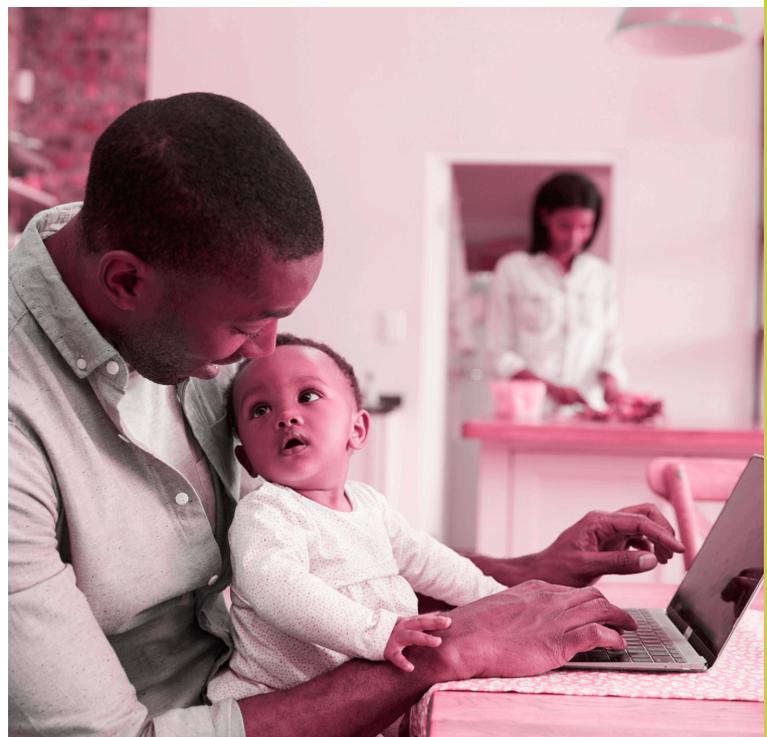
Spend more time with "A" people. They will energize you, empower you, inspire you, and give you strength rather than stress!



4. Just say "No"

"Will you...?" "Can you...?" "I just need a small favour... What do you think will happen if you say no? Sometimes we say yes to things because we feel pressure to give an immediate answer. However, you can always say that you need to think about it and will get back to them.

Being able to say no is a critical piece in reducing stress and balancing your life. Ask yourself what you are saying no to when you are saying yes!



5. Schedule time for yourself

If you do not take time and steps to preserve your health and well-being, then who will? Make it a priority to schedule the time and place for yourself to bring what gives you comfort, health, joy or whatever you most need now.

Be intentional in resting, in playing, in growing. Take at least 10 minutes a day to read, to walk or to rest. Scheduling time for yourself is a must if you want the best of yourself.



6. Live with purpose!

A life of authenticity, passion and purpose is one that is much easier to keep in balance. For this reason, there is no perfect, one-size-fits-all balance plan you should be striving for.

The best life balance plan is different for each of us because we all have different priorities and different lives. Remember that we always have a choice about how to live our lives, activities to be involved in and people to be in relationships with.

Getting the balance right

Juggle juggle juggle – from the moment you open your eyes until you close them again at night it is all you are doing these days.

Parenting has always been hard, but lockdown and home schooling have pushed the pressure up to a whole new level. No wonder parents are feeling frazzled. Not only are you doing long division, you are trying to work from home, and do all the cooking and shopping that keeps the household from falling apart.

Here are a few steps that can lighten your load.

Teamwork is key

If you and your partner both work from home, come up with a plan who takes care of the kids at a set time.

Let your kids know what to expect

You need to explain that you are not on holiday and that you all have work. Involve them in the timetable, and in doing so they will buy into it. Reward self-regulating work by play time or baking biscuits with them. Put up a busy sign on the door for whoever needs quiet work time.

Adjust your work hours

Try working flextime like starting work at 6am and then taking a break for a few hours in the afternoon so you can home school the kids.



Try productivity techniques

Set a time for 25 minutes and work flat out in that time, not allowing any talking or disruptions.

Be realistic

Realize there are going to be good days and bad days. You cannot be the perfect employee and the perfect parent simultaneously. You need to prioritize – it is not possible to do everything. Remember that in these challenging times of COVID-19 – your kids need you more as their parent than they do as their teacher.

Set boundaries and maintain discipline

Clearly and calmly explain to your children what the consequences will be if they do not follow your instructions and follow through if they disobey. Create a contract in which you and your child agree to the terms. This will help in getting their buy in and ensure they are heard.

Be honest

Remember that you and your children are only human. Anxiety creeps up on everyone – there is always a fear that one of us will get the virus. Parents feel frustrated at the lack of personal space and children can feel frustrated from boredom. It's important for everyone to communicate clearly to preserve the peace. If you lose your temper, do not be too proud to apologize – you will be teaching your children a valuable life lesson

Make time for yourself

You cannot focus on our children 24/7. For the sake of your sanity, you need some alone time. Take a long bath, exercise, or read a book. Being in a better state of mind will make you a better parent.



YOUR

DAILY

ROUTINE

MATTERS

References

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Telegraph.co.uk