



# Influencers in the Field

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## Navigating Life Events with Career Responsibilities

In today's fast-paced world, finding a balance between career achievements and personal life is a common challenge. As we aim to succeed professionally, we inevitably juggle work responsibilities with our personal goals and relationships. At this point in my life — between my husband, four kids, three dogs, family, friends and my role at Gallagher — my busy schedule has grown. I always evaluate different strategies to find a healthy and realistic work-life balance. I believe harmonizing work and personal life can enhance our wellbeing and productivity, potentially leading to a more fulfilled life.

It is easy to let professional obligations overflow into personal time, whether missing soccer games or skipping a family dinner to meet a deadline. I have been there! Over time, that overflow can strain relationships and create unnecessary stress. It does not feel good to miss those special personal events or important deadlines, which is why I source ideas and help find areas of those spheres that can be adjusted.

### **The Impact of an Unbalanced Life**

Though I celebrate and cheer on my children for all of the activities they are involved in, juggling the day-to-day can bring unexpected — and oftentimes hidden — stress and anxiety. As I shuttle them to sports practices, appointments or club activities, I try to be strategic with my meeting planning and task scheduling for work. This may include allowing extra time before a morning appointment if I am managing school drop-off or considering an evening sports banquet and asking to reschedule a meeting that might run late.

Unchecked stress like this could lead to burnout — in both the workplace and our personal life. Burnout can drain our energy, dull creativity and impair focus — leading to mistakes, reduced productivity and a spiral of negativity. It is a reminder that finding balance during life's busiest seasons isn't just helpful but essential. In this article, I will share strategies that have helped me create space for both personal joy and professional success, even during the most hectic times.

## Tools for Finding Balance

Creating space to balance your life and career needs can go a long way in increasing our satisfaction with both. Four ways we might achieve this include:

- **Communicating clearly** – Prevent workplace or home friction by clearly communicating our needs in advance, such as requesting coworkers not call us during our off hours or asking our family for help with childcare or pet needs before a planned vacation. Being proactive with these requests, rather than reactive, will allow us to iron out any issues, such as setting up protocols for deadline-driven projects or scheduling a backup sitter if family isn't available during that time to help.
- **Establishing boundaries (and sticking to them)** – Boundaries are as much about what we want to do as the things we do not. Let's say I establish with my manager that I do not want to take work calls after hours but relent when another colleague complains about the impact on their timetable. In that case, it isn't really a boundary anymore, is it? Boundaries can look like saying "no" to people important to us, such as coworkers and loved ones. By communicating our needs clearly — and sticking to our boundaries — we can prevent the erosion of our valuable personal time and any negative feelings that can result.
- **Managing our time and prioritizing what's important** – Keeping ourselves accountable in the workplace ensures our professional responsibilities don't creep into our personal spaces. Utilizing shared calendars, creating to-do lists and learning to block out time to focus on essential tasks can all help us make the most of our workday. If any deadlines or project requirements are unclear, clarify them as soon as possible to reduce the likelihood of time crunches and stress down the road. Shared calendars can also be used for personal reasons, such as keeping track of important health appointments, milestones and more.
- **Delegating for success and asking for help** – If it often feels overwhelming at work or there is a reluctance to take time off due to concerns about our team's ability to manage our responsibilities, it might be a sign that we are not delegating enough or asking for help. Delegation can be beneficial for both us and our team members. By involving others in our projects, we provide them with valuable experience and insight into our role. Reaching out to the manager or colleagues for feedback and assistance can help alleviate stress, even for a small project. These practices can help create a culture of trust, enhance engagement and encourage innovation while giving us the necessary space to focus on other priorities.

## Find Joy in the Chaos

I believe even the smallest moments of joy can significantly boost our wellbeing. Simple pleasures — like noticing the beautiful flowers on a quick walk or receiving a kind message from a friend — can have a tangible impact on our mood and health. On the other hand, lingering in negative emotions without finding relief may increase feelings of isolation and unhappiness. Embracing and appreciating these joyful moments is ideal, as they can help counterbalance life's stresses.

Here are some ways you can foster joy, no matter how busy work and life become:

- **Change the routine** – Take a morning cup of coffee outside or walk to a nearby restaurant for lunch instead of eating at our desk. Changes in routine can lead to positive transformations in mood and perspective by creating new opportunities in our day.
- **Embrace spontaneity** – If our daily work schedule leaves little time for ourselves, we can be creative in our joyful moments. Even stretching in the office for five minutes or taking a brief break to call someone special can be rejuvenating without impeding our ability to work.
- **Pursue connection** – Dedication to work is important but should not come at the cost of building relationships with our colleagues. In 2024, nearly 70% of employees who participated in a [Nectar survey](#) shared they would be happier if they had closer relationships with their coworkers. These bonds can lead to greater camaraderie, collaboration and improved job satisfaction. Grab lunch with a coworker or schedule virtual coffee chats or happy hours if working remotely.

- **Be kind to ourselves** – It is normal to face challenges, and treating ourselves with kindness and compassion during these times can foster resilience. Do not hesitate to speak up if there is trouble balancing work and personal life. Addressing these concerns early can help alleviate stress and enhance our self-confidence. Remember to try offering ourselves the same understanding and kindness we would give to a friend or loved one.

Creating balanced living is not always easy, but I believe it is essential for everyone. A healthy work-life balance can foster workplace engagement, happiness and innovation and encourage us to recognize the value of our personal time. Imbalances are bound to happen because we constantly readjust our daily schedules and routines. However, I have learned that awareness of my current state and openness to learning, as well as finding different strategies and tools and using them when we can, are helpful to finding a balance that works for me and makes me feel good. At the end of the day, I know my work-life balance is unique to my circumstances, but the underlying feelings of wanting success in my career and fulfillment in my personal life are something to which we can all relate. Consider these ideas and explore ways to incorporate them into your daily routine, or let them inspire you to discover new approaches. Share your insights with family, friends and colleagues, and strive together to maintain a balanced work-life dynamic.



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