


His Career, Her Career – Strategies for Balancing Work and Family

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Dual-Career Couple Facts

- ◆ Nearly 50 percent of families have two wage earners
- ◆ Half of the American work force is women
- ◆ 70 percent of women with children under 18 work
- ◆ Less than one-fifth of families are “traditional” breadwinner/homemaker families
- ◆ Work plays a significant role in the lives of dual-career families
- ◆ 60 percent of working parents experience conflict between work and family demands







Typical Dual-Career Couple Scenario

One partner comes home and says,
“Honey, I’ve been thinking about my career and I feel it’s time to make a change. I found out about this terrific opportunity in (fill in the blank) and I want to go for the job.”

To which the other partner responds,
“I don’t want to move. I’m at that point in my career where I’m successful and the company likes what I’m doing. I don’t want to start over! Plus, we can’t move the kids in the middle of the school year.”






Questions Dual-Career Couples Face

- ◆ Whose career takes priority? When?
- ◆ Should someone's career take priority? Why?
- ◆ Are our current jobs/careers fulfilling?
- ◆ How long do we want to stay in this geographic area? Do we like where we live?
- ◆ How long of a commute should each partner make?
- ◆ Who leaves work or stays out of work to care for the sick child, pet, or parent?
- ◆ Who does what in maintaining the household?
- ◆ Who runs the grocery/dry cleaning/household errands?


Adapted from Michelle Fleig-Palmer, Director of the Dual Career Program at the University of Nebraska, Kearney



What causes stress?

- ◆ Managing more numerous and complex work and family roles
- ◆ Society's expectations and socialization of gender and changing sex roles
- ◆ Finding support systems congruent with dual career family lifestyles
- ◆ Occupational mobility
- ◆ Role strain
- ◆ Role spillover


Adapted from *Balancing Work and Family*, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Bulletin #4186



So What is Work and Family Balance?

- ◆ You have enough time for work and family
- ◆ Life "flows" and you are able to enjoy it
- ◆ When something goes wrong (car breaks down, someone gets sick, no childcare) you have the resources to cope
- ◆ On track - personally and professionally


Adapted from Sandi Epstein, *What is Work and Family Balance? And How do I Get it?*



Characteristics of Work and Family Balance

- ◆ Not constant, comes and goes with life changes
- ◆ It takes WORK
- ◆ The process of seeking balance can be deeply rewarding


Adapted from Sandi Epstein, *What is Work and Family Balance? And How do I Get it?*



Happiness Possible for Dual-Career Couples

- ◆ Provides "positive" work experiences
- ◆ Provides cognitive challenges and sense of self esteem
- ◆ Enhances personal relationship
- ◆ Financial incentives
- ◆ Social support
- ◆ Acceptance and satisfaction with lifestyle choice
- ◆ Cooperation

Adapted from Sandi Epstein, *What is Work and Family Balance? And How do I Get it?*



Key Processes to Work Towards Balance

- ◆ Clarifying values
- ◆ Setting realistic goals and expectations
- ◆ Setting priorities
- ◆ Letting go and understanding control

Adapted from *Balancing Work and Family*, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Bulletin #4186



Challenge: Limited mobility

Solution:

- ◆ Look for new opportunities within current employer
- ◆ Look for new opportunities within current geographic location

Challenge: Role Conflict

Solution:

- ◆ Values clarification
- ◆ Setting realistic expectations
- ◆ Satisfaction with sharing roles

Challenge: Housekeeping

Solution:

- ◆ Communicate about inequities
- ◆ Develop an "equal" division of responsibilities and labor
- ◆ Hire out

Challenge: Childcare

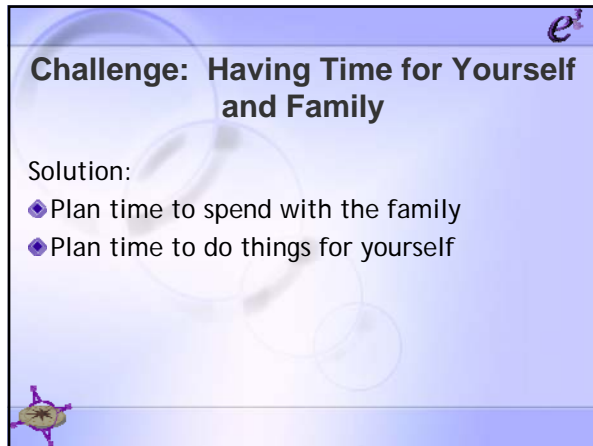
Solution:

- ◆ Be proactive and set plans in place
- ◆ Seek options

Challenge: Relationship with Partner

Solution:

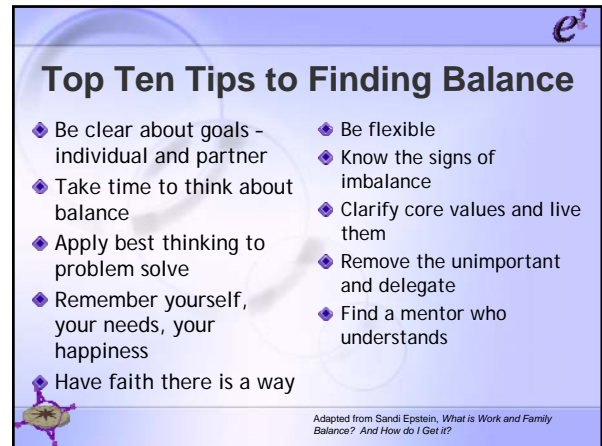
- ◆ Planning time to be together
- ◆ Regular check-ins
- ◆ Weekly dates
- ◆ Vacations and get aways



Challenge: Having Time for Yourself and Family

Solution:

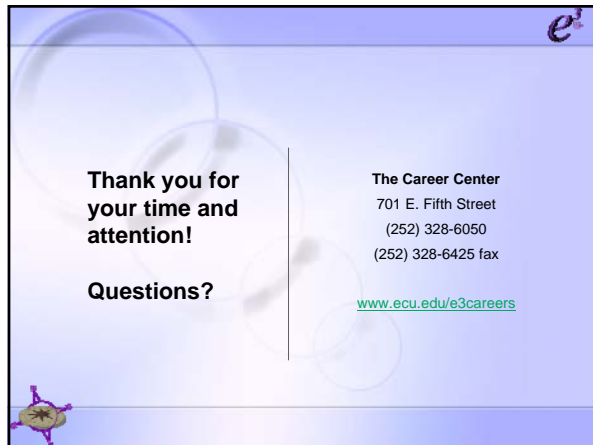
- ◆ Plan time to spend with the family
- ◆ Plan time to do things for yourself



Top Ten Tips to Finding Balance

- ◆ Be clear about goals - individual and partner
- ◆ Take time to think about balance
- ◆ Apply best thinking to problem solve
- ◆ Remember yourself, your needs, your happiness
- ◆ Have faith there is a way
- ◆ Be flexible
- ◆ Know the signs of imbalance
- ◆ Clarify core values and live them
- ◆ Remove the unimportant and delegate
- ◆ Find a mentor who understands

Adapted from Sandi Epstein, *What is Work and Family Balance? And How do I Get it?*



Thank you for your time and attention!

Questions?

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