



Finding Balance in an Unbalanced World

by Patti Hathaway, CSP

In 1973, people had 26 hours of leisure time each week. Today, we average only 16 hours of leisure time. That may be a result of the fact that more than half of the families with small children have both parents working and there is obviously a growing number of single parent families as well. Stress in the home and workplace is becoming a growing and widespread concern. How can we become maintain balance when there is less time to do all the things that are demanded of us? Here are some ideas that have worked for me as I attempt to balance my speaking business with family responsibilities.

Set goals with Significant Others. Steven Covey, author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, suggests creating a "Family Mission Statement" as a couple or family unit. When developed with grade school children it can create more commitment to our families and become the basis for making decisions and setting priorities. You can also develop a "Goal Book" to help you visualize your goals and dreams.

Treat Others the Way They Want to be Treated. Since some significant others have a desire to know the details of our whereabouts, a monthly calendar on our refrigerator can be helpful in coordinating work and after-work commitments and babysitting schedules. With the various colors, it is easy to see when balance becomes an issue. We are strong advocates of scheduling leisure time and "date nights" so that we can make our time as a dual-career couple a priority.

Only One of You. Recognize that you cannot do it all by yourself. There is only one of you. Just because you **can** do something, doesn't necessarily mean you **must** do it. For example, I have opted not to serve on the boards of several professional and community associations at this time in my life. This is the time for me to spend with my 4 and 7 year old boys. There will be a later time for me to serve and give back to my community and profession. I choose not to feel guilty over that decision because it is one that fits my personal philosophy and mission.

I love Dr. Bernie Siegel's thoughts on success. He says, "The only problem with climbing the ladder of success too frantically is we have to be careful when we get to the top we don't look down and realize it's leaning against the wrong building."

What about the personal side of there being only one of you. I am a big advocate of hiring a house cleaning service, particularly for dual-career couples. It's important to keep in mind, that if you manage the household, that does not mean that you do all the work. You need to delegate it, just as managers in other organizations delegate to their staff.

Personal Power In order to not burn out, we must have a place where we can "fill up". Where do you get your personal power from and the strength to keep going each day? Personally, I find it is important for me to start out each day with meditation and prayer so that my focus is where it should be. Perhaps you "fill up" in a different way.

If we are to become balanced, it is critical to develop ways to rejuvenate ourselves and develop our spiritual foundations. We will live a more satisfying and fulfilling life if we know we are here for a higher purpose--not just to satisfy our material urges and compete with others.

Donald and Nancy Tubesing in *Seeking Your Healthy Balance* state it well "The challenge is, in light of your values and beliefs, to invest yourself where it counts -- to invest yourself in a balance between self-care, other-care, and meaningful work that you believe in, that you can live with and be proud of, and that ultimately you will be willing to die with as your legacy. Invest yourself so that you can look back on your life and say that in your own way you did what you could to make the world a better place."

Patti Hathaway, CSP, The CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5 languages and have sold over 100,000 copies. Patti solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: www.thechangeagent.com for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.

