



Work-Life Balance: How to Parent Your Teenager as a

Usually both parents work - whatever the reasons are - for career, finances, or boredom. It is rare that one parent can stay at home these days.

While parents are out of the house, what happens to the kids? Yes, teenagers are in school most of the day, and then there may be a nanny, or the grandparents taking care of your kids, but then the question is always there:

Is there a right work-life balance?

We hear in society that we cannot have everything we want; we must either choose a career or choose parenthood. If we do both, there is often guilt and self-reproach that 'we did it somehow wrong'. But is this true? Can you not do both without feelings of guilt and wrongdoings? Finding a satisfying work-life balance is all about setting priorities and setting boundaries that will help you feel great in doing both - being a good parent and having a successful career.

So, how do you start?

1. You love your job, but you also love your family.

Maybe you love working, love making money, love being with people important to you and you derive meaning and job satisfaction at work. For whatever reason you are at work, there is something you get from work which you may not get at home. You need to balance your role as a career individual with that of a stay-at-home parent. How do you juggle both?

2. Make sure that your children feel safe and happy.

Life satisfaction in working mothers is usually linked to satisfaction in their children and their level of closeness to their children. Make sure that your work engagement and your recovery time from work is positively related to your child's happiness and feelings of closeness to you. Research has shown that children of working mothers do well in academia and in their future. Girls are more likely to complete more years of education, be better employed and boys are more likely to help with household chores and cleaning. Sometimes working mothers can even spend more time with their children than non-working mothers.

3. Plan ahead of time.

You can still be an encouraging and important role model for your children, even if you have to work late and come home late, even if you have to work in the evening or on the weekend. The key is that the little time that is left needs to be used well, and priorities for the family must be set. You need to have the energy to spend the time with your family, be completely present for them and leave work at work. How do you do this?

Perhaps you can think of the time you will be together ahead of time, plan ahead for the time you want to spend with the children. You can plan ahead, while you are driving, while you are going grocery shopping or waiting in line. Or ask your children to make some plans, what they would like to do, and come to a decision ahead of time.

4. Your personal well-being comes first.

Remember, airplane attendants always recommend that you put your oxygen mask on first before helping your children to do so. To be emotionally available, have the energy and be able to try to be there for your teenager and being a parent can only become a reality if you feel well. Your personal wellbeing will allow you to take care of your family. In order to give to others, you must think of yourself first. You need to be aware of your limits, of your burnouts and poor health, physical or mental, your sleep habits and your skills in managing stress. Taking care of yourself also means setting priorities on how you spend your time and how much time you spend in the household, with friends, with your hobbies and your family.

5. Setting routines

Remember, Murphy's law, "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong". Is there something that cannot go wrong? Confucius said that routines establish habits and good habits make you who you are and how your life will look like. Routines restore balance in our life, provide us with comfort and stability. Routines also provide certainty that no matter what happens, we are going to be doing this. Setting routines can come in the forms of family traditions, daily plans, and scheduled activities, new or old, small, or big. Something like Taco Tuesdays, movie nights, game nights, weekly trips or whatever your family enjoys. Find a routine and notice the effect it has on you and your family.

6. Strengthening your relationship with your teenager.

This may seem like a no-brainer but as most no-brainers they are easy to know, but hard to do.

Many parents raise kids by forcing their own dreams onto their children. Be it by going to a certain school, having a specific career, hobby or enjoyment, book or music, values or opinions. You may want your kids to come on a hike with you, but they want to go swimming at the beach. You may want them to come for a visit to your friends with you, but they prefer to stay home by themselves.

Listening to your teenagers' desires and wishes, brings you closer, even if you believe that the little time you have outside of your career has to be used together. Listening in such a way that your teenager will talk is an art that can be learned through good teachers and good practice. Spending the little time you have and making your teenagers' desires your priority means establishing closer rapport and better relationships. This will help your teenager to open up to you.

7. Establish a supportive network of friends or family

There will always be a time where you will need the help of friends or family, and where friends or family will need your help. You can establish carpools, look after each other's children or pets, help with important appointments, or even just rides to school or extra-curricular activities. Make sure ahead of time that you have a supportive network on hand for times of need.

8. Prioritize your needs

Remember you cannot do everything at all times. You have to choose. Creating a balanced life approach to work and family, means that somethings have to come last or be cut out. Maybe you have to cut on your dinner parties for your friends, may be you have to say no to your weekend work, may be you have to set boundaries in terms of time for work and family, may be you cannot make long trips anymore, and may be you cannot drive to certain places

due to heavy traffic. Prioritizing your time and how you will spend the time is the key to a healthy work-life balance.

9. Let go of certain desires

You cannot be perfect in everything. If the housework has to wait, or be completed just minimally, then let go of it. Are your children and family not more important, than a perfectly cleaned home? Things can be left as good enough, and you move on. Time left is more precious than home perfectly cleaned. Use the time to spend with your teenager and your family. Make small meals, teach your children to be responsible, help you and become independent. Give them little tasks, show them that you need their help. At the end quality time with your family is what makes everyone happy and creates the memories for a better tomorrow.