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My young son asked me the other day, “Mommy, why do you have to work more than other moms and dads?” His comment immediately gave my heartstrings a twinge. I replied, “I am not working right now!” and I scooped him up in a big hug. One of the biggest challenges many young lawyers face in their professional lives is how to simultaneously jump-start their careers and start a family all at the same time. Work-life balance seems like a foreign concept to most of us at the beginning of our careers; even those who strive hard to achieve such a balance in their lives often feel that chaos is only a new e-mail notification away.

As I reflect on the past 11 years since I

Can You Have Everything and Do Everything at the Same Time?

By Aidan R. Welsh

graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law, I have experienced more life and career milestones than I ever could have imagined. I started off as an associate at a prestigious family law firm in Greenwich back in 2006. I soon thereafter became a wife, an aunt, a mother, a partner at my law firm, and have served in every officer position that has ever existed on the CBA Young Lawyers Section Executive Committee. I have been recognized by multiple legal publications and the CBA for my work in the field of family law. While I have enjoyed many different titles and accolades since starting my legal career, I find myself wondering if I have found true “success” yet. For me, “success” is defined as achieving my goals both at the workplace and at home—finding work-life balance.

While I do not pretend to know what is best for all of the young lawyers out there on this subject, I can certainly tell you all that I have tried and failed at many different strategies to achieve a better work-life balance and I have succeeded at others. It is these moments of success that I want to share with you today. As life gets busy and the demands of work and family require your attention, sometimes we all just need a little reminding of what seems so simple.

Make Time for Yourself

My time is already limited as a full-time working mom and lawyer. How can I possibly fit time in for myself? But then again, how can I be my best self, wife, mother, and lawyer, if I have not taken time to take care of myself. I find that I am more productive and efficient at the office when I have enjoyed my time out of the office.

Mom Guilt...Let It Go

As Queen Elsa has told me time and time again when I cuddle up with my kids to watch *Frozen*... “Let it go.” I made the decision to go back to work shortly after having my two children. While I made that decision confidently, it certainly does not mean that “mom guilt” does not set in when I am working late, on trial, traveling, or when I am unable to attend an event at my child’s school. I may not be able to be there every moment of every day for my children, but I know that by making the choice I did, I am giving my children many other benefits. Accept and cherish your decision to work and have a family if that is your choice. Let the guilt go.

Take Care and Nurture Your Relationships

I am a divorce lawyer. People often ask me, “What is the most common reason couples

get divorced?" The answer to this question has been clear to me for some time. The answer is that the couple at some point in time no longer nurtured their relationship. They may have taken each other for granted, no longer had common interests, forgot that the marriage fox hole is made for two and, as a result, found themselves growing apart from one other. Marriage is a very special and important bond. It requires a significant amount of TLC. This is true as well of other types of relationships; relationships with children, parents, and friends. Nurture your relationships and they will grow.

Be All In

As a full-time working mom, there are times when I miss events for my children because I need to work and there are times when I have to leave work to be with my children. What I have learned is that, no matter where I am, I need to be 100 percent present wherever I am. If you are at work, be there 100 percent. If you are at home, be

there 100 percent. Physical presence is not enough. Focus on what you are doing and why you are doing it.

Ask for Help

"Overachiever" is certainly a label I have heard before. Many lawyers can probably attest to the same. As I have moved from the position of an associate to a partner and from a mother of one to a mother of two, I have learned that there are times when you cannot do it all yourself. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. Knowing your limits is important. Learning how to delegate is a skill that we all need to learn and embrace.

Slow Down

As Ferris Bueller says, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you might miss it." Take a break every once in a while. Breathe. Productivity and efficiency cannot be achieved when you do not slow down.

Sometimes You Have to Say "No" in Order to Say "Yes"

My to-do list is several pages long. Pretty sure I lost page three the other day. Whoops! As the list gets longer and longer every day and every year, I have learned that I cannot possibly do it all and do it well—at the same time. Something has to give. Life is about making choices. My choice might be different than yours on various issues but the important thing is we each made a choice. Events, opportunities, and items on the to-do list can be and should be prioritized. Sometimes you simply have to say "no" to something on that list in order to say "yes" to something else.

There are times when work-life balance seems like a herculean endeavor; however, I know it is something I will continuously strive for throughout my career. When I am able to achieve work-life balance, then I will know I have truly found success. **CL**



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