Balancing Work and Family

Leading a Double Life

Are you frustrated by a lack of time to do the things you want? Or even to do the things you have to get done? Managing a household and finding time for family activities is not easy for an employed parent. Routine family and household activities may average six hours; sleep averages seven hours; commuting uses one; and work on the job takes eight. That leaves only two hours for activities of choice! Many times those hours are spent doing jobs that need to be done instead of those we would like to do.

Dividing the Family Tasks
Families may use a variety of methods to divide household tasks:

- **Resource method:** People with the resources (time, energy, skill) do the job.
- **Rotating chores method:** Chores are rotated among all members. Everyone tries all tasks, although some training may be needed and standards will vary from week to week.
- **Each-person method:** Each person is responsible for his or her own food, clean-up, and laundry. Some family jobs still need to be considered (such as yard work and household repairs).
- **Substitute method:** Goods and services (convenience foods, cleaning help, dining out) are purchased in order to “save” time.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the average American spends time during a week.*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours spent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating and sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside of home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and personal maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It’s About Time
How is time spent? Keep a time diary for a few days, noting specific activities and the amount of time they take. Then examine the activities and compare them with personal and family goals. If activities and goals don’t blend, it may be time to re-evaluate the situation. If some special activities (such as volunteer work) are missing from the list, the time plan must allow for this too. The pie chart shows the total picture.
Take Time for 10 Things
1. Take time to Work—it’s the price of success.
2. Take time to Think—it’s the source of power.
3. Take time to Play—it’s the secret of youth.
4. Take time to Read—it’s the foundation of knowledge.
5. Take time to Worship—it’s the highway of reverence and washes the dust of earth from our eyes.
6. Take time to Help and Enjoy Friends—it’s the source of happiness.
7. Take time to Love—it’s one sacrament of life.
8. Take time to Dream—it hitchés the soul to the stars.
9. Take time to Laugh—it’s the singing that helps with life’s loads.
10. Take time to Plan—it’s the secret of being able to have time to take time for the first nine things!

Tips on Surviving the Day
- Organize closets, drawers, office, and home. This will take time but it’s worth every minute.
- Set goals and develop a plan. Keep priorities in mind as you determine your daily and weekly schedule.
- Invest in a few good calendars. A large one with the month-at-a-glance may be best for work.
- Don’t expect perfection. It may be necessary to adjust standards so you have time to spend elsewhere.
- Try the salami technique for jobs to be done—slice big jobs into smaller ones that are easier to accomplish.
- Learn when your prime time (time for peak performance) is and use it wisely. Determine prime time of other family members and delegate tasks according to person and when those tasks need to be accomplished.

Who Does This Now? Who Could Do It?
Try this activity with other family members. Is a review of responsibilities in order?

Who usually...
- prepares the meal?
- does meal clean-up?
- washes the car?
- does the yardwork?
- does the grocery shopping?
- plans the menus?
- attends appointments and events with child(ren)?
- pays bills and balances the checkbook?
- does household repairs and maintenance?

Source unknown

File: Family Life 8

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