



Balancing Work and Home for Whole-Life Success

by Ed and Ellen Schack

Today's driven, success-minded professionals strive to 'have it all' – and do it all – with respect to their personal and professional lives. However, all too often, this shotgun effort leads to disappointing results on many, if not all, fronts. The complexity lies in creating abundance in your professional life while still being able to relax and enjoy your personal life to its fullest.



Realizing whole-life success is possible. The secret lies in creating and committing to boundaries that keep work and home life separate, so that you may remain career-driven while also carving out as much quality family, couple, and 'me' time as possible. This helps to reduce

anxiety and stress for you, your romantic relationship, and a family unit at large.

Consider these tactical strategies that will help working professionals better balance their family, personal and career lives:

- Be totally accessible to business contacts **ONLY** during regular working hours, whether 9 to 5 Monday through Friday or other set working hours. Ensure all vendors, business partners, colleagues and clients understand that this is the company culture or your personal policy.
- Have a personal cell phone that is only for family and friends, so you can leave the business phone behind on family outings, personal 'me' time, at the health club, or with friends. Answer the work phone, fax or email **ONLY** during business hours.
- No Friday afternoon critical endeavors or fire drills. Stack

the more labor intensive, mission critical tasks – and those that require third-party involvement or input – early in the week, and taper down so that by Friday you can essentially focus on house-keeping items. This strategy can help you avoid weekend work loads and other infringements on what should now be your personal time.

- Just as you schedule professional obligations, also schedule time for personal, family, and couple activities. And don't forget to put in 'me' time to exercise, relax,

or spend time with friends. It doesn't matter if it is a few hours or days, or a small or large activity – put it on the calendar and plan around it to make it happen!

- If you are a business owner or manage staff in an operation with extended hours, create processes and protocols that can handle most situations when you are unavailable in the 'off' hours or otherwise. Also ensure all staffers understand you are only to be contacted in true emergencies (don't forget to define 'true emergency'), and that when

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you are not accessible you have empowered them to support you properly and make executive decisions in your absence.

There are also a few key principles that can go a long way toward establishing work/life balance and harmony, especially when you are in a relationship with an equally success-minded person:

Establish Open Lines of Communication. Communication is vital to any healthy relationship, whether business or personal. It is important to ensure that everyone, including yourself, is able to express themselves no matter what, as this helps diffuse misunderstandings and alleviates stress and time spent on repairing those downed communication lines.

Operate with Respect, Balance and Recognition. It's important to have go-to people to lean on in both the career and non-career aspects of your life. This may mean using a mentor, career coach or business consultant who can take the company to the next level, or a personal confidant who can help you make personal changes, improve communication, resolve issues and become a better person.

Identify 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 – where each person can go to get away from stress or the angst of a difficult moment – is important. Establish a place of 'escape' from such difficulties, so that you can clear your head, regroup, and productively deal with the situation at hand.

Focus on 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 it is the idea to 'pay it forward' by helping those who are less fortunate, or creating a bucket list based on what you and/or your company can do for others not only makes a difference in others' lives, but it also enriches your own life – and that of those you work with – and makes it feel more fulfilling.

Regardless of whether you're a business owner, a manager, executive or professional, it's easy to get off kilter – especially when under excessive stress and pressure at work or at home. Career demands can cause family disruptions, while other variables like tightening budgets can create friction at home and at the job. However, there are ways to manage such circumstances and, in doing so, regain control of your own personal and professional satisfaction. Start with the action items above and you'll be well on your way. □

The CEO Couple, Ed and Ellen Schack, are living examples of work/life/family balance based on key principles that foster a healthy 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. They may be reached online at www.theCEOcouple.com and via Twitter at #theCEOcouple.

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