

Four Strategies to Balance Home and Work

By Pat Heydlauff

Are you already dealing with an overly hectic daily schedule or the added time crush of holiday commitments? Can you keep up with life's challenges on a macro level and find balance between your home life, work life, kids' lives and still find time for you without added stress and frustration?

There is a solution based on the Feng Shui principle of taking control of your life that is easy to use, inexpensive and works. **Organize and prioritize your time.** Yes, prioritize! Treat time as a finite quantity so you don't over-commit. Take steps now to un-clutter your calendar by scheduling only things that are important to your work life, family and household duties. Learn to say "no" to everything else.

Strategy One

Begin with a calendar for the entire month and then break it down into one-week segments. Manage your time based on your needs for the week and always work toward getting the most important things done first. If you see a major event scheduled later in the month, any free time you have leftover should be devoted to that major event, which considerably reduces the stress involved in preparing for it.

Organize your one-week segments as a block of time so they are more manageable. Place everything you need to do that week on your calendar, including the routine and mundane, as well as the important task of taking care of yourself. Do not look at your schedule in one-day segments, you will tend to micromanage your schedule and overbook yourself thinking you can fit one more thing in. Once you know what you need to do in a one-week period, you can allocate your time based on both daily needs and importance.

Then, besides the necessary routine items, **do the most important thing first.** It is not about the fastest task to complete or the easiest thing to do but the most important task. This one step of doing the most important thing first will greatly reduce your stress and eliminate your frustrations.

What you use to manage your calendar should be a personal preference; just choose the one that really works for you. It does need to be portable so you can access the information at a moment's notice wherever you are. In a high-tech age, pen and paper can be just as efficient as electronic equipment.

Strategy Two

In order to stay on track to get everything done that needs to get done, **make a weekly plan and stick to it.** The less clutter and un-important things you have to deal

with on your calendar, the easier it will be to stay on track. You will be much more efficient, effective and productive and your home and work life will be more balanced.

Create shortcuts and consolidate errands. By looking at your schedule one week at a time it will be much easier and more obvious to find ways to save time by consolidating errands, children's appointments and work requirements. Always keep a running list with your shopping needs such as food, dry goods and errands like dry cleaning, so quick stops can be made on the way to appointments instead of using a larger block of time when you might be much further away.

Should you waver from your plan for emergencies? Absolutely! Should that become a habit? Absolutely not!

Strategy Three

Is multi-tasking an option? **Multi-tasking should be done only when 100 percent of your attention is not required on your current project or task.** For example, when you are driving, your focus should be 100% on driving -- not checking on phone messages or refereeing a disagreement among children in the backseat.

On the other hand, multi-tasking such as helping children with homework can be done while fixing dinner. In return, children should help with setting the table and other household chores to free up a parent's time for those things only adults can do.

Rather than multi-tasking at work, keep your office or workspace so organized that you can maximize your productivity and not waste time looking for things. Multi-tasking under pressure leads to mistakes and loss of efficiency and effectiveness, which can be very costly.

Strategy Four

Remember to take care of yourself so you have enough energy to stay organized and balanced. **Taking care of yourself should be one of your priorities.** It is especially important to schedule time each week to do something special for yourself. You need to regenerate your personal energy weekly in order to continue a hectic pace and remain balanced and successful at home and at work.

In a very demanding lifestyle, care must be taken to schedule quiet time, alone time -- time to just be at peace. Find a corner in your bedroom or living room, light a candle and play some peaceful music to regenerate your heart and soul. While in this space you can simply enjoy the peacefulness and allow your mind to go totally quiet, you can meditate or read an inspirational or motivational book. This process will help you keep up with everything else on your schedule.

You will reduce stress and frustration by organizing and prioritizing the way you spend your time and carving out some quiet time just for you on a weekly basis to re-energize. The result – a more efficient, effective, happier and productive you.

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Pat Heydlauff, president of Energy Design, uses Feng Shui design principles to eliminate chaos and stress at home and within oneself. More than a Feng Shui expert, Pat is a consultant and speaker who helps remove clutter and negativity while encouraging personal growth, improved relationships and prosperity. Her book, “Feng Shui: So Easy a Child Can Do It,” shows how small changes can lead to a big improvement in one’s personal and professional success. For information on her consulting, speaking and artwork, visit: www.Energy-by-Design.com or call: 561-799-3443.