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Work-Life Balance

By The CEO Couple, Ed and Ellen Schack

Today many Americans strive to "have it all" with respect to their personal and professional life but, all too often, this shotgun effort leads to disappointing results on many—if not all—fronts. "The complexity lies in creating abundance in your life while still being able to relax and enjoy life to its fullest," agrees CEO Couple Ed and Ellen Schack, "parent-preneurs" and speakers who have realized mutual whole-life success through key principals that have helped them successfully balance family life with growing businesses.

Individual business owners and parents of three, the Schacks have blended their families, work lives, and personalities in a way that complement each other and serve as a model for other couples and families striving to do the same. Some of their advice:

Embracing Our Differences: The Spice of Life. One of the most important components of life is to recognize how very unique each one of us is and how we can actually harness these individual qualities to add greater strength or capabilities to a relationship. Whether it's a spouse or a child, it is important to appreciate differing characteristics and personality. This may mean modifying a discipline or communication approach that lead to the necessary changes that generate a positive family impact and outcome.

Are We Having Fun Yet? Life's Way Too Short to Be that Serious. Life is supposed to be fun and work is, too. Ed and Ellen's philosophy is to make everything in life a worthwhile experience, lived moment to moment. Be present in those moments and make them as memorable as possible. Also keep a peaceful state of mind by purposely relaxing—don't wait for random chance to present you the opportunity.

WIFE: Open Lines of Communication. Communication is vital to any healthy relationship whether business or personal. The Schacks have embraced their business coach's philosophy, WIFE—What I Feel Like Expressing—that is a part of every weekly meeting, where employees get to talk about whatever they want to about CEOs, employees, themselves, the companies, etc. Ed and Ellen do this in a more informal way at home with their three kids. Make sure there is resolution on each topic presented so that no one is confused. And, be sure to reach a decision that provides one answer.

All Hands on Deck: Operating with Respect, Balance, and Recognition. When looking for inspiration in one's life, it's important to have go-to people to lean on in both the career and non-career aspects. This may mean using a business consultant who can take the business to the next level or a personal confidant who can help you make personal changes, improve communication, resolve issues and become better people. Tied to the principle of recognizing the value in others and accepting other's opinions is the overriding principle of being respectful in every aspect of life. Have respect. Let it go. Never stay angry. Don't get crazy over little things.

Shelter Against the Storm: Finding your Neutral Zone. It is not easy to maintain happy and healthy relationships on a personal or professional level. There will be discord and disagreement, so finding a neutral zone is important where each person can go to get away from stress. Think about your home or other location as a sanctuary that is replete with peace and positivity. Establish a place of escape from life's difficulties, so that you can clear your head, regroup and productively deal with the situation at hand.

Shift Change: Keeping our Home and Businesses Separate. It is important to create boundaries that keep work and home life separate, so that couples can carve out as much quality family time as possible. This helps to reduce anxiety and stress in the family unit. Those with home-based businesses can still establish work hours and then close up shop and focus on the family—for the health and happiness of all involved.

More than Skin Deep: Social Responsibility on the Inside and Out. Establishing a business and a family life based on a philosophy of social responsibility can generate a great deal of satisfaction. Whether you "pay it forward" by helping those who are less fortunate or you create a bucket list based on what you can do for others (rather than yourself), you can not only make a difference in others' lives, but also enrich your own life and make it feel more fulfilling. Doing these activities as a couple or family unit is a unique bonding experience.

About The CEO Couple

Ed and Ellen Schack are not your average couple. Both are CEOs of successful entrepreneurial national businesses, EES Cosmetic Solutions and Cowabunga Ice Cream. Both are committed to their "blended" family, and they hold steadfast to their faith. Ed and Ellen not only have an enduring positive outlook on life, but they developed a formula called "The Cowabunga Lifestyle" – one that does not take life too seriously. Their model for living and working is based on principles that foster healthy a marriage, business growth, and managing the rigors of everyday life: Respect, Communication, Partnership, Fun, Family, Faith, Balance and Well-Being combined with many operational components of business like Strategy, Vision, and Competition. Learn more online at www.theceocouple.com and via Twitter @theceocouple.