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Work-Life Integration for Physicians: Myths and Possibilities



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About Today's Presenter



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 - Be a role model for Fellows & Residents: one reason why physicians don't feel as if they can take time for themselves is because they don't have role models during their training who show them how to do it
-

Workplace Sources of Physician Stress

- Among physicians, the following factors are associated with stress:
 - Long hours
 - Excessive workload
 - Dealing with death and dying
 - Interpersonal conflicts with other staff
 - Patient expectations
 - Threat of malpractice litigation



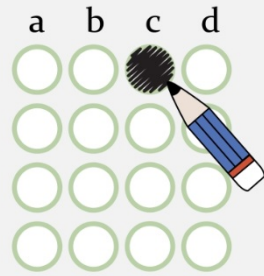
External (non-work) Sources of Physician Stress

- Among physicians, the following external factors are associated with stress:
 - Conflict between work and family roles/responsibilities
 - Length of commute
 - Financial burdens
 - Conflictual, dramatic or non-supportive relationships
 - Personal health issue



5 Characteristics of Performance Misery

- “Type A” Personality
 - Achievement oriented
 - Perfectionistic
 - Places high demands on self and others
- Highly critical of self; antagonistic or shaming
- Low use of self-encouragement and nurturing
- Unwillingness to access support system = isolation
- Low subjective wellbeing (a.k.a. daily happiness)



Poll

Over the past 90 days, how would you rate your work life?

- Stimulating—I leave work with more energy than when I arrived
- Routine—familiar and perhaps mundane at times
- Frenetic—I'm keeping pace, but only because I run everywhere
- Overwhelmed at times—feels like I've been drinking from a fire hose

Journal Article: Predictors Of Physician Career Satisfaction, Work-life Balance, And Burnout

CONCLUSIONS:

- Physicians can struggle with work-life balance yet remain highly satisfied with their career.
- Burnout is an important predictor of career satisfaction
- Most physicians reported having moderate levels of emotional resilience
- Control over schedule and work hours are the most important predictors of work-life balance and burnout

Source: Obstetrics & Gynecology, 2007 Apr;109(4):949-55

Journal Article: Principles to Promote Physician Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance

1. Meaningful work
2. Challenges commensurate with skills, interests, & resources
3. Opportunities for professional development
4. A culture that cultivates professionalism and professional satisfaction
5. Autonomy and flexible scheduling
6. A culture that values and encourages life outside of work
7. A culture of wellness

HBR Article: Manage Your Work, Manage Your Life

When it works, people who succeed in work-life integration:

- Involve family in work decisions and activities
- Vigilantly manage their own human capital

Four main themes:

1. Define success for yourself
2. Manage technology
3. Build support networks in work & home environments
4. Collaborate with your partner at home



HBR Article: Manage Your Work, Manage Your Life

Theme One: Define success for yourself

- Definition will evolve over time
- Describe your ideal self
- Personal success is associated with not having regrets



HBR Article: Manage Your Work, Manage Your Life

Theme Two: Manage technology

- Decide when, where and how to be accessible
- People do not truly multi-task
 - Instead, they attempt rapid switching between tasks
 - There is value in undivided attention
- Technology can provide flexibility
- Technology is a good servant but a poor master



HBR Article: Manage Your Work, Manage Your Life

Theme Three: Build support networks in work & home environments

- Help from extended family or paid help for mundane things
 - groceries, cooking
 - care for aging parents
- Helpful to vent to family and friends, safer than coworkers
- Support at work in the form of sounding boards, compassion



HBR Article: Manage Your Work, Manage Your Life

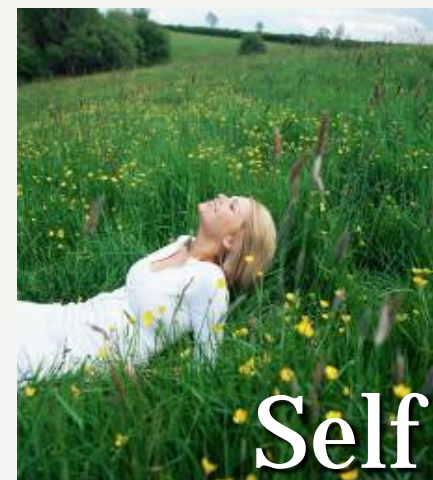
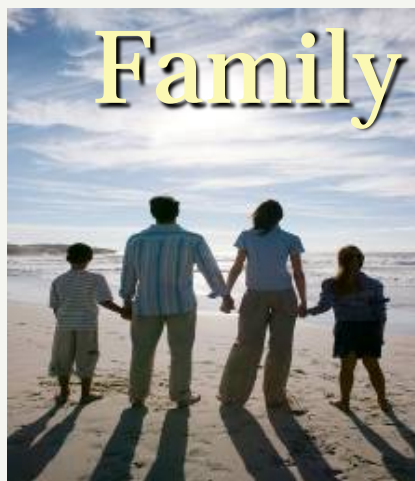
Theme Four: Collaborate with your partner at home

- Have a shared vision of success for everyone at home, not just for oneself
- Complementary qualities
- Emotional support
- Sounding boards and honest critics



What Is A Plausible Definition of Work-Life Integration?

Meaningful daily
ACHIEVEMENT and
ENJOYMENT
in each of life's four
quadrants



Be Self-aware;
Know Your Limits!



Know Your Limits

- Practice the resiliency skill of “capacity”
- Set boundaries with appropriate assertiveness
- Know yourself, and those close to you
- Negative/positive scripts: self talk
- Be aware of your emotional reactions/triggers
- Work is not the only determinant of self-esteem
- All the world’s a classroom: what have I learned from this?

*What level of acceptance can I achieve,
and how can I enjoy my awareness?*



Simplify

Simplify: Do we own Things, or do Things own us?

1964

- TV (1)
- Phone (1)
- Radio (2)
- Record player
- Train set
- Baseball bat & glove
- Skates & key
- Board games

2014

- TiVo (2)
- TVs (3)
- Cable TV boxes (2)
- Surround-sound stereos (2)
- DVD players (2)
- Computer
- Laptops (2)
- iPad
- iPods (5)
- Smartphones (3)
- House phones (5)
- CD player
- Scanner/fax/printer
- Internet cable modem
- WiFi router
- USB thumb drives (5, totaling 22 Gb)
- Wii game console
- Rockband guitar
- Digital cameras (4)
- Video cameras (5)
- Digital photo frames (2)

Simplify

- Eliminate clutter
- Consolidate financial accounts
- Collect memories and experiences, not belongings
- Build-in unstructured down time
- New people or things must be a “fit” for your goal to achieve greater balance through simplicity

*What level of simplifying can I achieve,
and how can I enjoy my newly uncluttered life?*

Renegotiate



Renegotiate at Home

- Renegotiating in Your Personal Life
 - Household chores
 - “Down time” or “decompress time”
 - Relationships needing less drama and more support
 - Commitments outside of the home

*What level of re-negotiation can I achieve,
and how can I enjoy my new commitments?*

Renegotiate at Work

■ Elevate and Delegate

- Elevate = review priorities with division chair
 - Seek support, relief or postponement
- Delegate = assign work to others, track progress, let others shine/fail

■ Let Go

- Courage to change your commitments
 - Abandoning a favorite activity
-

Discussing Expectations at Home

- Approach demands in your marriage as you do in your job — define what your roles are and meet the challenges like you do at work
- If, as a family, you decide it's not worth it to be working those long hours, then you have to talk about what kind of changes you are willing to make financially
 - In those circumstances, you have to sit down and negotiate with your partner what that acceptable level is

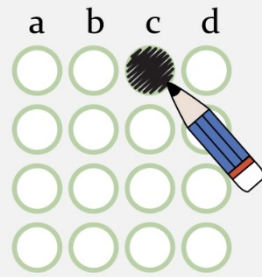
Source: Scott Haltzman, psychiatrist and author of a book on marriage happiness

Keys to achieving a work-life balance for Female Physicians

- Organization
- Flexibility
- Practice share
- It takes a village
- Delegate
- Hire
- Support (significant other, friends, neighbors, family, colleagues)
- Values weighing: time vs. \$
- Time for self
- Communication
- Being available
- Learn to say "no"
- Avoid energy draining activities
- Know that it can not be done "alone"

Pregnancy and Peer Relations

- A problem occasionally encountered by physician-mothers is the resentment of their colleagues
- Some colleagues may view a female doctor's pregnancy and family commitments as evidence of a diminished dedication to medicine and career
- The impact of pregnancy and childbirth can be minimized by notifying colleagues well in advance of the impending birth and the mother's plans for maternity leave



Poll

What level of support for Work-Life Balance have you experienced from your current manager or chief?

- Stellar—my chief proactively looks out after me
- Congruent—my chief role-models WLB and is open to my attempts to do the same
- Hypocritical—WLB is given lip-service but in practice is discouraged
- Antagonistic—attempts to request or assert for WLB result in scorn

Time Management Techniques

Parkinson's Law:

"Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion"

Cyril Parkinson, 1957

Time Management: Observations

- Time must be explicitly managed, just like money
 - Everything you do is an opportunity cost
 - Unlike money, time cannot be banked
- Poor time management → stress

*Being successful doesn't make you manage your time well—
managing your time well makes you successful.*

Time as Opportunity Cost

- Ask yourself:
 - Why am I doing this?
 - What is the goal?
 - Why will I succeed (by doing this)?
 - What happens if I choose not to do this?



Time Management Technique: Boulders & Pebbles

- Estimate the labor time required for every task
 - For larger projects, break them into smaller, distinct tasks and then assign the labor estimate
 - Tasks requiring longer than an hour are 'boulders'
 - Tasks of brief duration (5 to 30 minutes) are 'pebbles'
-

Boulders

- For 'boulder' sized tasks, proactively block out time in your calendar
 - Then preserve the time by vigorous limit-setting and distraction management

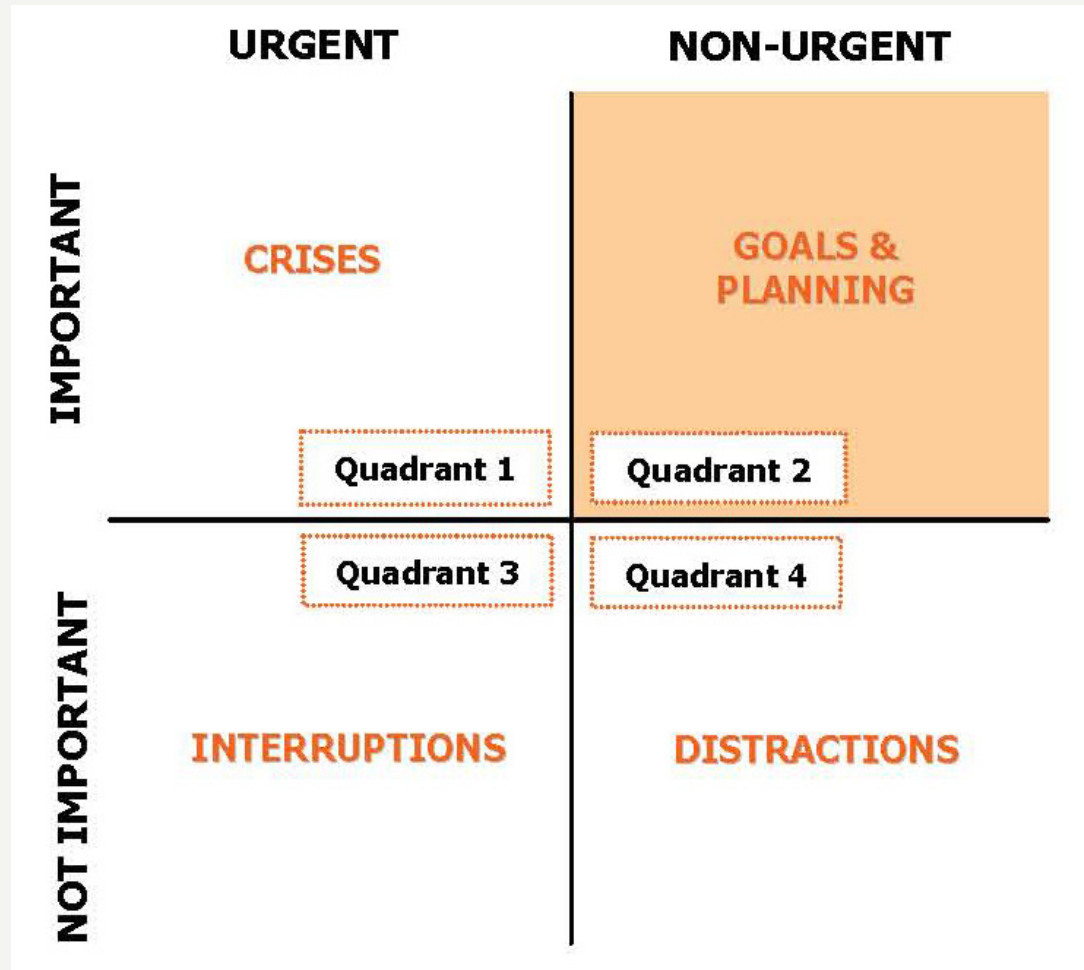


Pebbles

- 'Pebble' sized tasks may be completed within the smaller pockets of time in your schedule
 - A cancelled appointment or procedure
 - A commitment that ended early
 - Setting your wake-up alarm 15 minutes earlier



The Four-Quadrant TO DO List



PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST. Ask yourself, "Am I able to say 'no' to the unimportant, no matter how urgent, and 'yes' to the important?"

The Four-Quadrant TO DO List— Case Study

	Urgent (due soon)	Non-Urgent (due later)
Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinic visits in timely fashion • Enter patient orders • Patient notes • Patient calls • Insurance workflows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R01 application due in 6 months • Writing papers
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • committee meetings • requests to review for journals • the usual deluge of emails from people wanting “one little thing” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for teaching

Creating Laser Focus

- Create a Vision Statement about what will make you successful
- Engage others in that vision
- Become relentless in pursuit of completion

“Chase down your passion like it is the last bus of the night.”

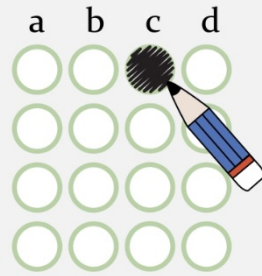
Activity

- Please write your answers on a piece of paper

 - 1. When you started your work day today, what was at the top of your list of things to get done?
-

Activity

2. In a few words, how would you describe what it means for you to be wildly successful at work?
 3. What are 3 actions you should be doing in support of that description of success?
 4. Of those 3, which would you perceive is the most important or valuable action?
-



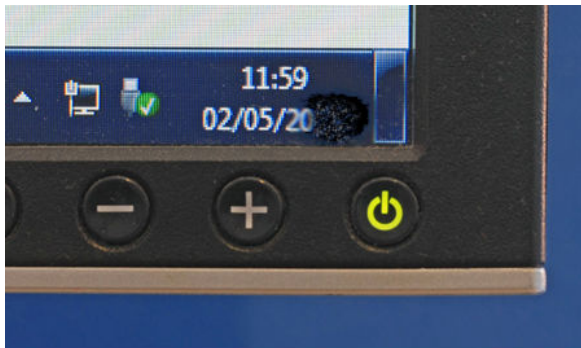
Poll

Was your answer to question 4 the same or different than question 1?

- Different—and I'm going to reprioritize answer 4 for the top of my to-do list today
- Different—but realistically I can't risk swapping them
- Different—but I'm conflicted about pursuing my success at the cost of other people's needs
- Same/similar—I'm empowered by my organization to choose the important over the urgent

Fences Make Good Neighbors

Protect your time with better boundary-setting



Nothing makes me more
productive than the
last minute.



som**ee**cards
user card

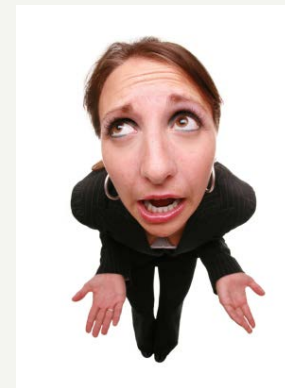
Barriers to Effective Time Management

- Lack of focus
- Poor boundary setting
- Inability to break-down a project
- Inaccurate time estimation
- Task paralysis—where to start first?
- Poor delegation skills
- Clutter
- Ineffective meetings
- Just-in-time management



Barriers to Effective Time Management

- Indecision
- Procrastination
- Unwillingness to say “no”
- Over-commitment
- Fear of success
- Imposter phenomenon
- Perfectionism
- Rigidity
- Self-indulgence
(play before work)
- Responsibility fatigue
- Reluctance to ask for help



When External Balance Cannot Be Controlled...

...maximize internal balance

- Depersonalization
 - Resiliency
 - Conflict resolution skills
 - Self-care
-

Sharpen the Saw

This is the habit of self-renewal, which has 4 elements:

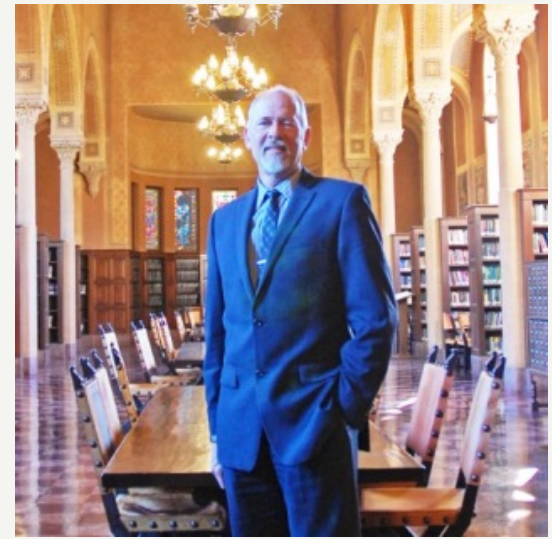
- Physically energized
 - exercise, nutrition and stress management
 - Mentally focused
 - reading, visualizing, planning & writing
 - Emotionally connected
 - service, empathy, synergy and intrinsic security
 - Spiritually aligned
 - values clarification & commitment, study and meditation
-

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